

CONSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON HEIGHTS BAPTIST CHURCH

PREAMBLE

Statement of Faith

THE BIBLE – GOD’S WORD

We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original writings, complete as the revelation of God's will for salvation, and the supreme and final authority in all matters to which they speak. (II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21)

THE TRINITY

We believe in one God, creator and sustainer of all things, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe that these are equal in every distinct perfection and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption. (Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 28:19; I Peter 1:2)

GOD THE FATHER

We believe in God the Father: an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, righteousness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of humanity, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (Genesis 1:1; John 4:23-24; John 3:16)

JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ is God's eternal Son, who has precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. We believe further that He is not only true God, but true man, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. We also believe in His sinless life, His substitutionary atonement, His bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven, His priestly intercession on behalf of His people, and His personal, visible, premillennial return from heaven. (John 1:1; John 14:6, John 10:27-30)

HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit, His personality, and His work in regeneration, sanctification, and preservation. His ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, to implement Christ's work of redeeming the lost, and to empower the believer for godly living and service. (Genesis 1:2; John 14:26; Acts 5:3-4; I Corinthians 12:12,13)

MAN

We believe God created persons, male and female, in the image of God and free from sin. We further believe all people are sinners by nature and choice and are spiritually dead. We also believe that those who repent of sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:26, 27; Romans 3:23)

SALVATION

We believe in salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We further believe that this salvation is based upon the sovereign grace of God, was purchased by Jesus Christ on the cross, and is received by man through faith, apart from any human merit, works, or ritual. We further believe salvation enables and results in righteous living, good works, and proper social concern. (Ephesians 2:8,9,10; Romans 6:23)

THE CHURCH

We believe that the Church is the spiritual body of which Christ is the head. We believe that the true Church is composed of all persons who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. We believe that this body expresses itself in local assemblies whose members have been immersed upon a credible confession of faith and have associated themselves for worship, for instruction, for evangelism, and for service. We believe the ordinances of the local church are believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper. We also believe in the interdependence of local churches and the mutual submission of believers to each other in love. (Matthew 16:18; Matthew 18:15-17)

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

We believe that each local church is self-governing in function, and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority. We further believe that every human being is directly responsible to God in matters of faith and life, and that each should be free to worship God according to the dictates of conscience. (Matthew 22:21; Acts 5:27-29)

CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

We believe that the supreme task of believers is to glorify God in their lives and that they should seek to live in such a way that their conduct be blameless before the world. We further believe that they should be faithful stewards of their possessions and that they should seek to realize for themselves the full stature of maturity in Christ. (Romans 12:1-2; Romans 6:13-14; Colossians 3:1-2)

LAST THINGS

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the saved and lost, the eternal existence of all people either in heaven or hell, and in divine judgment, rewards and punishments. (Hebrews 9:27,28; I Corinthians 3:10-15; II Corinthians 5:10)

ARTICLE I
NAME AND PRINCIPLE OFFICE

This church shall be known as the Washington Heights Baptist Church, also doing business as WHBC, Washington Heights Church or WHC. This Corporation will be further referred to in the Constitution as the "Church." The Church maintains its principal office at 1770 East 6200 South, Ogden, UT 84405.

ARTICLE II
PURPOSE AND VALUES

Our purpose is to lead people to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, to integrate believers into the life of our church, and to demonstrate to our world the dynamic reality of life together in Christ. Our values include:

- God's Word, the Bible, is our ultimate source of authority for our faith and practice.
- Recognizing our need for God's direction and blessing, we make prayer an integral part of all our planning and programs.
- Celebrative worship is a vital part of what we do, as we express to God our adoration, praise and thanksgiving, and listen as He would speak to us by His Spirit through His Word.
- We seek to challenge, inspire and encourage people in their spiritual growth and ministry, rather than motivate through guilt.
- We expect that all believers will desire to serve the Lord in some capacity, and thus we seek to involve them in ministry for the Lord as soon as possible.
- Our focus is on reaching our community and the world for Christ, rather than turning inward in a mode of maintaining the status quo.
- We encourage creative, innovative ways of doing ministry that are within our vision and values, and this gives us freedom to not fear failure.
- In our efforts to reach our community with the good news of Jesus Christ, we seek to build bridges rather than creating barriers.
- We seek to study and apply God's Word to every aspect of our personal lives and to our society without becoming an issues-oriented church.
- Since all are created in the image of God, we welcome all to our church, regardless of race, ethnic background, or social level.

ARTICLE III **CHURCH COVENANT**

In becoming a member of Washington Heights Baptist Church, we joyfully enter into covenant with one another:

- We will seek to develop a growing relationship of love for God.
- We will seek to foster a spirit of love, respect, honor, and trust for each other.
- We will refuse to initiate or encourage any spirit of gossip or criticism of a fellow member.
- We will seek to clarify any disagreements that should arise.
- We will be ready both to seek, as well as to give forgiveness, so that any strained or broken relationship can be restored.
- We will seek to demonstrate to all who observe us how Christians with differing backgrounds, personalities, and views love one another, forgive one another, and support one another in serving the Lord.
- We will seek to understand and develop our God-given gifts for building up the Body of Christ.
- We will endeavor to contribute regularly to the support of the ministries of the Church both in our community and around the world.

ARTICLE IV **AFFILIATION**

WHBC has voluntarily associated itself with the Conservative Baptist Association of America and the Rocky Mountain Conservative Baptist Association.

ARTICLE V **MEMBERSHIP**

SECTION I – General

The membership of this Church will be composed of qualified believers who have met the qualifications for membership and are listed on the membership role. Members of this Church have certain responsibilities and rights.

SECTION II - Requirements for Membership

The Requirements for Membership include a personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ and baptism by immersion as an expression and testimony of that faith, as well as:

- For those eighteen years or older, a signed agreement to the Church's Statement of Faith, the Church Covenant and Vision/Purpose Statement.
- For those under eighteen years of age, completion of the Church's membership class and its requirements.

SECTION III - Process for Membership

A person may unite with this fellowship of this Church in one of the following ways:

- a) Transfer of letter from a church of like faith and practice;
- b) Profession of faith through believer's baptism; or
- c) Reaffirmation of faith.

All applications for membership shall be made through the Pastoral Staff whose action to receive or reject an applicant shall be regarded as the action of the Church.

SECTION IV - Rights of Members

- a) All members eighteen years of age or older shall have equal rights and may vote in all matters to be determined by the congregation as defined by the Church Constitution.
- b) Members eighteen years of age or older may be nominated and elected to serve as officers of the Church.
- c) Members of this Church shall have no property rights. Upon termination of membership they shall be entitled to no personal interest in the assets of the Church.

SECTION V - Responsibilities of Members

- a) All members will strive to walk according to Biblical principles as stated in the Church Covenant, regularly support the ministries of the Church, and promote the unity of the fellowship.
- b) Any member who has a conflict with a fellow member shall follow the instructions given in Matthew 18:15-17.

- c) Any member who has a concern regarding some aspect of the Church ministry shall first share his/her concern with the responsible ministry leader. If the concern cannot be substantially resolved after good faith discussions between the parties, the member may carry his or her concern (in order) to a member of the Pastoral Staff and Deacon Chairman (Matthew 18:15-17). At each level, the member shall attempt in good faith to resolve the problem before involving the next higher level of care. Members shall avoid gossip and other unnecessary discussion of conflicts.
- d) Each member acknowledges that the decision of the Church leadership on any matter shall be binding, and that he or she will not file a lawsuit, complaint, or any other claim in any civil court or before any governmental authority against the Church or any of its members, employees, or agents with respect to any act or failure to act that occurred while he or she was a member of the Church (I Corinthians 6:1-8).

SECTION VI - Termination of Membership

A person's membership may be terminated in the following ways:

- a) Death;
- b) Transfer of membership to another church;
- c) Personal request by a member in good standing; or
- d) Removal by official action by the Board of Deacons in accordance with its Policy of Dismissal:
 - A member who is inactive in church attendance and financial giving for over one year period without reason; or
 - A member whose conduct is detrimental to the honor of Christ (including repeated unrepentant conduct inconsistent with fundamental biblical teaching and/or failure to honor the Church Covenant, Purpose and Values). Once duly notified of such action, a member's right to resign membership is restricted until the process is completed and the matter is resolved.

SECTION VII - Restoration of Membership

Members dismissed by the Deacon Board shall be restored by a majority vote of the Deacon Board according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8, when their lifestyles are judged to be in accordance with the Church Covenant and Values.

ARTICLE VI **GOVERNMENT**

SECTION I - Congregation

Congregational authority shall include:

- a) Approval of changes to the Articles of Incorporation and this Constitution;
- b) Approval of the calling or removal of the Senior Pastor;
- c) Approval of the annual budget to fund the Operational Plan;
- d) Approval of the purchase or sale of land and buildings;
- e) Election of the officers of the Church; and
- f) Election of members of standing committees.

SECTION II – Duties and Terms of the Officers

- a) The officers of the Church shall consist of:
 - Moderator and Vice Moderator
 - Church Clerk
 - Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Finance Committee
 - Treasurer
 - Financial Secretary
 - Board of Deacons and Board of Deaconesses
 - Two members of the Nominating Committee
- b) All officers shall be members of this Church in good standing.
- c) The Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Finance Committee, Treasurer, Financial Secretary and the two members of the Nominating Committee shall be elected annually at the time of the annual business meeting.
- d) The Deacons and Deaconesses shall be elected for a term of three years. At the end of their three-year term, they may be re-nominated and elected to serve another three years. No Deacon nor Deaconess shall be eligible for re-election to this office until one year has elapsed from the expiration of his or her second term of office.
- e) All officers shall assume office beginning March 1st of the year for which they are elected. The one-year term will extend into the following year to the end of the month of February.

- f) The resignation of any officer shall be delivered to the Church in writing, and shall be effective on the date specified in the resignation.
- g) The qualifications and duties of officers shall be as follows:
- Duties of the Moderator: The Moderator shall preside at all business meetings of the Church.
 - Duties of the Vice Moderator: The Vice Moderator shall, in the absence of the Moderator, preside at all business meetings of the Church or other occasions as the Moderator may request.
 - Duties of the Board of Deacons: The Board of Deacons shall assist the pastor in his work, and with him consider all applications for Church membership, requests for letters of transfer and termination of membership. The Board shall cooperate with the Pastor and the Board of Deaconesses in visiting the members, in the care of the sick, needy and distressed members of the Church, and in the preparation for and the observance of the ordinances of the Church. The Board shall manage the collection and disbursement of the Fellowship Fund to provide financial relief to members or others suffering financial hardships in accordance with the Fellowship Fund Policy.

The Board of Deacons shall consist of no less than twelve (12) members. As the needs of the Church and its programs are assessed by the Pastor and Deacons, the Board of Deacons, through the normal nominating process, may present additional Deacons and/or Deaconesses to the Church for their election.

An Executive Committee of the Deacon Board shall consist of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and at least one member-at-large from the Board. The Chairman of the Deacon Board shall be appointed annually by the Senior Pastor and ratified by a majority vote of the Deacon Board. The Chairman and Senior Pastor on an annual basis shall appoint the Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, and the member(s)-at-large to serve on the Executive Board. The Executive Board will provide assistance to the Pastor as required on a day-to-day basis within the limits of authority allowed for by the Board of Deacons and its policies. The Executive Board shall annually conduct a performance review with the Senior Pastor reflecting on the past year achievements and discuss objective plans for the year.

Annually, the Chairman of the Deacon Board shall appoint Deacon member representatives to serve on the various committees where a member from the Board of Deacons is required by this Constitution. The Chairman of the Deacon Board shall serve as a member of the Board of Trustees for the Church.

- Duties of the Board of Deaconesses: The Board of Deaconesses shall assist the Pastor in developing the spiritual life of the Church. It shall cooperate with the Pastor and the Board of Deacons in visiting the members, in the care of the sick, needy and distressed members of the Church and in the preparation for the observance of the ordinances of the Church. The Senior Pastor shall appoint the Chairperson of the Deaconess Board annually. The Board of Deaconesses shall consist of no less than twelve (12) members. Annually, the Chairperson of the Deaconess Board shall appoint Deaconess member representatives to serve on the various committees where a member from the Board of Deaconesses is required by this Constitution.
- Duties of the Church Clerk: The Church Clerk shall keep accurate records of the minutes of the annual and specially called business meetings. The Church Clerk shall preserve and properly file all letters, reports and other documents pertaining to business meetings and assist in the preparation of all other reports that may be required. The Church Clerk shall deliver immediately to the successor, all books, files, records and other documents in his/her possession.
- Duties of the Treasurer: In cooperation with the Administrator (Article X), the Treasurer shall review and verify the records of all monies contributed and disbursed for the general expenses of the Church, special funds, missionary and other benevolent purposes. The Treasurer shall also review all financial reports. The Treasurer shall report and be accountable to the Finance Committee.
- Duties of the Financial Secretary: The Financial Secretary shall keep an account for each contributor of record, showing pledges made and contributions received for each fund and render annual statements and quarterly statements as requested by the Administrator or Chairman of the Finance Committee. The Financial Secretary shall immediately deliver to his/her successor all books and records in his possession.
- Duties of the Chairman of the Finance Committee: The Chairman of the Finance Committee shall chair the Finance Committee and serve as a member of the Board of Trustees.
- Duties of the Vice-Chairman of the Finance Committee: The Vice-Chairman of the Finance Committee shall preside at the Finance Committee meetings in the absence of the Chairman or at other occasions as the Chairman may request.

SECTION III – The Board of Trustees and their Duties

Members of the Board of Trustees shall include Chairman of the Board of Deacons, Chairman of the Finance Committee and the Administrator (defined in Article X). The Board of Trustees shall hold in trust all buildings and grounds belonging to the Church and shall take all necessary measures for its protection. It shall perform such other duties as are imposed upon it by the Articles of Corporation and the Statutes of the State of Utah.

ARTICLE VII
STANDING COMMITTEES AND THEIR DUTIES

SECTION I - Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall consist of the following members: Chairman of the Finance Committee, Vice-Chairman of the Finance Committee, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Administrator, and one member of the Board of Deacons. The committee shall:

- a) Look after the financial interests of the Church;
- b) Meet at the call of its Chairman or the Administrator;
- c) In conjunction with the Administrator, prepare and present to the Church the proposed annual budget at the annual business meeting; and
- d) On a quarterly basis, review and post the financial status of the church with respect to the operating budget.

SECTION II - Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consist of a member of the Pastoral Staff appointed by the Senior Pastor, two members selected at-large (elected by the congregation annually), one member from the Board of Deacons and one member from the Board of Deaconesses. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the committee. The committee shall:

- a) Prepare a list of names from the active membership of the Church of those qualified to fill various offices;
- b) Interview each nominee proposed, and ascertain his or her willingness to serve, in case of election; and
- c) Nominate one person for each office to be filled and report the names to the Church at least two weeks before the election is to be held.

ARTICLE VIII ELECTIONS

SECTION I - Time

The annual election of officers shall be held at the Annual Business Meeting. Announcement shall be given to the congregation at the morning worship services for two consecutive Sundays prior to the annual election.

SECTION II - Procedure

The Nominating Committee shall provide a slate of nominees as provided by Article VII, Section II, two weeks prior to the Annual Business Meeting.

SECTION III - Vacancies

Vacancies occurring during the year may be filled for the remainder of that year through appointment by the respective chairperson in consultation with the Senior Pastor and ratification by the members of the affected committee or board.

ARTICLE IX PASTORAL STAFF

SECTION I - General Qualifications

Members of the Pastoral Staff must:

- a) Be willing to become a member of Washington Heights Church;
- b) Affirm the Statement of Faith (Preamble), the Church Covenant (Article III), and abide by WHBC Purpose and Values (Article II);
- c) Seek to meet the Biblical standards for Church leaders (1 Timothy 3);
- d) Practice proportional giving; and
- e) Possess the experience, education and abilities deemed necessary by the appropriate search committee.

SECTION II - Senior Pastor

- a) **Duties/Responsibilities**: The Senior Pastor shall faithfully preach the Gospel, lead the Church in fulfilling its God-given vision, promote the spiritual interest of the Church, direct care of the membership, and administer the ordinances. The Senior Pastor shall oversee the Pastoral Staff. He shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees. The Senior Pastor shall annually appoint the Chairman of the Deacon and Chairperson of the Deaconesses from members of the respective boards.
- b) **The Calling of the Senior Pastor**: When it becomes necessary to call a Senior Pastor, a nine-member Pastoral Search Committee shall be formed. The Search Committee shall be comprised of seven (7) members from the church body and two (2) members from the Pastoral Staff.

The Formation of the Pastoral Search Committee

The seven-member candidates to serve on the Pastoral Search Committee shall be selected by a committee comprised of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Deacon Board, Chairperson of the Deaconesses and two members of the Pastoral Staff selected by the Executive Pastoral Staff.

The two-member candidates from the Pastoral Staff to serve on the Pastoral Search Committee shall be selected by the Pastoral Staff.

The seven-member nominees shall be confirmed by a majority of those members of the church present and voting in a specially called business meeting.

At its first meeting, the nine-member search committee shall elect a chairperson and secretary. The Search Committee will develop a profile for the position and a program for presenting the potential candidate to the congregation that maximizes his exposure to the Church. Only one candidate shall be presented to the Church at a time.

A decision by the Search Committee to present the potential candidate to the Church requires a 2/3 approval from the Search Committee followed by a 3/4 approval by the Board of Deacons. If the potential candidate fails to receive a favorable vote by either the Search Committee or the Board of Deacons, the candidate shall be dismissed.

Having successfully gained an acceptance by the two aforementioned entities, the Search Committee shall present the candidate as their nominee recommendation to the Church in a specially-called business meeting. Notice of such meeting and its purpose shall have been posted one (1) week in advance of said meeting. A 3/4 vote of the members present and voting shall be necessary to extend a call. The vote shall be by secret ballot. The committee will dissolve upon the successful calling of a Senior Pastor.

- c) **Resignation/ Termination of Senior Pastor:** The Senior Pastor may resign giving thirty (30) days' written notification to the Chairman of the Board of Deacons.

Termination of the employment of the Senior Pastor by the Church shall be preceded by a Board of Deacons' recommendation of termination secured by 3/4 vote of its members. The termination of the Senior Pastor shall be decided by the congregation at a specially-called business meeting. A notice of such meeting and its purpose shall be posted and communicated to the Church for two successive Sundays before the said meeting. A 3/4 vote of the members present and voting shall make valid the termination of the Senior Pastor. The vote shall be by secret ballot.

SECTION III - Pastoral Staff

- a) **Duties/Responsibilities:** The member of the Pastoral Staff shall lead his/her area of ministry in fulfilling its God-given vision consistent with the Church Covenant, Purpose, and Values of the Church. The Pastoral Staff member shall be ultimately accountable to the Senior Pastor.
- b) **Calling of a Pastoral Staff Member (Existing Position):** The process for filling an existing position is, first, the formation of a Search Committee which represents a cross-section of members involved in the specific ministry. The Senior Pastor will appoint a member of the Pastoral Staff who will select members to the Search Committee and serve on that committee.

Second, the Search Committee shall, upon forming, select its chairperson and secretary. The Committee will develop a profile for the position and a program for presenting the potential candidate to the congregation that maximizes his/her exposure to the Church. Only one candidate shall be presented to the Church at a time. A successful candidate for the position will gain approval (3/4 majority vote) through the following entities, in order: (1) Search Committee, (2) Pastoral Staff, and (3) Board of Deacons. A budgeted Pastoral Staff Position shall be determined by the Senior Pastor after consultation and approval by the Board of Deacons. The process may range from a direct appointment to a fully engaged and formal search process. A successful candidate will gain the approval (3/4 majority vote) through, in order, the Pastoral Staff and Board of Deacons.

- c) **Calling of a Pastoral Staff Position (New Position):** When it becomes necessary to establish a new pastoral ministry position determined by the Senior Pastor, the need will be assessed and approved by the following entities: Board of Deacons and Finance Committee. A recommendation for the new position will be proposed to the congregation for approval. The position will be considered and approved by a 2/3 majority of the voting members present and voting at a specially-called business meeting. Once approved, the position will be filled in accordance with Article IX, Section III, part b) Calling of a Pastoral Staff Member (Existing Position).

- d) **Resignation/Termination of Pastoral Staff Member:** The Pastoral Staff Member may resign giving thirty (30) days' written notification to the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor may ask for the resignation or terminate a member from the Pastoral Staff after consultation with the Executive Committee of the Board of Deacons.

ARTICLE X ADMINISTRATOR

The Administrator shall oversee the administrative business of the Church and perform those duties in accordance with and cited in this Constitution. The Administrator is appointed and reports to the Senior Pastor and may be a member of the Pastoral Staff. The Administrator is a member of the Finance Committee and Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE XI FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year shall coincide with the calendar year.

ARTICLE XII AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended at any regular or specially-called business meeting of the Church by a 2/3 vote of those present and voting, provided a quorum is present and voting, and provided that notice of such amendment stating the proposed change shall have been given to the Church on two consecutive Sundays.

ARTICLE XIII BUSINESS MEETINGS AND RULES OF ORDER

SECTION I – Annual Business Meeting

The Annual Business Meeting shall be held by the end of February each year. The primary purpose of the meeting shall be the election of officers, review of year-end financials, and adoption of the new year's annual budget.

SECTION II – Specially-Called Business Meetings

Specially-called business meetings may be called by the Senior Pastor or Chairman of the Board of Deacons giving the congregation at least one week notice thereof. In an emergency situation (i.e. a major fire involving the Church building, community disaster, etc.), a specially-called business meeting may be called at any time with the consent of the Executive Board of Deacons.

SECTION III – Quorum

Twenty-five (25) members shall constitute a quorum. A quorum, present and voting at an annual or specially-called business meeting shall be sufficient to decide any question presented unless otherwise provided by the Constitution.

SECTION IV – Qualification of Voters

All matters, as provided in Article VI, Section I, shall be voted on by members, eighteen years of age or older, present at the business meeting.

SECTION V – Rules of Order

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the business proceedings of this Church, except as otherwise provided for in this Constitution.

**ARTICLE XIV
DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH**

Should conditions prevail that the ministry of Washington Heights Baptist Church cannot continue, title to the assets shall be transferred to the Rocky Mountain Conservative Baptist Association, provided that: (a) no part of the net earnings shall be distributed or inure to the benefit of any individual; and (b) the assets shall be distributed to one or more organizations having like tax-exempt status and purposes in compliance with Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.

**ARTICLE XV
CONSTITUTIONAL INTERPRETATION**

When questions arise with regard to the interpretation of the Constitution, the decision of the Board of Deacons will be considered as the final authority.