

# WITS END CHURCH CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

*Ratified: February 22, 2009*

## ARTICLE I NAME & ADDRESS

The name of this organization shall be WITS END CHURCH.

Office Address: 15217 11<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE Shoreline WA 98155

## ARTICLE II STATEMENT OF FAITH

**Ultimate reality consists in one God**, an infinite “sweet society” eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All things ultimately derive their existence from Him. His desire is that the will and life of all beings would come into loving harmony with His.

**God the Father** is an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. His creative agency lies behind all things. He concerns himself mercifully in the affairs of each person, He hears and answers prayer, and He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

**Jesus Christ**, the most influential person in human history, is the eternal son of God; true god and true man. He came from heaven by the power of the Holy Spirit; he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death, was buried and descended into hell. On the third day He rose again in accordance with the scriptures. He is presently alive in bodily form in heaven reigning over and holding together all things. He will come again in glory to fulfill the kingdom and judge the living and the dead.

**The Holy Spirit** comes from the Father and Son to indwell believers in Jesus thereby helping, teaching and guiding them toward what Jesus would be and do if He were they. As such the Holy Spirit regenerates, purifies, and empowers all believers in Jesus.

**The Scriptures**, both Old and New Testaments, are the inspired Word of God, received and delivered by each human writer without error concerning "teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness". They are our sole authority concerning what is real, who is well off, what a good person is like, and how one becomes a good person.

**Men and women**, spiritual beings created in God's image, exist to love and serve Him and each other. However, they have fallen through disobedience in thought, word and deed, and have incurred a sinful nature and disposition leading to physical and spiritual death, which is separation from God.

**All who change their lives and trust Jesus Christ** are born from above by receiving the Holy Spirit; justified by faith that his blood sacrifice satisfies the holiness and justice of God.

**God invites us to live** in a spirituality in which all of the aspirations of every human heart for welfare and for being a good person can be realized. This consists of the fruits and gifts of the Spirit, manifested as the

believer follows the life pattern (i.e., "way") of Christ in spiritually disciplined activity and endures daily trials. This results in a life lived to the full, loving God and others in holy and effective participation in the kingdom of God, for the glory of God.

All who are born from above by the Holy Spirit comprise **the universal church**, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head. Its localized expression devotes itself to presenting and living the way of Christ as knowledge of redeemed human nature and disposition within the Trinitarian reality. This is demonstrated through our worship, prayer, ministry of the Word, fellowship, participation in baptism and the Lord's Supper, and thoughtful, open-minded proclamation of the gospel to our world.

**Water baptism** by immersion in the name of the triune God is the believer's profession of faith. Baptism symbolizes our solidarity with Jesus in his death and resurrection.

**Participation in the Lord's Supper** by the believing community commemorates the death of Christ until He returns. Communion symbolizes our sharing of Jesus's body and blood in his death and resurrection.

**Jesus Christ will return** to the earth personally, visibly, gloriously and imminently. The souls of all who have ever lived will be resurrected in body for his evaluation of them--for the just, to the everlasting joy of His presence, but for the unjust, to everlasting separation from Him.

### ARTICLE III PURPOSE STATEMENT & CORE VALUES

#### **Purpose**

Together we seek to live and enjoy the co-mission of Jesus.

#### **Core Values**

We desire to co-create a multi-cultural, Christ-compelled community who gathers rhythmically to share, engage and be known in a safe and accepting environment. (Community)

We believe that by listening to God and responding to the movement of the Spirit we will become a living organization, nurturing natural and spiritual growth in community and leadership. (Administration)

We agree to embrace one another as family honoring each child, woman, and man as ourselves and encouraging proportionate participation according to our abilities and capacities (Family)

We affirm that Biblical and relevant-to-community teaching will serve to reveal and make known the depth of God's truth. (Teaching)

We agree to be a people committed to manifesting God's kingdom, empowered to fight for and support the lost and wounded as we birth missional leadership both locally and globally. (Mission/Kingdom)

We believe God's Spirit bears fruit, bringing forth wholeness as a body which will be evident in our character, desires, love for each other and all people and in the sharing of our gifts. (Fruit of the Spirit)

We desire to be a people who share hope and healing, because we believe redemption begins with repentance and restoration in Jesus' name. (Healing)

We agree to respond to and glorify God by the Spirit's leading through arts, traditions, and other evolving practices. (Worship)

We affirm that acknowledging our depravity, accepting grace and being a people of prayer will allow us to grow in truth and joy as we attend to the spiritual disciplines, such as discernment, fasting, Bible study and worship, and will establish a legacy of spiritual transformation. (Spiritual Disciplines)

We believe that by addressing conflict, relating with openness and risk and recognizing our brokenness we can better engage our desire to live Christ-filled lives together. (Reconciliation)

We agree to challenge each other to discover and express our gifts, passions, creativity and talents by freely learning alongside one another without being consumed, ignored or unnecessarily restrained. (Passion)

#### **ARTICLE IV AFFILIATION**

Wits End Church shall be affiliated with the Columbia Baptist Conference and the Baptist General Conference.

#### **ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP & PARTICIPATION**

##### **Membership Requirements**

Members of Wits' End shall be called Covenant Participants.

1. Qualifications
  1. Together seek to live and enjoy the co-mission of Jesus.
  2. Seek to live life consistent with the Scriptures, faith statement and values of the church.
  3. Stay reconciled with the people of Wits' End Church.
  4. Invest in the ministry and dreams of Wits' End Church.
2. Responsibilities.
  1. Approve annual budgets.
  2. Ratify new Covenant Participants.
  3. Vote for hiring of the Senior Pastor.
  4. Vote for new Troublemakers.
  5. Participate in the annual meeting.
3. A Covenant Participant can be added at any point during the year.
4. A Covenant Participant can be removed at their own request or by the Troublemakers at the failure to meet the qualifications and/or uphold responsibilities outlined here.

## ARTICLE VI LEADERSHIP

### Leadership Requirements

Leaders of Wits End Church shall be called Troublemakers and Staff. We affirm, but currently do not constitutionalize the role of Elders in our community.

#### Troublemakers

1. Qualifications
  1. Shall be Covenant Participants
  2. Are nominated by Covenant Participants
  3. Elected to two-year terms with a four-year limit.
  4. Cannot simultaneously be ministry staff or in family of ministry staff.
  5. The Senior Pastor shall always be a member of the Troublemakers.
2. Responsibilities
  1. Discern overall direction and emphasis, prepare annual budgets, verify staffing.
  2. Approve ministry charters.
  3. Support objectives of chartered ministries
  4. Keep financial books and generate financial reports.
  5. Communicate financials and progress against objectives to overall church community.
  6. Schedule and administer annual meeting.
  7. Evaluate job performance of Senior Pastor.
  8. Form candidate committee as needed.
    1. In the case of a Senior Pastor search committee, the committee must include both Troublemakers and other Covenant Participants.

#### Staff

1. Qualifications
  1. Shall be Covenant Participants
  2. A call to a senior pastor candidate shall issue from the Covenant Participants upon recommendation of a Candidate Committee and a 75% affirmative written ballot vote of the Covenant Participants at a properly noticed business meeting.
  3. All other ministry staff shall be hired by the Senior Pastor.
2. Responsibilities
  1. Carry out specific areas of ministry under the direction of the Senior Pastor. The called staff shall strive to “equip the saints” for the work of ministry.
  2. The Senior Pastor
    - i. Shall be the spiritual and executive leader of Wits End Church
    - ii. Preach and teach the Word, lead public worship services, administer the ordinances, and lead the community in a practical Christian life.

- iii. Be a member of the Troublemakers and an *ex officio* member of all ministry teams and committees and in such capacity shall strive to establish and accomplish objectives in conjunction with the direction of Wits End Church.
- iv. Represent the staff to the Troublemakers.

3. Dissolutions

1. A staff relationship may be dissolved by action of the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor shall establish the terms of dissolution.
2. When the Senior Pastor is the subject of dissolution, the Senior Pastor shall not participate in the Troublemakers decision to dissolve the relationship. In the instance of dissolution of the Senior Pastor relationship, the Senior Pastor shall be allowed to appeal the action to the Covenant Participants. A 75% written ballot vote of Covenant Participants present at a properly noticed business meeting is required to reverse the action of the Troublemakers.

**ARTICLE VII  
BUSINESS, ELECTIONS AND VOTING**

1. The annual business meeting of the church shall be held during the latter part of January or in February, as determined by the Troublemakers. The agenda of the annual business meeting shall include election of Leaders, approval of budgets and objectives for the current year, and other matters as determined by the Troublemakers. In preparation for the meeting, the Troublemakers shall supply Covenant Participants with written reports from key ministries, together with a financial report, budget, and Senior Pastor's report at least one week prior to the annual meeting.
2. The annual business meeting, as well as any special business meeting, may be restricted in whole or in part to the Covenant Participants, as determined by the Troublemakers.
3. Unless otherwise provided in this Constitution, a majority vote in any meeting by the Covenant Participants is required for action.
4. A quorum for conducting votes shall be the greater number, 10% or 10, of all Covenant Participants.
5. Proper notice for all regular and special business meetings shall be ten (10) days published in writing, on the church website or email newsletter. Such notice shall include any special items for action at the special meeting.

**ARTICLE VIII  
FISCAL AND ELECTIVE YEAR**

1. The fiscal year of the church shall be January 1 through December 31. The elective year of the church shall be March 1 through the last day of February.

**ARTICLE IX  
ACQUISITION, DISPOSITION AND ENCUMBRANCE OF REAL PROPERTY**

1. By affirmative vote of the Troublemakers, the church may borrow money, buy, lease, acquire, own, hold, improve, use and deal in and with, real or personal property, or an interest in property,

wherever located, and may sell, convey, mortgage, create a security interest in, lease, exchange, transfer or dispose of all or a part of its real or personal property, or an interest in property, wherever located; save and except, however, that any action involving expenditures exceeding 20% of the previous year's giving must be approved by the congregation at a business meeting called for such purpose and that any sale, lease, transfer, or disposition of all or substantially all of the church property and assets shall likewise be approved by the congregation at a business meeting called for such purpose.

2. In case of dissolution of Wits End Church, the church property and debt shall be transferred to the Columbia Baptist Conference.

#### **ARTICLE X DISSOLUTION**

1. Dissolution of the church corporation would be based upon decision of the troublemakers confirmed by a majority vote of the Covenant Participants at a properly noticed business meeting.

#### **ARTICLE XI AMENDMENTS**

1. Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted by the Troublemakers with the approval of the Covenant Participants.