

Wildwood Baptist Church  
Constitution

Preamble

The name of this organization shall be Wildwood Baptist Church of East Moline, Illinois. We, the members of Wildwood Baptist Church, do ordain and establish the following articles to which we voluntarily submit ourselves. The date of this document is March 24, 2019, and it will be in effect from that date forward, after having been properly voted for and passed as hereinafter set forth, and at least one copy signed by every member of the executive board has been filed with the Church Clerk.

Articles

**Article I Faith**

**A. Of Our Objective**

To glorify God by fulfilling the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that Jesus Christ has commanded.

**B. Of The Church**

We believe that the church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers (a) associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel; (b) observing the ordinances of Christ; (c) governed by His laws; and (d) exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word; (e) that its officers are Pastors who have been ordained, and Elders whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures; (f) we believe the true mission of the Church is found in the Great Commission. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19) (g) We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only superintendent is Christ, through the Holy Spirit; (h) that it is scriptural for the true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel; that every church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; (i) on all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final.

(a) Acts 2:41-43

(b) I Cor. 11:2; Acts 2:42

(c) Eph. 1:22-23

(d) Eph. 4:11; I Cor. 12:4; 8-11

(e) Acts 14:23; 6:5-6; 15:23; 20:17-28; I Tim. 3:1-7; 8-13

(f) Matt. 28:19-20

(g) Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23-24; I Pet. 5:1-4

(h) Acts 15:22; Jude 3-4; II Cor. 8:23-24; I Cor. 16:1; Mal. 3:10, Lev. 27:32; I Cor. 16:2

(i) I Cor. 6:1-3; 5:11-13

### **C. Of Our Ordinances**

We believe that Christian baptism is (a) the immersion in water of a believer; (b) in the Name of the Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit; (c) to show faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; (d) and that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation. We believe in participating in the Lord's Supper from time to time in which (e) the members of the body of Christ by the sacred use of bread and cup are to commemorate the dying love of Christ, preceded always by solemn self-examination.

(a) Acts 8:36-39; Matt. 3:6; John 3:23; Rom. 6:4-5

(b) Matt. 28:19

(c) Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12

(d) Acts 2:41-42; Matt. 28:19-20

(e) I Cor. 11:23-30

### **D. Of The Scriptures**

We believe that the Holy Bible (a) was written by men supernaturally inspired; (b) has truth without any admixture of error for its matter, and (c) therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man, the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried. By The Holy Bible, we mean the collection of sixty-six books, from Genesis through Revelation, which, as originally written, does not contain and convey the Word of God, but IS the very Word of God. By Inspiration, we mean that the books of the Bible were written by holy men of old as they were moved by the Holy Spirit in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally inspired and free from error, as no other writings have ever been or ever will be inspired.

(a) II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:19-21; Acts 1:16; 28:25

(b) Ps. 119:105; 130, 160; Luke 24:25-27, 44-45; John 17:17

(c) Ps. 119:39; Prov. 30:5-6; Rom. 3:4; I Pet. 1:23; Rev. 22:19; John 5:39, 45-47, 12:48; Isa. 8:20; Eph. 6:17; Rom. 15:4; Luke 16:31; Ps. 19:7-11

### **E. Of The True God**

We believe that there is one, and only one living and true God, (a) an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth; (b) inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; (c) that in the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

(a) Ex. 20:2-3; Gen. 17:1, I Cor. 8:6, Eph. 4:6; John 4:24; Ps. 83:18; 90:2; 147:5; Jer. 10:10

(b) Ex. 15:11; Rev. 4:11; I Tim. 1:17; Rom. 11:33; Mark 12:30

(c) Matt. 28:19; John 10:30, 15:26, 17:5; I Cor. 2:10-11 12:4-6; I John 5:7; Acts 5:3-4; Phil. 2:5-6; Eph 2:18; II Cor. 13:14

## **F. Jesus Christ**

We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man. He has (a) always existed as eternal God the Son. While retaining (b) His absolute deity, He became and remained a perfect man, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He (c) died on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice for our sins according to the scriptures. He (d) rose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of God the Father, He is (e) now our High Priest and Advocate. He is the Head of His body, the Church, and ultimately, (f) every knee will bow to Him and confess that He is Lord.

- (a) John 1:1; Col 1:15-17
- (b) Luke 1:35; Phil 2:5-8
- (c) I Cor. 15:3
- (d) I Cor. 15:4; Acts 1:9; Heb. 1:3; Heb. 4:15; I John 2:1
- (e) Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18
- (f) Phil. 2:9-11

## **G. Of the Holy Spirit**

That the Holy Spirit is a divine person; (a) equal with God the Father and (b) God the Son and (c) of the same nature; (d) that He was active in the creation; (e) that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the Evil One until God's purpose is fulfilled; (f) that He bears witness to the truth of the gospel in preaching and (g) testimony; (h) that He is the agent in the new birth; (i) that He seals, baptizes, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, and helps the believer.

- (a) John 14:16-17
- (b) Matt. 28:19
- (c) Heb. 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35
- (d) Gen. 1:1-3
- (e) II Thes. 2:7
- (f) John 16:8-11
- (g) John 15:26-27; Acts 5:30-32
- (h) John 3:5-6
- (i) Eph. 1:13-14; Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; 24:49; John 1:33; 14:26; 16:13; Acts 11:16; Rom. 8:14, 16, 26-27; II Thes. 2:13; I Pet. 1:2

## **H. Of The Devil or Satan**

We believe that Satan was once (a) holy and enjoyed heavenly honors; but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty One, fell and (b) drew after him a host of angels; that he is now (c) the malignant prince of power of the air, and the unholy god of this world. (d) We hold him to be man's great tempter, (e) the enemy of God and His Christ, (f) the accuser of the saints, (g) the author of all false religions, the chief power back of the present apostasy; (h) the lord of the anti-Christ, and (i) the author of all powers of darkness destined, however, (j) to final defeat at

the hands of God's Son, and (k) to the judgment of an eternal justice in a place prepared for him and his angels.

- (a) Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:14-17
- (b) Rev. 12:9; Jude 6; II Pet. 2:4; Eph. 2:2; John 14:30
- (c) I Thess. 3:5; Matt. 4:1, 3
- (d) I Pet. 5:8
- (e) Zech. 1:3; I John 3:8; Matt. 13:25; 37-39; Luke 22:3-4
- (f) Rev. 12:10
- (g) II Cor. 11:13-15; Mark 13:21-22
- (h) I John 4:3; 2:22; II John 7
- (i) Rev. 13:13-14; II Thess. 2:8-11
- (j) Rev. 12:7-9; 19:11, 16, 20; 20:1-13
- (k) Rev. 20:10; Matt. 25:41

### **I. Of The Creation**

We believe in the Genesis account of creation, and (a) that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively; (b) that man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness; (c) that man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher forms; (d) that all animal and vegetable life was made directly, and God's established law was they should bring forth only after their kind.

- (a) Gen. 1:1; Ex. 20:11; Acts 4:24; 17:23-26; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 11:3; John 1:3; Rev. 10:6; Rom. 1:20; Jer. 10:12, Neh. 9:6
- (b) Gen. 1:26-27; I Cor. 11:7
- (c) Gen. 2:7; 21-23
- (d) Gen. 1:11; 24

### **J. Of The Fall Of Man**

We believe (a) that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker, but (b) by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state, (c) in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but of choice; and (d) therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse.

- (a) Gen. 3:1-6, 24
- (b) Rom. 5:12-19
- (d) Rom. 1:20, 28, 32; Gal. 3:22

### **K. Of The Virgin Birth**

We believe (a) that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner; (b) born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever or can ever be born of woman, and (c) that he is both the Son of God, and God, the Son.

- (a) Gen. 3:15
- (b) Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; Mark 1:1; John 1:14; Ps. 2:7; Gal. 4:4
- (c) I John 5:20; I Cor. 15:47

### **L. Of The Atonement For Sin**

We believe (a) that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace (b) through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin honored the divine law by His personal obedience and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; (c) that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinners place, the Just dying for the unjust; Christ, the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; (d) that, having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven, and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior.

- (a) Eph. 2:8; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24
- (b) John 3:16; Matt. 18:11; Phil 2:7; Heb. 2:14; Isa. 53:4-7; Rom. 3:25; I John 4:10; I Cor. 15:3; II Cor. 5:21
- (c) John 10:18; Phil. 2:8; Gal. 1:4; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; Isa. 53:11; Heb. 12:2
- (d) I Cor. 15:20; Isa. 53:12; Heb. 7:25; 9:12-15; I John 2:2

### **M. Of Grace in The New Creation**

We believe (a) that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; (b) that the new birth is a new creation in Jesus Christ; (c) that it is instantaneous and not a process; (d) that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; (e) that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, not by character, not by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; (f) that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.

- (a) John 3:3
- (b) II Cor. 5:17
- (c) Luke 5:27; I John 5:1; John 3:6-7; Acts 2:41; 16:30-33
- (d) II Pet. 1:4; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1; II Cor. 5:19; Col. 2:13
- (e) John 3:8; 1:12-13
- (f) Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9

### **N. Of The Freeness Of Salvation**

We believe (a) in God's electing Grace; (b) that the blessings of salvation are made free to all in the gospel; (c) that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and (d) that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his

own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; (e) that such rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

- (a) I Thess. 1:4; Col. 3:12; I Pet. 1:2; Titus 1:1; Rom. 8:29-30
- (b) Matt. 11:28; Isa. 55:1; Rev. 22:17; Rom. 10:13; John 6:37
- (c) Isa. 55:6; Acts 2:38
- (d) Isa. 55:7; John 3:15-16; 5:40; I Tim. 1:15; I Cor. 15:10; Eph. 2:4-5
- (e) John 3:18, 36

### **O. Of Justification**

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is Justification; (a) that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; (b) that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works or righteousness which we have done; but solely through faith in the Redeemers blood whereby His righteousness is imputed unto us.

- (a) Acts 13:39; Isa. 53:11; Zech. 13:1; Rom. 5:1, 9; 8:1
- (b) Titus 3:5-7; Rom. 1:17; 4:1-8; Heb. 2:4; 10:38; Gal. 3:11

### **P. Of Repentance And Faith**

We believe that repentance and faith are (a) solemn obligations, and (b) also inseparable graces, (c) wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God; (d) thereby, being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession and supplication for mercy; (e) at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our only and all-sufficient Savior.

- (a) Acts 20:20
- (b) Mark 1:15
- (c) Acts 2:27-28
- (d) Luke 18:13; Rom. 10:13; Ps. 51:1-4, 7; Isa. 55:6-7
- (e) Luke 12:8; Rom. 10:9-11

### **Q. Of The Perseverance Of The Saints**

We believe (a) that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; (b) that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; (c) that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and (d) that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation.

- (a) John 8:31-32; Col. 1:21, 23
- (b) I John 2:19; Matt. 13:19-20
- (c) Rom. 8:28; Matt. 6:30; Ps. 121:3; Heb. 1:14
- (d) I Pet. 1:15; Phil. 1:6; John 10:28-29; 16:8; Rom. 8:35-39

## **R. Of The Righteous And The Wicked**

We believe that (a) there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; (b) such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of God, are truly righteous in His esteem; (c) while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse; (d) this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting joy of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost.

(a) Mal. 3:18; Gen. 18:23; Rom. 6:17-18; Prov. 11:31; I Pet. 4:18

(b) Rom. 1:17; I Cor. 15:22; Acts 10:34-35; I John 2:29; 3:7; Rom. 6:16

(c) I John 5:19, 3:7; Gal. 3:10; Rom. 6:23; 7:6

(d) Prov. 14:32; Luke 9:26; 16:25; Matt. 7:13-14; 25:34, 41; John 8:21; 12:25

## **S. Of The Return Of Christ**

We believe in the personal, bodily return of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, at the end of this present age. Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:10-11; Titus 2:11-14

## **Article II Authority**

The authority is vested in the Executive Board duly elected by the body of believers of which the church is composed, subject to conditions as hereinafter set forth.

## **Article III Annual and Special Meetings**

A. The fiscal year of the church shall be from September 1 through August 31 of each year. The church officers shall take office on April 1 of each year and hold office for a term as set forth in this constitution. (Two regular business meetings of the church shall be held; one during the months of September and March in the church building at which time shall occur the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting, all reports, and all other necessary business of the church.)

These meetings must be announced on two consecutive Sundays immediately preceding the appointed day. The election of church officers shall be at the March meeting. The Church Clerk shall keep the minutes, and the meeting shall be governed by Parliamentary rules. The meeting shall be conducted by the Chairman of the Executive Board or in his absence by the Vice-Chairman.

The church members shall elect all officers by ballot, and a majority of all votes shall be required to elect. If a majority vote is not cast on the first ballot the two nominees with the highest number of votes will become the nominees on the next ballot. The church may be called together for the transaction of any legitimate business by the Pastor, by the Chairman of the Board, by a majority vote of the Board, or by a resolution setting forth the nature of the business to be considered and signed by thirty percent (30%) of the membership.

Dates of all such special meetings shall be set by the Chairman of the Board within thirty (30) days after having received such a request provided that notice of such meetings shall be given on two consecutive Sundays immediately preceding the day appointed.

#### **Article IV License to Preach**

We believe that from time to time Spirit-filled men will be called out from among us to proclaim the Gospel of the Grace of God. Such men may be given a license to preach by a two-thirds vote of the church members present, provided the Board is unanimous in their convictions that the candidate has considerable gifts, and provided that their judgment is based upon actual experiential success, rather than their hopes of what he may do, and provided this experience shall be for one (1) year. After one (1) year, it may be renewed for such length of time as the Board may decide.

#### **Article V The Executive Board**

All executive power shall be vested in the Executive Board consisting of lay elders and vocational elders (pastors) as voting members, the Church Clerk and the Church Treasurer. Lay elders will carry at least a plus-one majority in the overall number of elders. A quorum must participate (two-thirds of elders) to entertain a vote. Voting is governed by a  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote, with the goal of reaching unanimity. All Elders have equal voting privileges, with the exception outlined in Article VI, D and E. A regular meeting shall be held each month in the church at such time as may be agreed upon and announced by the Board. The Elders shall elect one of their members as Chairman and one of the members as Vice Chairman in April of each year. The Chairman of the Executive Board shall be responsible for and have the authority to sign all legal documents for Wildwood Baptist Church.

#### **Article VI Church Officers**

There is one office of church leader in the Bible: that of elder/overseer/shepherd (pastor). These titles are used interchangeably in the New Testament; Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Ephesians 4:11

For purposes of this document, the title of Pastor is reserved for those elders who have been ordained by a church or denomination of like faith. However, it is recognized that all biblical elders are equal in value, authority, and accountability before our Lord.

As those who are accountable to God, the elders' role as encouragers, teachers, and preachers aid and train people in all functions of the ministry. All elders will adhere to a standard of unity, transparency, and collaboration with one another. By nature of their gifting, call, skills, and compensation, vocational elders (pastors) will carry a greater share of ministerial responsibilities. They will be encouraged to operate within their gifting and collaborate with one another, while striving to maximize collaboration amongst all elders.



The Executive Board may appoint task-specific committees in order to make recommendations to the Executive Board (i.e. Pastoral Search Teams, Budget Committee) or execute tasks upon guidance from the elders (i.e. Missions Committee, Service Ministry Team). Elders may participate in any committee to provide guidance and direction.

A. By nature of the position, the Lead Pastor is the primary vision-setter for the church and carries primary responsibility for the preaching ministry of the church. He will be subject to a job description as provided by the Executive Board. (Evaluation process is outlined in Article VI, G)

B. All other vocational elders (pastors) will be subject to a job description as provided by the Executive Board. (Evaluation process is outlined in Article VI, G)

C. Elders are responsible for the creation, approval, and oversight of all church ministries, committees, organizations, activities, and facilities. They may not sell, mortgage or otherwise encumber church property without a proper vote of the Executive Board, and the consent of a two-thirds vote of church members present called together for that special purpose. Vacant seats may be filled by appointment by the Executive Board until the next member election if vacancies leave less than the plus-one majority.

D. Vocational elders (pastors) will not be involved in discussions or votes regarding other vocational elders' salaries, nor vote regarding their own.

E. Vocational elders (pastors) will recuse themselves from votes concerning any vocational elder (pastor) discipline.

F. In order to be elected, all elders must be determined to satisfy the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. All elders must be willing to adhere to Wildwood Church's Constitution, vision, and policies.

G. Elders may be removed from their seats for behavior or beliefs that do not align with Wildwood's Constitution, and/or for ineffectiveness of ministry. The discipline process will follow the instructions laid out in 1 Timothy 5:19-20, 2 Timothy 4:2, Titus 1:9, and Matthew 18:15-17. Lay elders may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Board, not counting the lay elder subject to removal. Removal of a vocational elder (pastor) must be upon the recommendation of the Executive Board and affirmed by a two-thirds vote of church members casting a proper vote.

H. The Treasurer shall be elected for a two year term. The Treasurer shall hold and disperse funds as approved by the Executive Board. The Treasurer and the Chairman of the Board shall be signers on all accounts. Monthly reports shall be submitted to the Board. Reports shall be made available to the congregation at each Semi-annual meeting. Audits will be conducted at the discretion of the Executive Board.

I. The Clerk shall be elected for a two year term. The Clerk shall keep a record of all business transactions of all Congregational and Executive Board meetings. The Chairman and the Clerk shall sign all approved minutes. Records of all meetings shall be kept at the Church after approved by the Board or congregation, as appropriate.

## **Article VII Election of Board Members**

The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Executive Board, subject to the approval of the Executive Board. Appointment should give sufficient time to seek input from the congregation and gain approval of nominees by the elders. Executive Board members are elected by a two-thirds vote of members present casting a proper vote.

## **Article VIII Church Membership**

A. Voting Membership. Full membership will be issued to an individual who has:

- (1) Publicly professed their faith in Jesus Christ
- (2) Been baptized by immersion (This requirement may be satisfied by the experience of a former baptism by immersion in a church of like faith.)
- (3) Reached fifteen years or older in age
- (4) Completed the application process designated by the Executive Board.
- (5) Been interviewed and approved by the elders.
- (6) Affirm Wildwood's Constitution and Church Covenant by signing the Membership Application and affirmation of Constitution.
- (7) A vocational elder or ministry director will become a member of Wildwood at the time when the congregation votes to call him or her, or at the time of their hiring. His or her spouse will become a member of Wildwood at that time, provided they meet the other requirements for membership. Their children will follow the membership process outlined in the Constitution.

B. Receiving of New Members. All new member applicants shall become members when received by the congregation at the reading of the Church Covenant at a regular Sunday Service. The following Church Covenant is to be read:

We affirm our Constitution with all its Articles of faith and polity because we believe they summarize both a knowledge and belief of the truth necessary for sound doctrine and required for Christian fellowship. We do not intend by this affirmation to set aside or undervalue any of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, but we believe the Bible to be God's own written Word, given to us through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In seeking to follow Jesus as Lord and the instructions of God's Word, we pledge together in the power that only the Holy Spirit supplies to keep away from evil desires because they fight against our souls; we will get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of malicious behavior; and we will be kind to each other, forgiving each other, just as God through Christ has forgiven us.

We will every time we get the opportunity, do good to everyone, especially to our Christian brothers and sisters; we will remember and appreciate our church leaders who teach us the Word of God, taking a good look at the way they live, and let their faithfulness as well as truthfulness teach us; we will give as generously as we can in relation to income, not reluctantly or in response to pressure, because God loves the person who gives cheerfully. (Then the new members are welcomed into membership.) Voting privileges begin at this time.

1 Peter 2:11; Ephesians 4:31-32; Galatians 6:10; Hebrews 13:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7

C. Continuing Membership - Membership continues indefinitely on the basis of a members participating in the services of the church by attendance, contributions, and communications. A six month lapse in the regular participation of a member will result in removal from the rolls of the church except for the conditions listed below:

1. Members temporarily leaving the area must keep the church informed of their whereabouts through correspondence with the Church Clerk or Pastoral Staff every six months. "Temporarily" will be defined by Board Policy.
2. The Executive Board may make exceptions for members not participating due to health, physical disability, or other special situations. To prevent a membership from lapsing, the elders will attempt to contact the person involved to determine the reason for their absence and try to encourage them to renew their regular participation in the services of the church or to move their membership to a church of like faith. The person's name will be removed from the rolls of membership if they do not renew their regular participation after being contacted by the elders, or if the elders are unable to contact the person after making reasonable efforts to locate and contact them.

D. Church Discipline - It is part of the ministry of this church to encourage and equip its members to live in accordance with the teachings of the Scriptures and our Articles of Faith and Polity. Where a member is found to live or teach in a manner contrary to the Scriptures and/or Articles of Faith and Polity, the church shall seek to lovingly restore the erring member to truth and fellowship. If there is no repentance, church discipline shall be carried out according to biblical guidelines (e.g., Matthew 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1; 1 Cor. 5; Titus 3:10; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:14-15; James 5:19-20; 2 Cor. 2:5-11).

**E. Dispute Resolution.** We believe differences or conflicts should bring receptivity to change and growth, not litigation. We believe that the Bible commands us to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian church (see Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 6:1-8). Therefore, by signing the Membership Application and affirming the Church Covenant, members agree to resolve any claim or dispute arising from or related to this Constitution by biblically-based mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration. Venue will be the State of Illinois and jurisdiction will be under Illinois law. Judgment upon an arbitration decision may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction, in conformity with the laws of Illinois. Notwithstanding this provision, to protect the church, Wildwood maintains liability insurance. Therefore, this conflict provision is conditioned upon agreement by Wildwood's insurers that, in light of the particular facts and circumstances surrounding the disputed matter, this provision, and the process it establishes, will not diminish any insurance coverage maintained by the church.

## **Article IX** Position Statement on Gender, Marriage, Sexuality, and Family

A. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27; Matt 19:4.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive, union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. God has planned the family as the first institution of the world. It is made up of persons joined to one another by marriage, as previously stated, blood, or adoption. Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, Wildwood Church will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, the elders and licensed staff of Wildwood Church shall only officiate marriages between one man and one woman. Finally, the facilities and property of Wildwood Church shall only host weddings between one man and one woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (1 Cor 6:9- 10)

B. The husband and wife are of the same worth before God. Both are created in God's likeness. (Gen 1:26-28; 2:15-25.) The marriage relationship shows the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given duty to provide for, to protect, to guide his family and seek to honor his wife by living with her in an understanding way. (Ephesians 5:21-33; 1 Peter 3:7) A wife is to submit herself with kindness to the servant leadership of her husband. A wife submits just as the church willingly submits to the leadership of Christ. (Ephesians 5:21-33; 1 Peter 3:1- 6)

C. Children, from the moment of creation, are a blessing and inheritance from the Lord. (Psalm 139:13- 16; Psalm 127:3-5) Parents are to show to their children God's example for marriage. Parents are to teach their children biblical values. Parents are to guide their children to make choices based on truths in the Bible. Parents are to guide their children by living a life faithful to God. Parents are to guide their children with loving discipline. (Deuteronomy 6:6-7, Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:4) Children are to respect and obey their parents. (Ephesians 6:1)

D. We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5)

E. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11) We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Wildwood Church.

## ADDITIONAL REFERENCES RELATED TO BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE FAMILY

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 128; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Isaiah 49:1; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; Matthew 15:18-20; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7

### **Article X Changes**

The church may make any change in this document which seems necessary. Such changes not originating with the Executive Board must be submitted in the form of a written resolution, signed by thirty per cent (30%) of the membership, to the Executive Board in time for their consideration at a regular meeting of the Board prior to the date of the special, annual, or semi-annual meeting. If, after due consideration, the Board favors by a majority vote to present the proposed changes to the church, notice will be given as set forth in Article III, Section C, and a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) vote of the church members present in favor of the changes will cause them to be adopted into and considered a part of this document.