

White River Christian Church, Inc.
Constitution and By-Laws

1685 North 10th Street
Noblesville, In 46060

As amended January 17, 1989
And then revised February 2, 2002
And then revised January 2008
As amended January 28, 2018

Preamble

We the directors of White River Christian Church, Inc., being a corporate body of Christian Faith and commitment, along with the members of White River Christian Church, in order to more effectively maintain this church in accordance with the principles and requirements based upon the commands of Jesus Christ found in the Bible, and to more adequately perform the duties and responsibilities of church administration and management, do hereby establish this Constitution and adopt the By-Laws as the Church's amended Articles of governance effective the 28th day of January, 2018 in compliance with the requirements of the Indiana Nonprofit Corporation Act of 1991. We enact this Constitution and Bylaws for guidance in the execution and procedures of all matters pertaining to the church.

These by-laws are to provide general guidance on organization, governance and operation; based upon biblical principles and practices. However, the ultimate authority for the Church's organization, governance and operation is the Bible. When a conflict or ambiguity exists concerning these by-laws, deference is to be given to the biblical reference to resolve the conflict or ambiguity.

Article I

Purpose, Property and Membership

A. Name and Purpose

This congregation shall be known as White River Christian Church (Matthew 16:18) (hereinafter referred to as "Church"). The purpose of the Church shall be to carry out the commands of Christ as suggested in the "Great Commission", using the Bible as its only Rule of Faith, Doctrine, and Life (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38-42). The Church exists to introduce people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, nurture and grow disciples and to always be Bible based, Christ centered and mission minded.

B. Principal Office and Property

The principal office of the Church is 1685 North 10th Street, Noblesville, Indiana 46060. The property owned by the Church in Noblesville, Indiana, can never be possessed or controlled by anyone outside the local congregation, and it, the

local Congregation, shall not obligate itself with any denominational organization (Ephesians 1:21-23).

C. Organization.

The Church was organized on March 3, 1976 under the Indiana Nonprofit Corporation Act of 1971 and has continued to operate as an Indiana Nonprofit religious organization since that date.

D. Membership Qualifications

To be a member of the Church, a person must:

1. Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Matthew 16:16; Acts 16:31)
2. Repent of the sin in their life (Acts 2:38; 2 Cor. 7:10)
3. Make a public confession of that faith (Romans 10:9-10)
4. Be baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:13-17, Matthew 28:18-20, Galatians 3:27)

One who wishes to transfer membership from a New Testament Church shall reaffirm their faith publicly, having previously conformed to the above requirements. Nothing in this Article I, Section C. shall limit the right of the Church to refer to persons qualifying under this section as “members”, however, no such reference to members in these By-laws shall constitute such person as a member within the meaning of the Indiana Nonprofit Corporation Act.

E. Member Expectations

Members shall seek to pattern their lives after Christ, as shown in the New Testament.

1. A member may be of any age; however, a member must be at least 16 years of age to vote
2. The responsibilities of members are described by, but not limited to, the following:
 - a) living in deep communion with Christ through personal prayer and study of the Scriptures
 - b) regular presence in corporate worship (1x per month minimum)
 - c) consistent financial contributions throughout the year
 - d) participation in a small group for the purpose of connecting in relationships and growing spiritually
 - e) service in an area of their spiritual giftedness and calling
 - f) commitment to and support of the vision of the Church
 - g) being accountable and submissive to the leadership of the Church
3. A member is an “Active Member” by fulfilling the qualifications and living out the expectations listed.

In an effort to properly reflect the current membership of the Church, membership records will be updated periodically, and members will have an active or in-active status as determined by the Leadership Team. This determination is based upon an individual’s level of involvement (as identified in Article I -D). An attempt

to reach in-active members will be made, and should an inactive member not respond to the Church's attempts to contact them, an inactive member may be removed from the membership roll at the discretion of the Leadership Team.

F. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be removed from the Church roll for the following:

- 1) death
- 2) transfer of membership to another church
- 3) by the personal written request of the member
- 4) removal by the Elders and/or Leadership Team based upon membership inactivity, or based on behavior that errs in biblical doctrine or conduct.

Article II
Church Leadership

A. Elders

The Church seeks to be a New Testament Church committed to the teachings of the Bible. No other authority or tradition is to guide the means, faith, or structure of the Lord Jesus Christ's Church. The pastoral and administrative structure for a New Testament Church is to utilize a plurality structure of leaders, consisting of, but not limited to elders, professional staff, lay leaders, etc. The Elders shall be accountable before God for the ultimate oversight of the Church.

The Elders shall also serve as the Board of Directors of the Church as defined under the Indiana Nonprofit Corporation Act and shall oversee, lead, shepherd, and care for the spiritual condition of the Church as set forth in the Bible and serve as the sole authoritative interpreter of Scripture. According to scriptural example, the Elders responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. **Shepherding / Pastoral Caregivers.** The elders are to care for the souls of the pastoral team and congregation by providing prayer covering, anointing the sick with oil, teaching, and mentoring of younger members of the Church.
2. **Protecting the Doctrine of the Church.** The elder's will ensure that the teaching and preaching ministry is firmly grounded in the sacred text of God's word (the Holy Bible).
3. **Overseeing / Stewarding.** As the spiritual overseers of the Church, the elders empower the mission and vision of the Church while approving the annual budget and financial direction of the Church.

Any man who is an active member of the church and 1) is 35 years or older 2) has been active at WRCC for 3 years or more and 3) has demonstrated maturity over an indeterminate period of time and meets the Biblical requirements as listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4 is eligible to serve as an elder. An elder shall be above reproach in his private and public life.

1. The Elders of the Congregation shall determine and have final decision on all matters that shall come before or pertain to this Congregation. All decisions must be by consensus of the body of Elders.
2. The selection process for an Elder is as follows
 - a. A Candidate for the position of Elder will be recommended to the Senior Pastor or the Elders by anyone from the congregation or from an elder.
 - b. Each candidate will complete an application and interview process with the body of Elders.
 - c. After prayerful consideration of the candidate and his family, the Elders will decide whether or not to recommend the candidate to the Congregation for approval as an Apprentice Elder.
 - d. Upon recommendation to the Congregation, the body will have the opportunity for a period of 30 days to voice any concerns about the individual's spiritual fitness and/or ability to serve as an Elder. Any/all concerns should be brought to the attention of the Point Elder. If any/all concerns are resolved by the Board of Elders, the candidate will begin to serve as an Apprentice Elder for a period of one (1) year minimum.
 - e. Following the period of apprenticeship, the candidate, with Elder approval, may then be recommended to the Congregation for ordination as Elder.
3. The Elders shall appoint a Point Elder from the body of Elders who shall serve as the President of the Board of Elders.
4. There shall be no term limit to the office of Elder.
5. Following three (3) years of service (or as approved by the body of Elders for special circumstances), an Elder shall take a sabbatical for a period of (1) year. Following this time of sabbatical, the returning Elder shall have his name placed before the congregation to be affirmed verbally. Any/all concerns about the individual's spiritual fitness and/or ability to continuing serving as an Elder should be brought to the attention of the Point Elder. If any/all concerns are resolved by the Board of Elders, the Elder will return to active service. A returning Elder would not be required to serve an apprenticeship.
6. The body of Elders shall be no less than six (6) nor more than fifteen (15), not counting the Senior Pastor, Apprentice Elder(s) or Elder(s) on sabbatical). If at any time the body of Elders is less than stated, a steering committee shall be established consisting of Pastors and key lay leaders. The responsibilities of the body of Elders will be held by the steering committee. The steering committee shall function only until the minimum number of Elders is ordained for the office.
7. The Elders will meet regularly for prayer and discussion about direction, vision and mission of the church. A quorum of 66% constitutes an official meeting. Meeting notes should be recorded and kept on file for review in the church office.
8. The Elders can hold special meetings as required or on the call of the Point Elder when 50% of the Elders are present, and shall consider 66% of the Elders as constituting a quorum at regular or special meetings.
9. The Elders shall be considered the legal trustees of the congregation.

B. Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor is an Elder and is also accountable to the Elders to lead the Church in such a way that she functions effectively as a New Testament Church, thereby achieving her stated vision and purpose. The Senior Pastor will provide a clear voice of leadership to the Church and be responsible for casting and communicating the vision, while preaching and teaching the Word of God so that lives can be authentically impacted by the Scriptures. He is to teach and exhort by precept and example. His objective is to help people come to Christ and grow in Christ through insightful and accurate presentation of the Word.

Compensation paid to the Senior Pastor by the Church is for services rendered as the Senior Pastor of the Church and is not to be considered for services rendered as an Elder. The Senior Pastor's service as an Elder is considered voluntary and noncompensatory.

The Senior Pastor shall be called following:

- a. The recommendation of a search committee
- b. Approval by the body Elders
- c. Affirmation by congregational vote at a "Special Meeting" by active members (Article I-D)

C. Ordained Pastors/Directors

The Church will be in need of additional ordained pastoral staff. The Leadership Team will prayerfully identify the ministry area needing additional staffing. The Lead Pastor and Ministry Team Leader will be responsible for leading and executing the search process. A candidate will be presented to the Elders for their counsel, and following the appropriate interviews and background investigations, will appoint this individual as a member of the staff. All Pastors/Directors will discharge the duties of their role as pastor/director as set forth in the New Testament and guidelines of job descriptions.

1. A Pastor is an individual who has been ordained by a local congregation/church leadership to serve as a spiritual shepherd and teacher to others.
2. A Director is an individual who has not been ordained but is providing pastoral leadership for a ministry area (and is not to be construed to mean "elder" as referenced in Article II, A.). Any present member, previous member, or individual significantly connected to this Church, who by his piety, zeal, and aptness to serve in full-time vocational ministry may apply for ordination as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Ordination is the formal declaration by the elders of the Church that the individual has effectively prepared to pursue Christian ministry as a vocation, and this individual sufficiently meets all standards and requirements for being recognized as a professional minister.
3. The following process is to be completed before the ordination of an individual by the Church.
 - a) An individual must submit a completed Ordination Application to the Senior Pastor and request to be ordained by the Elders.

- b) The Elders will interview the candidate to discern the level of biblical knowledge, theological understanding, and pastoral capability, and will interview the candidate's spouse/family for affirmation of calling.
- c) The Elders will ordain the individual, declaring such person to be a professionally equipped and prepared as a Pastor. The Church will provide the individual with the appropriate written credentials reflecting this declaration. The Church will maintain a relationship with all clergy ordained by the Church for the express purpose of further encouraging and observing the individual's quality of ministry.
- d) If for any reason of heresy, immorality or conduct unbecoming a Minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Elders of the Church maintain the right to revoke the ordination of the individual.

E. Non-Ordained Professional Staff

From time to time, the Church will be in need of additional assistance in ministry areas. These ministry demands can be met professionally by having non-ordained staff members assist the Church in the specific ministry area. The Leadership Team locates a likely candidate for the position, and following appropriate interviews and background investigations, appoints the individual to the staff. No Elder approval is required but the Elders may review all hires as necessary.

F. Non-Paid Ministry Directors/Coaches/Leaders

All non-paid ministry leaders must meet the scriptural qualifications for deacons (i.e.,servants) as listed I Timothy 3:8-13.

1. Ministry Directors/Coaches/Leaders shall coordinate and administrate the ministry areas of the Church. They shall serve as leader/servants in an area to which they are called. They shall lead in nurturing existing ministries, as well as identifying and developing new ministries in their areas of responsibility. They shall also lead in selecting people from among the active servants in their ministry to lead in specific ministries.
2. Ministry Directors/Coaches/Leaders will be chosen by the staff, from those who have distinguished themselves in their gifted areas. They are to be gifted in the ministry area(s) they will lead and be full of faith and the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:1-6, Romans 16:1-2; I Timothy 3:8-13).
3. The term of service will be determined by the willingness of the individual to continue in service and their faithfulness in leading the ministry, and shall be subject to periodic review by the appropriate staff member.
4. All volunteers over the age of 18 who are working with children under the age of 18 are required to complete and pass a criminal background check before serving in a ministry area.

Article III
Church Meetings

A. Congregational Meeting

A Vision Weekend shall be held within thirty-days (30) following the end of the calendar year. The meeting shall be for the purpose of:

- a. Reports on the mission and vision of the Church
- b. Presentation of the elder approved budget

B. Special Meetings

The Board of Elders may call a special meeting of the congregation when necessity requires.

C. Voting

At any meeting of the congregation where voting is required, a two-thirds vote of the “active members” (as described in Article 1, Section D and E) present shall constitute a quorum, provided that appropriate and sufficient notice (verbal and/or written) of such meeting and its subject matter has been given the “active members” of the congregation.

A vote of the active members of the Church shall be required as set forth in this section for the following:

1. The calling of a Senior Pastor – vote shall be by private written ballot and a two-thirds vote of the active members present shall constitute a quorum

Article IV
Operational Processes

The Church shall maintain adequate and accurate books and records of accounts (i.e., financial records); minutes of meetings; records of membership including names, addresses and contribution records of individuals. All such records shall be kept at its principal place of business, and the safekeeping of the records shall be the responsibility of the Operations Director..

A. Organizational, Policy and Procedural Manuals

These manuals have been prepared as a guide to all who serve in leadership positions at the Church. Their purpose is to aid in the effective and efficient functioning of individuals and groups and to optimize the fulfilling of the purpose of the Church. They provide guidelines and summary information about the Church’s organizational structure and ministry operations. The Leadership Team, who is the primary body who oversees the Church’s day to day operations, are empowered by the Elders to create processes and policies for effective ministry activity.

B. Inspection of Records, Reports and Documentation

Every active member shall have the absolute right, at any reasonable time, to inspect all records, reports, and documentation; with the exception of personnel salaries and records, contribution records, meeting minutes of a sensitive nature, and counseling records.

C. Employment Records

Terms of compensation and benefits for all employees shall be in writing and reviewed at least once each calendar year. (see Employment Handbook for all HR policies and procedures).

D. Fiscal Calendar

The fiscal year for the Congregation shall be January 1 through December 31 of each year.

E. Core Beliefs

The Elders will provide and distribute a list of core doctrines of White River Christian Church based on the teaching of the Bible.

Article V
Indemnification

The Church shall indemnify an Elder, employee, officer, committee member, or agent of the Church who was, is, or may be named defendant or respondent in any proceeding as a result of his or her actions or omissions within the scope of his or her official capacity in the Church. An agent includes one who is or was serving at the request of the Church as an Elder, officer, partner, venturer, proprietor, trustee, partnership, joint venture, sole proprietorship, trust, employee benefit plan, or other enterprise. However, the Church shall indemnify a person only if he or she acted in good faith and reasonably believed that the conduct was in the Church's best interest. In a case of a criminal proceeding, the person may be indemnified only if he or she had no reasonable cause that the conduct was unlawful. The Church shall not indemnify a person who is found liable to the Church or is found liable to another on the basis of improperly receiving a personal benefit. A person is conclusively considered to have been found liable in relation to any claim, issue, or matter if a court of competent jurisdiction has adjudged the person liable and all appeals have been exhausted

Article VI
Amendments

- A. These constitution and bylaws may be amended (with exclusion of the Purpose, Property, and Membership in Article I) by the complete agreement of a quorum of the Board of Elders (see Article II A. 7.) of Church.

Article VII
Resolution

At a duly called Congregational meeting of White River Christian Church, Inc., which was held on the 6th day of October, 1974, the majority of the church members present and voting at said Congregational Meeting adopted the following resolution as being both expressive of the will of, and also binding upon, such

Congregation and its property.

“BE IT RESOLVED” that the White River Christian Church, Noblesville, Indiana, hereby goes on record as declaring, in unmistakable terms, that under no circumstances, shall said Congregation ever surrender, by merger, absorption, or otherwise, its historically independent and unequivocally undenominational position in Christendom, nor its strictly congregational policy, that is to say, its God given and Bible centered right, as well as its inherent authority, to govern its own affairs in accordance with the New Testament, without interference by any outside authority, ecclesiastical or otherwise”.

Article VIII
Construction

These Bylaws will be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Indiana. Any references in the Bylaws to statutes, regulations, or other sources of legal authority will refer to the authorities cited, or their successors, as they may be amended from time to time. If any Bylaw provision is held to be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable in any respect, the invalidity, illegality, or unenforceability will not affect any other provision and the Bylaws will be construed as if the invalid, illegal, or unenforceable provision had not been included in the Bylaws. The headings used in the Bylaws are used for convenience and will not be considered in constructing the terms of the Bylaws.

I certify that I am the Point Elder (President) of the Elders of White River Christian Church and that the foregoing Constitution and Bylaws constitute the Constitution and Bylaws of the Church. These Bylaws were duly adopted by the consent of the Elders (Directors) of the Church and by a majority vote of the active members this ____ day of _____, 2018.

Point Elder/President
Elders (Directors) of White River Christian Church, Inc.