

# **BYLAWS OF Wellington Church**

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## **Preamble**

From its inception, Wellington Church has operated with the conviction that Christ is the Head of His church (Ephesians 4:15–16; 5:23–24). Furthermore, Wellington has acknowledged that Christ's Headship is administered through those whom the Lord has given responsibility to serve as elders/overseers of His flock (1 Peter 5:1–4). The elders' responsibility of oversight must be exercised in the spirit of Christlikeness and in humble submission to the Bible.

In keeping with this desire to be faithful stewards of the believers who comprise the body of Christ, the elders of Wellington have established By-laws for the purpose of defining legally the biblical purpose, doctrine, and governance of the church. These By-laws are meant to serve as a clarifying and protective measure for those who worship as the body of Christ at Wellington. As a measure of clarity, they serve to articulate the way the church functions in an orderly manner. For instance, all of the decision-making authority biblically rests upon the elders which is in keeping with the scriptural conviction of Christ's Headship as articulated above. Furthermore, the By-laws set forth the guidelines and requirements for a person to be recognized and accepted into membership, as well as the biblical procedure to deal with an unrepentant member who is damaging his life and witness through ungodly behavior (church discipline).

The By-laws serve as an internal guide for matters of how the church operates, and yet also functions to provide legal protection by being forthright and clear on matters of church polity. Also, relevant cultural matters such as human sexuality and marriage are biblically defined in an appendix. Because of this, the document is meant to be read as a technical legal document. These By-laws identify and clarify Wellington Church's overall goal of being faithful to Christ, and in no way are meant to supplant Wellington's commitment to Christ's authority in His Word. On the contrary, these By-laws will hopefully serve to protect and maintain Wellington's commitment to biblical ministry in the years ahead.

## **Article 1**

### **Name, Standing, and Location of Offices**

Originally incorporated as Wellington Christian Church, but now operates with the name Wellington Church of Nicholasville, Kentucky. Wellington Church is an autonomous local church and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational interference or control. Recognizing the benefits of associating with like-minded believers and churches, Wellington Church will cooperate with like minded churches at the spiritual discretion of the Elders. It is a Kentucky nonprofit religious corporation with its principal offices in Nicholasville, KY.

## Article 2

### **Purpose**

This Corporation is organized exclusively for religious purposes (including charitable purposes common to a pastoral church ministry as defined by Scripture). Wellington Church exists to promote God's glory by proclaiming Christ, preparing believers, and pursuing the lost.

Wellington exists to:

1. *Promote God's Glory*

- As a local gathering of Christians, we exist to exalt our worthy God (Eph 1:5–6, 12–14; 3:20–21; 2 Thess 1:12). We do this individually by seeking to live prayerfully and obediently unto God. We also prioritize gathering corporately each Lord's Day to demonstrate our dependence upon Him through prayer, song, fellowship, the ordinances, and the teaching of His Word (Acts 2:42).

2. *Proclaim Christ*

- The great evidence of a transformed heart is a Spirit enabled dependence and delight in Christ (1 Thess 2:13). The expression of our dependence and delight in our Savior is demonstrated in careful attention to His Word, the Bible. We warmly embrace the necessity of regular exposition of the Bible as the primary means by which believers grow in knowledge and love for Christ (2 Tim 2:15; 3:16–4:4).

3. *Prepare Believers*

- Even as our Lord served, so we are called to serve. We desire to see the whole body serving each other and their community in ways that demonstrate their transformed lives. To this end, we aim to teach and counsel that every member of the body would be equipped to serve Christ in a way that the whole church is edified (Eph 4:11–16).

4. *Pursue the Lost*

- Even as Christ came to seek & save the lost, so we are called to bring the gospel to the nations. To this end we seek to faithfully proclaim the gospel of grace to our community and partner with others who labor around the world in the same cause (Matt 28:19–20).

## Article 3

### **Statement of Faith**

The Statement of Faith below represents key doctrinal matters which Wellington holds to and teaches. While this statement is foundational to our belief and practice, the Bible in its entirety is the final rule of our faith and practice.

## **THE HOLY SCRIPTURES**

Wellington accepts, acknowledges and teaches the Bible, and thus the sixty-six books of the Bible as God's divine revelation to man (1Cor. 2:7-14; 2 Pet 1:20, 21), verbally inspired in every word (2 Tim. 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed. The Holy Spirit overshadowed the human authors that through their individual personalities and different styles of writing they composed and recorded God's Word to man (2 Pet. 1:20, 21) without error (Mt. 5:18; 2 Tim. 3:16).

While there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is found by diligently applying the literal grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 17; 16:12-15; 1Cor 2:7-15; 1John 2:20). It is a true Christian's responsibility to ascertain the true intent and meaning of Scripture, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations. The truth of Scripture stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it.

The Bible constitutes the infallible rule of faith and practice for Christians both as individuals and as His church (Mt. 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12, 13; 17:17; 1 Cor 2:13; 2Tim 3:15-17; Heb 4:12; 2Pet. 1:20, 21)

## **THE ETERNAL LORD**

There is but one living and true God (Dt 6:4; Is 45:5-7; 1Cor. 8:4), an infinite, all-knowing Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, and eternally existing in three Persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19; 2Cor 13:14) equally deserving worship and obedience.

## ***GOD THE FATHER***

God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own holy purpose and grace (Ps 145:8, 9; 1Cor. 8:6). He is the Creator of all things (Gen 1:1-31; Eph 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent ruler of the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Ps. 103:19; Rom. 11:36). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Eph 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1Chron. 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (Hab 1:13), nor does He reduce the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1Pet. 1:17). Though He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Eph. 1:4-6) He saves from sin all who come to Him through Christ's atoning death at the cross (John 1:12; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:5; Heb 12:5-9).

## ***GOD THE SON***

Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father (John 10:30; 14:9). God created “the heavens and the earth and all that is in them” according to His own will, through Christ by whom all things continue in existence and in operations (John 1:3; Col 1:15-17; Heb 1:2). Through the incarnation (God becoming man) Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence. The eternally existing Christ accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and became the God-man (Phil 2:5-8; Col 2:9). Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Mic 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9, 10; Col 2:9). He was virgin born (Is 7:14; Mt. 1:23; 25; Lk 1:26-35) God incarnate (John 1:1, 14). The purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God’s kingdom (Ps 2:7-9; Is 9:6; John 1:29; Phil 2:9-11; Heb 7:25, 26; 1Pet 1:18-19). In the incarnation, Christ laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes (Phil. 2:5-8). Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death at the cross and His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (John 10:15; Rom 3:24, 25; 5:8; 1 Pet 2:24).

By the efficacy of the death of Christ, the believing sinner is freed from punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin; and is declared righteous, given eternal life and adopted into the family of God (Rom 3:25; 5:8,9; 2Cor 5:14, 15; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18). Our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and His ascension to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High-Priest (Mt 28:6; Lk 24:38, 39; Acts 2:30, 31; Rom 4:25; 8:34; Heb 7:25; 9:24; 1John 2:1). Through the resurrection of Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of Christ and gave proof He has accepted His atoning work at the cross. His bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers (Jn 5:26-29; 14:19; Rom 4:25; 6:5-10; 1 Cor. 15:20, 23). Christ will one day return to receive the church, which is His body, unto Himself and will establish His kingdom (Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 20). Christ is the one through whom God will judge all mankind (John 5:22, 23): believers (1 Cor 3:10-15; 2 Cor 5:10); living inhabitants on the earth at His glorious return (Mt. 25:31-46); and unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Rev 20:11-15). As the mediator between God and man (1Tim 2:5) and the head of His body (the church; Eph. 1:22; 5:23; Col 1:18) He is the final judge of all who reject trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Mt 25:14-46; Acts 17:30, 31).

## ***GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT***

The Holy Spirit is divine, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity, including intellect (1 Cor 2:10-13), emotions (Eph 4:30), will (1Cor 12:11), eternality (Heb 9:14), omnipresence (Ps 139:7-10), omniscience (Is 40:13, 14), omnipotence (Rom 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13). The work of the Holy Spirit is to execute the divine will in the creation (Gen 1:2), the incarnation (Mt 1:18), the written revelation (2Pet 1:20, 21) and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7).

The unique work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16, 17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the establishment of the church. His activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, of judgment; and transforming believers into the image of Christ (John 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Rom 8:29; 2Cor 3:18; Eph 2:22). The Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ (1Cor 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Rom 8:9-11; 2Cor 3:6; Eph 2:22).

The Holy Spirit also administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays, but glorifies Christ by redeeming the lost and building up believers in holy faith (John 16:13, 14; Acts 1:8; 1Cor 12:4-11; 2Cor 3:18). The gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost that enabled the apostles to speak in other languages and to perform miracles was for the purpose of authenticating them as the revealers of divine truth, and was never intended to be characteristic of all believers (1Cor 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2Cor 12:12; Eph 4:7-12; Heb 2:1-4). With the passing of the apostolic age and the completion of the canon of Scripture there is no longer need for such signs since man can determine today who speaks for God by comparing their teaching with God's revelation in His Word. This does not mean the Lord no longer does miracles in response to the prayers of His people, it just means there is no need for the Holy Spirit to do them through His messengers to publicly validate His Word or His work.

## **MAN**

Man was created by God in His image and likeness, free of sin with rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Gen 2:7, 15-25; Jas 3:9).

God's intention in the creation of man was that he should glorify Him, enjoy His fellowship, live within His holy will, and accomplish His divine purposes (Is 43:7; Col 1:16; Rev 4:11).

Through Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence; incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death; became subject to the wrath of God; and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of reconciling himself to God apart

from divine grace. Man is hopelessly lost, thus his salvation is wholly dependant upon God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gen 2:16, 17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Rom 3:23; 6:23; 1Cor 2:14; Eph 2:1-3; 1Tim 2:13, 14; 1John 1:8).

## **SALVATION**

Salvation is solely by God's grace through the merit of Christ's shed blood and not on the basis of human effort or works (John 1:12; Eph. 1:4-7; 2:8-10; 1Pet 1:1,2).

Salvation is an act of God whereby before the foundation of the world He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies (Rom 8:28, Eph 1:4-11; 2Thes 2:13; 2Tim 2:10; 1Pet 1:1,2). This sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Eze 18:23, 32; 33:11; Jn 3:18, 19, 36, 5:40; 2Thes 2:10-12; Rev 22:17). All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Lord will receive (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; Jas 4:8). While God is sovereign, He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Rom 9:11-16). This sovereignty will always exalt the holy will of God in a manner totally consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Mt 11:25-28; 2Tim 1:9).

## **REGENERATION**

Regeneration is a supernatural work by which divine nature and divine life are given (Jn 3:3-8; Titus 3:5) to repentant sinners by the power of the Holy Spirit through the use of God's Word (John 5:24), which enables them to respond in faith to the salvation Christ secured for them at the cross. This regeneration is made evident by fruits demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct (1Cor 6:19, 20; Eph 5:17-21; Phil 2:12b; Col 3:12-17; 2Pet 1:4-11). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of Christ (2 Cor 3:18) which is climaxed in their glorification at Christ's return (Rom 8:16, 17; 2Pet 1:4; 1John 3:2, 3).

## **JUSTIFICATION**

Justification is an act of God (Rom 8:30, 33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Lk 13:3; Ac 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Rom 2:4; 2Cor 7:10; Is 55:6,7) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Rom 10:9,10; 1Cor 12:3; 2Cor 4:5; Phil 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Rom 3:20; 4:6) and is the result of Christ's atoning death at the cross (Col 2:14; 1Pet 2:24) and the imputation of His righteousness to those He has redeemed and reconciled (1Cor 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2Cor 5:21). By this God is the "just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Rom 3:26).

## **SANCTIFICATION**

Every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification which is the maturing of the believer as he brought into the likeness of Christ through obedience to the Word of God by the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:32; 1Cor 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2Thess 2:13; Heb 2:11; 3:1; 10:10,14; 13:12; 1Pet 1:2; John 17:17; Rom 6:1-22; 2Cor 3:18; 1Thess 4:3,4; 5:23).

Every person redeemed by Christ is involved daily in the conflict between their new nature in Christ and the old flesh in which they remain incarcerated. This struggle never completely ends. All claims to the total eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural (Gal 5:16-25; Phil 3:12; Col 3:9, 10; 1Pet 1:14-16; 1John 3:5-9).

## **SECURITY**

All those Christ redeems are kept by God's power and are secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom 5:9,10; 8:1,31-39; 1Cor 1:4-9; Eph 4:30; Heb 7:25; 13:5; 1Pet 1:4,5; Jude 24); therefore, we rejoice in the assurance of our salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an excuse for sinful living and carnality (Rom 6:15-22; 13:13,14; Gal 5:13,16,17, 25, 26; Tit 2:11-14).

## **THE CHURCH**

All who place their faith in Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united body, the church (1Cor 12:12, 13), the bride of Christ (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:23-32; Rev 19:7, 8), of which Christ is the head (Eph 1:22; 4:15; Col 1:18). The body of Christ began on the day of Pentecost (Ac 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ (1Cor 11:2; Eph 5:23-32; Rev 19:7, 8). The church is a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Eph 2:11-3:6) and is distinct from Israel (1 Cor 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Eph 3:1-6; 5:32).

The supreme authority for the church is Christ (Eph 1:22, Col 1:18) and church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in Scripture. Biblically designated male leaders are Elders also called bishops, pastors, and pastor-teacher; Acts 20:28; Eph 4:11) and deacons, both of whom are to meet biblical qualifications (1 Tim 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9; 1Pet 5:1-5). They lead as servants of Christ (1Tim 5:17-22) using the authority of His Word for all decisions and the congregation is to follow their leadership (Heb 13:7, 17).

The autonomy of the local church should be free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or



organizations (Tit 1:5). However, it is scriptural for churches to cooperate with one another for the presentation and propagation of the faith (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1Cor 5:4-7, 13; 1 Pet 5:1-4).

The purpose of the church is to glorify the Lord (Eph 3:21) by growing in the faith (Eph 4:13-16), through instruction in the Word (2Tim 2:2, 15; 3:16,17), fellowship (Acts 2:47; 1John 1:3), proper observance of the ordinances (Lk 22:19; Acts 2:38-42), and by communicating the good news of God's redemption of fallen man to all the world (Mt 28:19; Acts 1:8).

With regards to the ordinances there are two that have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42).

## **BAPTISM**

One of the ordinances, water baptism, is meant to be an outward expression of an inward reality. Its purpose is to visibly and publicly express what has hopefully taken place invisibly and privately in the life of one who has been *born again* by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8-10).

Water baptism is meant to identify new Christians with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:1-10; Colossians 2:12). It outwardly symbolizes the cleansing of sin that has taken place in the life of a believer and their deliverance from sin's just punishment (Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:20-21).

Both Christ and the apostles commanded believers to be baptized (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38). For this and other reasons, some have wrongly concluded that water baptism is a necessary step for getting saved. However, Scripture is clear that the means of our salvation is the grace of our Lord who saves us through faith in the One who satisfied His just wrath at Calvary, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-10).

A believer must therefore be immersed into Christ in order to be justified before a holy God; however, we must never *replace* the substance of baptism (being born again in Christ) with the symbol of water baptism, lest we give false assurance to those who are not true Christians but believe they are saved because of their obedience to a sacrament.

It is important to understand that being immersed into Christ is essential for salvation and while the symbol of that reality does not nor cannot save us, it is still an important ordinance of the church because it is an obedient and visible proclamation of the Christian's redemption.

That is why we hold to credo-baptism through the mode of immersion. Credo-baptism simply refers to the fact that we are only to baptize those who have confessed a genuine faith in Christ as Lord. This is often referred to as a believer's baptism. The clear pattern of Scripture is that faith in Jesus Christ always preceded baptism (Acts 2:38-41; 8:12; 9:18-19; 10:44-48; 16:14-15, 29-36; 18:8; 19:1-7; 22:16; Galatians 3:27). Therefore, we do not hold to the baptism of infants

or children who have not first confessed a saving faith in Christ but would encourage them to receive water baptism after coming to faith.

The other clear pattern of Scripture is that baptism was done by immersion (Acts 8:36-39; Mark 1:15; John 3:22-23; Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10). While some churches have adopted a mode of pouring or sprinkling, water baptism by immersion is clearly the mode taught by Scripture. In the Greek text, the Word used for baptize is *baptizo* which literally means “to immerse” or “to dip”. Because immersion is the normative mode of baptism in Scripture and because it is critical for the Christian to be completely immersed into Christ as a new creation, we hold to water baptism by immersion so that the symbol properly corresponds to the reality.

## **THE LORD’S SUPPER**

The Lord’s Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He returns and should always be preceded by solemn self-examination (1Cor 11:23-32). Though the elements of communion are only representatives of the body and blood of Christ, the Lord’s Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ who is present, fellowshiping with His people (1Cor 10:16). It is our practice to take the Lord’s Supper weekly because we want Jesus’ death to be the focus of our time together because His death is what makes us acceptable to a holy God.

## **THE RETURN OF CHRIST AND ETERNAL DESTINIES**

We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 24:44; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 4:16; 2 Thess 1:5–10; Rev 1:7). The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to holy living, sacrificial service and energetic mission (2 Peter 2:10–13). We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace (Rev 20:11–21:4). Amen.

### **Article 4**

## **Corporate Membership**

### **Section 1. Corporate Directors**

The Corporate Directors, if any, on file with the Commonwealth of Kentucky, shall consist of a President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

The office of Corporate President shall be held by the Chairman (Chairman, here refers to the Elder having the responsibility of leading in meetings) of the Board of Elders (We do not here refer to the group of Elders to imply any sort of correlation to the secular business board model).

The Corporate Secretary shall be appointed by the Board of Elders. The office of Corporate Secretary may be, but is not required to be held by the Secretary of the Board of Elders.

The Corporate Treasurer shall be appointed by the Board of Elders and shall be responsible for the financial accounting in the church as described more fully in Article 7.

## **Section 2. Members of the Church**

The Corporation as a legal entity shall have no members. However, at the discretion of the Board of Elders, the Corporation may use the term “member” for those who agree to the membership covenant of the church. “Member” in that sense shall refer only to affiliation with the spiritual purposes of the church and shall not confer any legal privilege to act in a corporate capacity, vote for the election of corporate officers, participate in any decision on corporate dissolution or the disposition of corporate assets, or participate in any decision on changes to the Corporation’s Articles, By-laws, or Statement of Faith.

## **Article 5**

### **Church Membership**

#### **Section 1. Purpose of the Fellowship**

Those individuals who applied for church membership and have been duly accepted shall constitute a spiritual body, united for the spiritual purposes set forth in these By-laws.

#### **Section 2. Active Membership**

Church membership in Wellington Church shall be open to all persons who give credible testimony of conversion to Christ, have experienced believer’s baptism in Christ, symbolized by water baptism, and who agree to come under the authority of Christ as their Head through obedience to His Word.

#### **Section 3. Membership Privileges**

Church membership shall not vest anyone with any voting or proprietary rights in the Corporation but shall only entitle the church member to participate in a meeting of church members on those matters that the Elders choose to submit to the church membership for participation or affirmation. In such cases, attendance privileges are restricted to church members who are in good standing, who are not under any disciplinary action, and who have regularly attended over the preceding year.

The Elders, at their sole discretion, may choose to exclude any person from a church meeting if they deem it advisable for the orderly conduct of the meeting.

Membership shall not be assignable inter vivos by any church member, nor shall that membership vest to any personal representative, heir, or devisee.

#### **Section 4. Applications for Membership**

Anyone wishing to apply for membership shall notify an Elder or any individual designated by the Elders to facilitate membership inquiries. Applicants shall be given an application for membership, along with a copy of the church's By-laws, including the Statement of Faith.

To be received into membership, applicants shall (1) provide credible testimony of their conversion to Christ; (2) have experienced believer's baptism, symbolized by water baptism; and (3) who agree in writing that they will (a) support and abide by the Statement of Faith and the By-laws and (b) manifest biblical submission to the Elders.

#### **Section 5. Denial of Membership**

If, upon review of an application for membership the Elders, in their sole discretion, determine that the applicant should not be received into membership, membership shall be denied. The decision made by the Elders shall be final and there shall be no appeal to any legal, secular, or ecclesiastical authority.

#### **Section 6. Admission of Applicants**

Applicants admitted to membership shall present themselves at a worship service designated by the Elders, at which service such applicants shall publicly affirm their membership commitment and be publicly acknowledged and received as church members.

#### **Section 7. Responsibilities of Members**

Church members shall regularly attend the scheduled worship services of the church, support the church financially as their means allow, pray for the leadership and ministries of the church, exercise their spiritual gifts for the mutual benefit of all within the church body, cultivate biblical godliness in their homes and private lives, and manifest biblical submission to the Elders who serve as under-shepherds of Christ Who is the Head of the church.

#### **Section 8. Church Discipline**

Church discipline is a biblical process designed to address unrepentant sin which becomes known in the church body.

(a) The threefold purpose of church discipline is to (1) glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6), (2) edify believers by deterring sin (1 Timothy 5:20), and (3) call the offending believer to repent and return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).

(b) Members of this church (and other professing Christians who regularly attend this church) who promote heretical teaching or engage in unrepentant sin as determined by the Elders, shall be subject to church discipline according to Matthew 18:15–18.

In keeping with Matthew 18:15–17 and Galatians 6:1–2, church members who have knowledge of another member's promotion of heretical teaching or unrepentant sin may warn the individual in private and seek his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring individual does not heed this warning, then the warning church member may go to the erring individual accompanied by one or two other members and again seek his repentance and restoration. The accompanying members shall serve as witnesses to the discussion. These first and second warnings should be separated over time.

If the erring individual still refuses to heed this warning, then the matter may be brought to the attention of the Elders (or a duly appointed Elder or committee of Elders). If, in their sole discretion, the Elders determine that there is corroborating evidence that the erring individual is promoting heretical teaching or is otherwise refusing to repent, the Elders may inform members of the church in order that members who love the Lord and this individual may, through prayer and counseling call the erring individual to repentance.

If the erring individual demonstrates repentance, their fellowship shall be reinstated by the Elders. If, however, the erring individual does not repent in response to the church in its collective call to repentance, then the Elders may publicly dismiss the individual from membership and/or the fellowship of the church.

The erring individual may be restored to membership only upon demonstration of repentance, received at the sole discretion of the Elders, and upon such conditions as the Elders determine acceptable. The decision made by the Elders shall be final, and there shall be no appeal to any legal, secular, or ecclesiastical authority.

(c) Nothing in the foregoing shall restrict the discretion of the Elders to proceed directly to the third stage of church discipline (i.e., informing church members so the church may call the erring individual to repentance) or to the fourth stage of church discipline (i.e., the dismissal from membership and/or the fellowship of the church), if in the sole discretion of the Elders the issue is (1) public and has the potential to bring reproach on the gospel or (2) the disciplined party has disseminated heretical teaching in disregard of the direction of the Elders.

(d) Individuals whom the Elders deem guilty of factious and divisive conduct may also be subject to dismissal from membership and/or the fellowship of the church in accordance with Titus 3:10–11. The approach to such individuals shall be handled according to the sole discretion of the Elders. The decision made by the Elders shall be final and there shall be no appeal to any legal, secular, or ecclesiastical authority.

(e) The members of this church, those applying for membership in the church, and all other individuals who regularly attend or fellowship with this church, agree that there shall be no

appeal to any court because of dismissal from the church or because of statements made in the course of church discipline.

(f) The Elders grant church membership only on the condition that the individual forfeits and waives the right to resign from membership if he or she is approached by the Elders regarding a matter subject to church discipline. Resignations from membership are possible only by church members who are in good standing and who are not under the process of church discipline.

(g) Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, and at the sole discretion of the Elders (or an individual appointed by the Elders), any individual, including a church member, may be notified that he or she is not to be present on church premises for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the physical or spiritual well-being of others. Such required absence may, but need not, be concurrent with church discipline of that person.

(h) Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, the name of any church member who has not attended a worship service for a period of three months or longer may be removed from the membership rolls at the sole discretion of the Elders after they have been contacted and every effort is made to address either spiritual or physical needs that have separated them from their worship and service of the Lord at Wellington.

## **Section 9. Special Meetings**

Special meetings of church members may be called at any time by the Preaching Pastor or by two-thirds of the Elders.

## **Section 10. Notice of Meetings**

Notice of special meetings shall be verbally made from the pulpit at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting and shall also be published if possible on Sunday(s) immediately preceding the meeting.

## **Section 11. Quorum**

At all meetings of church members, the church members present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

## **Section 12. Voting Rights**

Church members do not constitute a body with authority over the Elders. They cannot conduct a binding vote of any kind on any doctrinal, pastoral, operational, or financial matters of the church, nor pass resolutions binding upon the church. All such authority resides with the Elders, who serve as under-shepherds of Christ, Who is the Head of His church. Church members also shall not have any equity in the real property of the Corporation, or rights to vote on its disposal.

## Article 6

### Elders

#### Section 1. Powers

All the activities and affairs of the Corporation shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Elders, responsible for shepherding and having oversight of the flock. Without prejudice to such general powers, but subject to these same limitations, it is hereby expressly declared that the Elders shall have the following powers in addition to the other powers enumerated by these By-laws:

- (a) To select or remove the Corporate Directors; to select and remove all officers, agents, pastors, and employees and prescribe such duties for them consistent with the Scriptures, civil authority, the Articles of Incorporation, or these By-laws; and fix the terms of their offices and their compensation.
- (b) To make such disbursements from the funds and properties of the Corporation as are required to fulfill the purposes of this Corporation, to conduct, manage, and control the activities and affairs of the Corporation, and to make such rules and regulations as they may deem best for the operation of the Corporation.
- (c) To adopt, make and use a corporate seal, and to alter the form of such seal from time to time as they may deem best.
- (d) To establish policies and practices for the church consistent with the purposes of this Corporation.
- (e) To assist the Preaching Pastor in the administration of the ordinances of baptism and communion. Current Elders in good standing are also authorized to solemnize marriages.
- (f) To borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purposes of the Corporation and to execute and deliver in the corporate name, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, deeds of trust, mortgages, pledges, hypothecations, or other evidences of debt and securities.
- (g) To apply any financial proceeds from church collections or activities to further the purposes of the Corporation.

#### Section 2. Number of Elders

The number of Elders at any given time shall be determined by the existing Elders.

### **Section 3. Nomination, Selection, and Tenure of Office**

The Elders shall appoint additional Elders at their sole discretion, with the advice of church membership as deemed appropriate by the Elders. The newly appointed Elders shall assume service at a time determined by the existing Elders. Elders shall serve for as long as they are able, provided they maintain the biblical qualifications for service as described in the next section.

The Elders may appoint a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer at their sole discretion, with duties to be defined from time-to-time by the Elders.

### **Section 4. Qualifications**

The office of Elder is limited to men who are active members of the church and possess the biblical qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9.

### **Section 5. Resignation**

An Elder may resign by giving written notice to the Preaching Pastor or Elders.

### **Section 6. Removal of Elders**

An Elder may be removed from office if he is found to be physically or mentally incapacitated or biblically disqualified after investigation by the Elders. If an Elder is removed because of sin that is deemed sufficient to disqualify him from shepherding, the remaining Elders may rebuke him publicly if the remaining Elders deem such action to be biblically warranted.

### **Section 7. Regular Meetings**

Regular meetings of the Elders shall be held at such times and places as determined by the Elders. At their sole discretion, the Elders may at any time designate a portion of a regular meeting to be open to church members for observance or participation.

### **Section 8. Special Meetings**

Special meetings of the Elders may be called at any time by the Preaching Pastor or by two-thirds of the Elders.

### **Section 9. Notice of Special Meetings**

Special meetings of the Elders shall occur with a minimum notice of forty-eight (48) hours given personally by telephone, text, email, or similar means of communication. Notice may be waived with consent of the current Elders.



## **Section 10. Quorum**

Except as otherwise provided herein, a majority of the Elders currently serving shall constitute a quorum. The act or decision done or made by the Elders present at a regular or special meeting duly held at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Elders.

## **Section 11. Participation in Meetings by Conference Telephone**

Elders may participate in a meeting through the use of conference telephone or similar communications equipment so long as all members participating in such meeting can hear one another.

## **Section 12. Adjournment**

A majority of the Elders present may adjourn any Elders' meeting to another time and place. Notice of the time and place of holding an adjourned meeting need not be given to absent Elders if the time and place is fixed at the meeting adjourned, except as provided in the next sentence. If the meeting is adjourned for more than forty-eight (48) hours notice of any adjournment to another time or place shall be given prior to the time of the adjourned meeting to the Elders who were not present at the time of the adjournment.

## **Section 13. Rights of Inspection**

Every Elder shall have the right, upon reasonable notice, to review all books, records, and documents and to inspect the physical properties of the Corporation of which such person is an Elder, for a purpose reasonably related to such person's interest as an elder.

## **Section 14. Decisions of the Elders**

Decisions of the Elders shall be reached after prayerful consideration by unanimous consensus in a spirit of humility, with each Elder regarding one another before himself.

## **Section 15. Committees**

Committees of the Elders may be appointed by resolution of the Elders. Committees shall be composed of two or more Elders and shall have such powers of the Elders as may be expressly delegated to it by resolution of the Elders.

## **Section 16. Fees and Compensation**

Elders shall not receive any stated or fixed salary for their services, except for pastors serving as vocational pastors. However, nothing herein contained shall be construed to preclude Elders from serving in any other capacity and receiving compensation in that capacity.

## Article 7

### **Other Offices**

#### **Section 1. Deacons**

The Elders may, at their sole discretion, appoint biblically-qualified deacons to assist the Elders in the administrative, operational, or pastoral care of the church, after they have been carefully, prayerfully and fully vetted for doctrinal faithfulness and Christian maturity.

#### **Section 2. Ministry Leader Selections**

Any ministry leader shall serve at the pleasure of the Elders. Each shall fulfill his or her responsibility until they resign, are removed, become disqualified to serve, or until their successor is selected.

#### **Section 3. Subordinate Officers**

The Elders may appoint, and may empower officers as the business of the Corporation may require, each of whom shall do so for a specified period and perform such duties as are provided in the By-laws, or as the Elders may from time to time determine.

#### **Section 4. Removal and Resignation**

Any officer may be removed upon disqualification as determined by the Elders. Any officer may resign at any time without prejudice to the rights, if any, of the Corporation under any contract to which the officer is a party, by giving written notice to the Preaching Pastor or Elders. Any such resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of such notice, or at any later time specified therein.

#### **Section 5. Vacancies**

A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or any other cause shall be filled in the manner prescribed in the By-laws for regular appointments to such office, provided that such vacancies shall be filled as they occur, and are not required to be filled on an annual basis.

#### **Section 6. Inability to Act**

In the case of absence or inability to act of any Corporate Director, officer of the Corporation, or any person herein authorized to act on behalf of the Corporation, the Elders may from time to

time delegate the powers or duties of such person to any other officer or person whom the Elders may select.

### **Section 7. Chairman of the Elders**

The Chairman of the Elders shall be the President of the Corporation and shall, subject to the oversight of the Elders, have general supervision of the activities of the Corporation and the Corporate Directors. He shall preside at all meetings of the Elders, which are to be conducted according to scriptural principles. He shall be an ex officio member of all the standing ministries, if any, and shall have powers and duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Elders or the By-laws.

### **Section 8. Secretary of the Elders**

The Secretary of the Elders (not to be confused with the Corporate Secretary) shall record the minutes of all Elders' meeting. The Secretary of the Elders shall give, or cause to be given, notice of all meetings of the Elders and any ministries thereof required by these By-laws or by law to be given, shall keep the seal of the Corporation in safe custody, and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as prescribed by the Board. The Secretary of the Elders shall be responsible to keep, or cause to be kept, a church membership register showing the names of church members and their addresses.

### **Section 9. Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall ensure the stewardship of the physical and financial resources of the Corporation. The Treasurer shall ensure that all financial activities and transactions are consistent with these By-laws and are above reproach in the eyes of the Board of Elders, the church membership, and civil authority.

The Treasurer shall keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of the Corporation. The books of account shall at all reasonable times be open to inspection by any Elder. The Treasurer shall deposit, or cause to be deposited, all monies and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the Corporation with such depositories as may be designated by the Elders. He shall disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of the Corporation as may be ordered by the Elders, shall render, or cause to be rendered, to the Chairman and the Elders, whenever they request it, an account of all the transactions and of the financial condition of the Corporation, and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Elders. He shall make, or cause to be made, regular financial reports that accurately reflect the financial condition of the Corporation.

## Article 8

### **Ordination, Licensing, and Commissioning**

#### **Section 1. Ordination of Vocational Pastors**

Ordination refers to the unanimous recognition by the Elders of a man's call to the ministry, preparation as a shepherd, and qualification to serve. Ordination shall be conferred for life, so long as the man continues to manifest the qualifications of the ministry. It is limited to those who have adequate training for ministry and are regularly preaching the Word at the time of their ordination.

## Article 9

### **The Preaching Pastor**

#### **Section 1. Selections**

The Preaching Pastor and all other vocational pastors, shall be selected and confirmed by the Elders at their sole discretion. They shall remain in ministry an indefinite period of time subject to the following reservations: the Elders reserve the right to dismiss them upon providing a minimum one month's written notice of their intention to dismiss. Each vocational pastor must give at minimum of one month's notice if he intends to resign. The time limit of a pastor's resignation or dismissal is subject to a lesser time if by mutual agreement between them and the Elders.

#### **Section 2. Duties**

The Preaching Pastor shall be a member of the Elders and accountable to them. He, or a designated member of the vocational ministerial team, shall arrange for and conduct all public worship services of the church and shall be responsible for general oversight of the spiritual welfare of the church. If there is not a Preaching Pastor currently serving, the Elders shall be responsible to arrange for the public worship services of the church.

## Article 10

### **Other Provisions**

#### **Section 1. Endorsement of Documents, Contracts**

The Elders, except as in the By-laws otherwise provided, may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized by the Board of

Elders, no officer, agent or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the Corporation by any contract or agreement, or to pledge its credit, or to render it liable for any purpose or to any amount.

Subject to the provisions of applicable law, any note, mortgage, evidence of indebtedness, deed, conveyance, and any assignment or endorsement thereof executed or entered into between the Corporation and any other person, when signed jointly by the (1) the Corporate President and (2) the Corporate Treasurer, shall be valid and binding on this Corporation in the absence of actual knowledge on the part of the counterparty or counter parties that the signing officers had no authority to execute the same.

## **Section 2. Instruments in Writing**

All checks, drafts, demands for money and notes of the Corporation and all written contracts of the Corporation shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents, as the Elders may from time to time by resolution designate.

## **Section 3. Amendments**

The practical and/or functional operations described within the By-laws may be amended and new and additional By-laws may be made from time to time by the Elders in the exercise of the power granted by these By-laws; however, any changes made to the doctrinal convictions outlined within Article 3 of these By-laws concerning the nature of the inerrant Scripture, the Godhead including the divinity and humanity of Christ, and biblical matters of soteriology, must be made so as to give greater clarity and conformity to biblical truth, and in no way remove or alter the current doctrinal affirmations.

Any proposed amendments to the By-laws shall be introduced at a regularly scheduled Elders' meeting for consideration and discussion. To facilitate notice and deliberation, amendments may not be brought up for discussion at the same meeting in which they are introduced.

## **Section 4. Record of Amendments**

Whenever an amendment or new By-law is adopted, it shall be copied in the book of minutes with the original By-laws, in the appropriate place. If any By-law is repealed, the fact of repeal with the date of the meeting at which the repeal was enacted or written assent was filed shall be stated in said book.

# **Article 11**

## **Receipt, Investment, and Disbursement of Funds**

### **Section 1.**

The Corporation shall receive all monies or other properties transferred to it for the purposes for which the Corporation was formed (as shown by the Articles of Incorporation). However, nothing contained herein shall require the Board of Elders to accept or receive any money or property of any kind if it shall determine in its discretion that receipt of such money or property is contrary to the expressed purposes of the Corporation as shown by said Articles.

## **Section 2.**

The Corporation shall hold, manage, and disburse any funds or properties received by it from any source in a manner that is consistent with the expressed purposes of this Corporation.

## **Article 12**

### **Corporate Records and Reports**

#### **Section 1. Records**

The Corporation shall maintain adequate and correct accounts, books, and records of its business and properties. All such books, records, and accounts shall be kept at its principal place of business.

#### **Section 2. Fiscal Year of the Corporation**

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31 of each calendar year.

## **Article 13**

### **Dissolution**

Upon dissolution of this Corporation, the Elders shall cause the assets, after meeting all obligations to vocational pastors and/or others the church owes, to be distributed to another Corporation with purposes similar to that identified in Article 2 of these By-laws and Article 8 of the Articles of Incorporation as amended.

## **APPENDIX ON BIBLICAL SEXUALITY AND MARRIAGE**

The following principles and guidelines regarding biblical sexuality and marriage are designed to ensure that Wellington Church operates in a manner consistent with the Word of God.

### **Section 1.**

Each human being is created in the image of God as either male or female, a gender that is encoded genetically and manifested physiologically prior to birth. Marriage is the union of one man and one woman. The family units thus formed on these principles provide the foundation of civil society.

### **Section 2.**

Any effort to violate the creative order of God by attempting to modify or transform human gender is sin. Since marriage is biblically defined as between one man and one woman, all homosexual or polygamous unions are sinful. Beyond marital standards, sexual sin includes, but is not limited to, premarital sexual relations, extramarital sexual relations, incestuous relations, pornography, bestiality, and pedophilia. Persons engaged in such violations of God's Law, like all sinners, should be called to turn from their sin and seek forgiveness through repentance and faith in Christ.

### **Section 3.**

Participation in any program or activity of this church that is limited to individuals of one sex is exclusively limited to individuals who are persons of that sex. Access to facilities that are designated for use by only one sex is exclusively limited to individuals who are persons of that sex. In complying with these guidelines, individuals should not violate the sovereign act of God in their birth gender by intentionally presenting their physical features or dress to be that of the opposite sex.

### **Section 4.**

Persons who are actively and unrepentantly engaged in any sinful practice or practice that contradicts or undermines the doctrinal standards of this church are not eligible for membership. Similarly, active and unrepentant engagement in any sinful practice or practice that contradicts or undermines the doctrine of this church is grounds for church discipline, up to and including excommunication. A practice is sinful when it is contrary to the teachings of the Holy Bible.

### **Section 5.**

Except as a vendor or independent contractor, in order to be eligible for employment at the church, the applicant or employee must be a member of the church. Since a purpose of the

church is to teach and instill biblical values, and because every employee of the church is a representative of the church, in order to be eligible for employment at the church the applicant shall not be actively engaged in unrepentant sin and shall not be perceived to undermine or contradict, through his or her actions, behaviors, or speech, the tenets of the Bible and the doctrines of this church.

#### **Section 6.**

Church ministers, members, and staff shall not use their title, position, or ordination in a way that contradicts or undermines the teachings of this church and the Holy Bible by, including but not limited to, officiating over or solemnizing weddings or ceremonies joining more than two people or two people of the same gender.

#### **Section 7.**

Neither property nor facilities owned or controlled by this church (or used with permission obtained by the church) shall be used or permitted to be used for any activity or speech that is contrary to any stated or implied doctrine or religious belief or practice of this church.

#### **Section 8. Weddings and Funerals**

The church actively seeks to minister to the surrounding community by making its facilities available for Biblical weddings and funerals. A wedding or a funeral of non-members is permitted only insofar as the ceremony comports with the teachings of the Holy Bible and the doctrinal standards of this church. If it becomes evident that a wedding or funeral does not or will not comply with the teachings of the Holy Bible and the doctrinal standards of this church, the church may, within its sole discretion, cancel or modify the event, so as to comport with the teachings of the Holy Bible and church doctrinal standards. In no event shall an unbiblical ceremony be permitted to proceed.