



WestGateChurch.org

Constitution & Bylaws

A California Nonprofit Religious Corporation

Article I: Name and Incorporation

The name of this church shall be WestGate Community Bible Church, also known as WestGate Church. It was incorporated under the laws of the State of California on July 17, 1953.

Article II: Purpose

The purpose of the church is twofold:

1. To strive to fulfill the Great Commandment by encouraging Christians to love God with all their heart, with all their soul, with all their mind and with all their strength, and to love others as we love ourselves (Matt. 22:36-40).
2. To strive to fulfill the Great Commission by taking the gospel of Jesus to all the world, beginning in our community and reaching out to the whole world personally and through supported missionaries, and to make disciples by teaching Christians to obey everything Jesus has taught us in the Bible (Matt. 28:19-20).

Article III: Statements of Faith

In essentials, "unity."

In nonessentials "liberty."

In everything "love."

God

There is one God, who eternally exists in three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each person is fully God, equal in divine nature and perfect in every way.¹ They exist in perfect love,

¹ Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 8:6; John 10:30; Acts 5:3-4

harmony and community with one another. Furthermore, each person of the Trinity has a unique role and function in their relationship to each other and to the world:

God the Father

God the Father is the maker of heaven and earth. He is sovereign and full of love, mercy, justice, kindness, and in His great love towards the world He purposed redemption by sending His Son Jesus.²

Jesus Christ the Son

Jesus is both fully God and fully man, was born of the Virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, died on the cross in our place to pay for our sins, rose from the grave to conquer death and is now seated at the right hand of the Father interceding for His people. Jesus' work on the cross accomplishes the forgiveness of sins, eternal life, right standing with God and the gift of the Holy Spirit for all who trust in Him. He will return again to bring His new heavens and new earth to make all things right.³

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit applies the redemptive work of Jesus in the believer through the conviction of sin, new birth and the sealing of salvation. The Spirit is also active in guiding and maturing the believer into Christ-likeness. He freely bestows gifts unto believers to do the work of ministry, advancing God's Kingdom here on Earth.⁴

His Word

His Word, the Bible,⁵ is the divinely inspired revelation of God, which came through the agency of man, preserving both a divine and human origin.⁶ It is fully reliable, trustworthy and without any error in the original manuscript. It records the story of God's redemptive work of humanity and the world. The Bible is fully authoritative revealing who God is and what we are called to do here in this world.

His Story

God made us in His image and everything He made was good but we chose to center our lives on ourselves and on the pursuit of things rather than on God and others. This has led to disintegration of creation and the loss of peace---within ourselves, between ourselves and in the nature itself. War, hunger, poverty, injustice, racism, bitterness, meaninglessness, despair, sickness and death all are symptoms.

This grand story covers:

² Psalm 146:6; John 3:16-17

³ John 1:1-2; John 1:4; Luke 1:35; Romans 3:24-25; Romans 4:25; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Hebrews 7:25, 9:24; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2; Hebrews 4:14-16; Hebrews 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 12

⁴ Romans 8:4; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4-5; John 16:5-11; Ephesians 1:13-14

⁵ The Protestant version of the Bible

⁶ 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21; John 10:35

- Creation and God's Image⁷
- Sin, Fall, Brokenness and Rebellion of Humankind⁸
- Pursuit of God through Abraham and the people of Israel⁹

- Incarnation, life, cross, death and resurrection of Jesus¹⁰
- Salvation, The Church, The Holy Spirit and the Kingdom of God-New Life and New Creation¹¹
- Judgment and Second coming of Jesus Christ¹²
- Reconciliation and Restoration of all things-New Heavens and New Earth¹³

His Plan

Our sins caused this great separation between God and humanity which caused brokenness in this world, but in His great plan towards His creation, God entered history in the person of Jesus in order to deal with all the causes and results of our broken relationship with Him. By His sacrificial life and death He both exemplifies the life we must live and rescues us from the life we have lived. By His resurrection He proved who He is and gave us the hope of eternity by renewing creation where all things are restored to full joy, justice, peace and glory. The Gospel is the good news about the God who has acted in history to save us and make things new and this Gospel is the climax of this beautiful story and plan of God. This salvation work is a free gift, apart from any human merit and can only be received by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone.¹⁴

His People

Between His first coming and His second coming, we live by faith in Him. When we believe and rely on Jesus' work (rather than ours) for our relationship with God, His healing kingdom power comes upon us and begins to work in us. Christ gives us a radically new identity, as sons and daughters of God, to freely love and care for one another. He puts us into a new community of people and commissions us to care for His world and the people in it. We are called to make disciples and proclaim Jesus to the ends of the earth. This living out of our faith gives a partial, but real, foretaste of the healing and redemption of the world that God will accomplish when Jesus returns. We attempt to live as Jesus lived with a focus that begins with a love for God and extends itself to love and help reach our neighbors and those who are far from God and in our community.

Article IV: Government

This church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any

⁷ Genesis 1-2

⁸ Genesis 3 and onward

⁹ Genesis 12 and onward

¹⁰ Recording of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John)

¹¹ The book of Acts and the letters of Apostle Paul

¹² 2 Peter 2-3

¹³ Revelation 21

¹⁴ Ephesians 2

denominational control. The church shall be governed by a Board of Elders as affirmed by the membership of the church. The Board of Elders shall have authority to act on behalf of the membership in all matters, except where a membership vote is required as outlined in these Bylaws.

The fiscal year of this church shall begin on the first day of September and end on the last day of August of the following calendar year.

Article V: Membership

Section 1: Qualifications of Membership

Membership is determined by those who have completed the required steps and is herein referred to as a member. Those steps are, but not limited to, having satisfactorily completed current discipleship classes, baptism by immersion, having verbally explained their journey to faith in Jesus Christ to those approved by the Board of Elders and having signed the Partnership Agreement.

Section 2: Voting Rights of Membership

Every active member who is eighteen (18) years or older, shall have the right to vote on the following matters and be binding upon the Board of Elders:

1. Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation or Constitution & Bylaws.
2. Annual election of Elders to the Board of Elders.
3. Appointment or dismissal of the Senior Pastor.
4. Buying or selling of real property.
5. Erection of buildings.
6. Financing by secured debt on real property.
7. Merger or dissolution of the Church.

Section 3: Church Discipline

The process of church discipline of a member will follow Biblical principles including Christ's teaching in Matthew 18:15-20 with the hope that the member subject to church discipline may be restored. The steps to be followed will include:

1. Confronting the member one-on-one in private;
2. Reproving the member in the presence of two or three others;
3. Bringing the matter to the attention of the Elders;
4. Informing the congregation.

Section 4: Termination of Membership

A. Inactive Members

An individual who remains inactive for one (1) year shall be automatically removed from the membership. Inactive members can be restored to active membership upon knowledge their reactivity. Any member whose membership was terminated due to church discipline may have their membership reinstated by a majority vote of the Elders.

B. Church Discipline

After following scriptural principles of church discipline, the Board of Elders may dismiss a member for conduct determined to be detrimental to the spiritual welfare of the church on the basis of Scripture, for reasons including but not limited to denial of any aspect of WestGate Church's Statement of Faith, breach of the WestGate Church Six40 Partnership Agreement,

divisive behavior or persistent sinful conduct.

Article VI: Officers, Elders, and Staff

Section 1: Corporate Officers

The Corporate Officers shall consist of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer. The Elders may also appoint other officers, as they deem necessary. These officers may be other elders or identified operational staff positions (to serve as non-voting elders) as “members at large” and shall be elected by the Board of Elders for a term of one (1) year at the first meeting of the Board of Elders in a new fiscal year. An Elder may serve in at most one officer position at a time, and the Senior Pastor is ineligible for service as an officer.

A. Chairman:

The Chairman of the Board of Elders shall be the Chairman of the Corporation. The Chairman shall be an Elder elected to the position of Chairman by the Board of Elders. The Chairman shall preside at all official business sessions of the congregation and of the Board of Elders.

B. Vice-Chairman:

The Vice-Chairman of the Board of Elders shall be the Vice-Chairman of the Corporation. The Vice-Chairman shall perform the duties of the Chairman in his absence and such other duties, which the Chairman may assign. The Vice-Chairman shall endeavor to become familiar with the rules of parliamentary procedure and serve as parliamentarian when requested.

C. Recording Secretary:

The Recording Secretary of the Board of Elders shall be the Secretary of the Corporation. The Recording Secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of all business meetings of the congregation and the Board of Elders, attend to all official correspondence, and preserve all records of church business.

D. Treasurer:

The Treasurer of the Board of Elders shall be the Treasurer of the Corporation. The Treasurer will oversee the financial ministry of the church.

E. Member at Large: The Member at Large will represent the Board of Elders in a specific capacity determined by the remaining Board members for a single fiscal year.

Section 2: Board of Elders

A. Qualifications of an Elder:

An Elder must meet and uphold all biblical qualifications for holding the office of an Elder.¹⁵ An Elder must be above reproach in all manners of service to the church and personal behavior in and among the community. An Elder shall be a member of this church. Except for the Senior Pastor, no Elder will be financially compensated for serving as an Elder. Family or other business relations shall relate no two actively serving elders.

B. Duties of the Elders:

The Elders shall manage and direct the ministries of the church in all spiritual and financial matters.¹⁶ Specifically, the Elders are:

¹⁵ I Timothy 3:2 -7, Titus 1:6-9 and I Peter 5:2,3.

¹⁶ I Peter 5:1-5

1. To guard the church from false doctrine and divisiveness, in part by overseeing and executing matters of church discipline according to the Scriptures and these Bylaws.
2. To care for the physical and spiritual needs of the pastoral staff.¹⁷
3. To meet regularly as a board for prayer and to evaluate one another concerning productivity and walk with the Lord, taking any self-discipline necessary in accordance with the Scriptures.¹⁸
4. To review and approve the annual budget as prepared by the staff.
5. To support staff positions as necessary to assist the ministries of the church, and to approve any hiring or terminations related to those positions.

C. Election and Term of the Elders:

Elders are to be nominated by existing Elders. These nominees are brought before the congregation for affirmation at the Annual Meeting. Each Elder shall serve for a three (3) year term unless a shorter term is otherwise specified upon election for the purpose of creating or maintaining staggered terms. There shall be a required one (1) year sabbatical leave after serving three (3) consecutive terms of three (3) years.

D. Vacancies on the Board:

A vacancy on the Board of Elders because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or any other cause may be filled by a person meeting the qualifications of an Elder who is elected by a two-thirds majority of the remaining elders. The term of an Elder so elected shall end at the next Annual Meeting, at which time they can be recommended and reaffirmed by the membership.

E. Termination of an Elder:

An Elder may be removed from the Board of Elders by a two-thirds majority vote of the remaining Elders.

Section 3: Senior Pastor

A. Qualifications of the Senior Pastor:

The Senior Pastor shall meet all the Biblical criteria for an Elder as outlined in Article VI: Section 2A. The Senior Pastor shall have an exemplary life, witness and walk with God. The Senior Pastor shall have had graduate or suitable other training in the pastoral ministry. Upon acceptance of appointment to this church, the Senior Pastor will automatically be a member of this church.

B. Duties of the Senior Pastor:

The Senior Pastor is the spiritual leader and administrator of the church under the direction of the Elders. Specifically, the Senior Pastor shall:

1. Communicate the vision and goals of the church regularly to staff, lay leaders, and the general congregation.
2. Manage the operation of the church including both ministry related and functional issues.
3. Make recommendations to the Board of Elders regarding staff positions as needed to accomplish ministry goals.
4. Serve as a member of the Board of Elders during employment as Senior Pastor of WestGate Church.
5. Direct the preaching of God's Word.
6. Oversee the administration of the ordinances of communion and baptism by immersion.

C. Appointment of a new Senior Pastor:

¹⁷ | Thess 5:12-13

¹⁸ | Tim 5:19-20

In the event of a vacancy in the position of the Senior Pastor, a Pastor Search Committee shall be appointed by the Board of Elders to investigate candidates for Senior Pastor. Upon a two-thirds majority approval of the Pastor Search Committee, the candidate will be recommended to the Board of Elders, who with two-thirds majority approval shall recommend the candidate to the congregation. The appointment of a new Senior Pastor shall come before the congregation for consideration in a Special Meeting of the Membership. A two-thirds vote of approval by the eligible members present shall be necessary to approve the appointments of the candidate.

D. Termination of the Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor may be removed by the membership at a duly called Special Meeting of the Membership. A two-thirds vote to dismiss by the eligible members present shall be necessary to terminate the Senior Pastor.

Section 5: Pastoral Staff

When the Board of Elders, on the recommendation of the Senior Pastor, sees the need for the creation of a new staff position, the Senior Pastor shall direct the search, develop the job description and hire an individual with suitable gifts, education, and temperament for the job, subject to Board of Elders approval of the candidate.

All members of the Pastoral Staff shall serve under the supervision of the Senior Pastor and shall perform such duties as the Senior Pastor may assign to them.

The Pastoral Staff will operate as non-voting elders (will attend Elder meetings as assigned by the Senior Pastor) and are held to the same standards of spiritual leadership as the Board of Elders and the Senior Pastor.

Any dismissal of staff personnel will be subject to concurrence by the Senior Pastor and the Board of Elders.

Section 6: Indemnification

The Board of Elders shall by resolution provide for the indemnification of Officers, Elders and Staff in positions of responsibility with the church to protect them from suits brought or threatened to be brought against them personally by reason of their position with the church, their good faith actions for the benefit of the church, or for negligence insured against by the church. Nothing in this clause shall violate California Corporations Code Section 9246.

Article VII: Meetings

Meetings of this church shall follow the guidelines as noted in this article, except where modified by the Senior Pastor and/or the Chairman of the Board of Elders to respond to specific needs of the church and for specific purpose as a result of an emergency or disaster.

Only active church members may vote on issues brought before the congregation. The latest edition of "Robert's Rules of Order" will prevail for all meetings.

A. Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting shall be held no later than forty (40) days after the start of a fiscal year as determined by the Board of Elders and shall require three (3) weeks advance notice to the congregation in all public forms of communication used at that time.

The purposes of the Annual Meeting shall be held only for the affirmation of Elders and presentation of the previous year's finances. In addition, there will be an informational

presentation of the current year's budget.

A quorum for any Annual Meeting duly called shall consist of the voting members present. Actions requiring a vote by the eligible members require affirmation by two-thirds of the eligible members present.

B. Special Meeting of the Membership

A Special Meeting shall be held not more than three (3) weeks after the Special Meeting is called in the manner required, and following prior notification in all public forms of communication used at that time.

The purpose of the Special Meeting shall be to address matters of any special nature. Notice of a Special Meeting shall be made to the general membership in all public forms of communication used at that time.

A quorum for any Special Meeting duly called shall consist of the voting members present. Actions requiring a vote by the eligible members require affirmation by two-thirds of the eligible members present.

Article VIII: Commissioning, Licensing and Ordination

A member of this church, confident of the call of God to the Gospel Ministry, may make application to the Board of Elders for commissioning, licensing or ordination.

If two -thirds majority of the Board of Elders decides that an applicant is worthy of further consideration for commissioning, licensing or ordination by this church to the Gospel Ministry, the Board may ask the Senior Pastor to call a council which shall thoroughly examine the candidate's call to the ministry, education, Christian experience and doctrinal belief. Upon recommendation of the council and approval of the Board of Elders, the candidate shall be publicly commissioned, licensed or ordained.

Commissioning, licensing and/or ordination may be revoked by the Board of Elders following the same disciplinary process and criteria of Church Discipline.

Article IX: Dissolution

No part of the earnings, properties or assets of this church, on dissolution or otherwise, shall inure to the benefit of any private person or individual or any member, director, or official of this church, and on liquidation or dissolution all properties and assets of this church remaining after paying or providing for all debts and obligations shall be distributed and paid over to such corporation(s) organized and operated for religious purposes in conformity to the Statement of Faith as stated in this Constitution, as determined by the Board of Elders and subject to approval by vote in a Special Meeting.