

We recognize that, in the case of a local New Testament Church, a constitution is simply a tool to aid the church in the implementation of its goals, not an end. This constitution will be followed under normal circumstances, but it is not to be administered legalistically.

Article I Name

The name of this church is the Wakeman Congregational Church.

Article II Church Distinctives

Mission

The mission of Wakeman Congregational Church is to glorify God by making disciples in Wakeman and the surrounding area, calling them into a devoted community of worshipping and maturing believers; teaching, learning, and growing together in obedience to Christ; investing in one another; and sending them out to be salt and light in the community and the world.

Core Values

Scripture- The Bible is the final and definitive revelation of God to man which teaches what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Jesus Christ- Jesus Christ is the Son of God whose life and ministry are unique and necessary to the salvation of man and thus our goal is to know Christ and to make Him known.

Regeneration- The new birth is necessary to membership in the body of Christ and to discipleship. We emphasize this truth in our worship, our teaching, and our ministries.

Discipleship- Becoming and making mature followers of Jesus Christ is the chief duty of the church and of its members. We do this by introducing people to Christ and helping them to know Him, investing in them, and teaching them in word and deed.

Family- The family is of divine origin and foundational to making disciples so that the church supports and strengthens the family in its ministry to all ages.

Fellowship- Fellowship is a key element of Christian growth and to strengthening the church and to incorporating believers into the church.

Community- We love the community in which God has placed us and desire as a church community and as church members to seek the good of our community.

Music and Arts- Music and Arts are gifts of God and signs of His blessing and we desire to use music and arts to glorify God and benefit our community.

Statement of Faith

We believe that God revealed Himself to humankind through the scriptures, consisting of the Old and New Testaments. We believe the Scriptures are inspired by God and therefore without error and authoritative over our lives.

We believe there is one God, revealed in three distinct persons-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all equally and eternally God.

God called the worlds into being, creates persons in His own image, and sets before each one the ways of life and death.

God seeks in holy love all people from aimlessness and sin.

God judges people and nations by His righteous will, declared through prophets and apostles.

Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, born of the virgin Mary, our crucified and risen Savior, came to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death. Jesus ascended into Heaven where He sits at the right hand of His Father. Jesus will return to earth for a final judgement for all peoples.

God bestows on us the Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

Covenant

As we confess our faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ our Savior, willing to be guided by the Holy Spirit, we promise, as members of Wakeman Congregational Church, to walk together as Christian brothers and sisters. We promise to be obedient to God's living Word, to work, to worship, and to serve together so that the love and the faith of Jesus Christ will be expressed through our lives and our church.

Article III Doctrine

This church recognizes the Word of God as recorded in the Bible as the source of faith and practice. Each member has the privilege and responsibility to follow the Word of God according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The following statements summarize our understanding of the Bible in the following areas:

1. The Bible- We believe that the Bible is God's Word. It was written by men who were inspired by God and led by His Spirit. Therefore, it is inerrant, authoritative, infallible and applicable to our everyday lives. (2 Timothy 3:14-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:21)
2. God- We believe that there is one eternal God who is the Creator of all things. He exists in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10-11, Luke 3:21-22)
3. Jesus- We believe that Jesus is the one and only Son of God. He was with God at the beginning and was born into this world through the Virgin Mary. He is both God and man. Because of His sinlessness and sacrificial death on the cross, He is the only one who can reconcile us to God and assure us victory in this life. (John 1:1-2, 14; Philippians 2:5-8; Luke 1:26-38; Hebrews 7:26; Acts 2:22-24; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Acts 1:9-11)
4. The Holy Spirit- We believe that the Holy Spirit dwells within every Christian and provides the power for living a life that pleases God. We also believe that the Holy Spirit gives gifts accordingly so that the body of Christ might be built up into full maturity. (John 14:25-26; John 16:12-15; Acts 1:4, 8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-13; Ephesians 5:18)
5. Mankind- We believe that all people are created in the image of God to have fellowship with Him. But because of their sin and rebellion, they are alienated from God. A person is incapable of regaining a right relationship with God through his or her own effort. However, a relationship with Him is possible through God's grace. (Genesis 1:27; Romans 3:23; Galatians 3:22; Ephesians 2:8-9)
6. Salvation- We believe that the blood of Jesus Christ provides the sole basis for the forgiveness of sin. Therefore, only those who truly place their faith in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross will be saved. Salvation is a free gift and cannot be earned. Those who trust in Jesus Christ are to repent of their sins, confess their belief in Him, and follow the Lord in Christian baptism. (John 3:16; Romans 10:13-15; Galatians 3:26-27; Acts 2:37-38; Acts 22:16; Matthew 28:19-20)
7. The Christian Life- We believe that all Christians should live for Christ and not for themselves. By obeying God's commands as found in the Bible and by yielding daily to the Spirit of God, every believer should mature and be conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:20-26; 2:1-7; John 14:23-24; Romans 12:1-3)
8. Eternity- We believe that those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ will live eternally with God (heaven), and that those who have not placed their faith in Jesus will live eternally without God (hell). (Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 19:20; 20:1-15; 21:8)
9. The Church- We believe that the church is the body of Christ, of which Jesus Christ is the head. The purpose of the church is to glorify God by loving Him and by making Him known to the lost world. We gather each Lord's Day, as did the early church, for the

purposes of study, fellowship, and prayer. We also live out our faith during the week that God may be glorified, and people may see Christ in us. (Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 20:7)

10. Marriage- We believe that God wonderfully and immutably created mankind as male and female. These complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Genesis 1:26-27) We believe marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in an exclusive union, as seen in Scripture. (Genesis 2:18-25)

11. 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. (PS. 139)

12. This doctrinal statement does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God, speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, and is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of the church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Pastor and Church Council are Wakeman Congregational Church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

By-Laws

The Bible is the authority for Christ's church. Where His Word speaks, His church submits. Where His Word is silent, His church is at liberty to establish policies and procedures for maintaining all things decently and in order and providing for things honest in the sight of all.

Those policies and procedures established by the church are contained in these Bylaws. They are to be considered neither sacred nor infallible. They are subject to change by the church in accordance with due process herein described. In them, place no confidence for the security of our fellowship, but only in the Lord who is the Great Shepherd of our souls.

Article IV Government

The responsibility of governing of this church rests with its members who exercise the right of control in its affairs.

Believing in the freedom and responsibility of each church to govern itself according to New Testament principles, this church shall remain autonomous and independent.

Wakeman Congregational Church understands the benefits arising from the free fellowship of likeminded churches and will endeavor to participate with such churches as the opportunity arises.

Article V Membership

Section 1: Requirements and responsibilities of membership

The membership of this local church is open to all people of the Christian faith who seek fellowship with God and man and growth in the Christian life. The requirements of membership of Wakeman Congregational Church are:

- Confession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior, as testified to the Diaconate and the Pastor.
- Membership classes with the Pastor or recognized lay leader.
- Public declaration of adherence to the Church Covenant, Constitution and By-Laws during a worship service.
- Commitment to attend worship service on a regular basis, and to fellowship with other members of the congregation as often as possible.

Section 2: Discontinuation of Membership

Becoming and making mature followers of Jesus Christ is the chief duty of the church and of its members. However, in certain cases membership may be discontinued. Membership may be discontinued in one of the following ways.

- By transfer: Letters of withdrawal and recommendation to other churches will be granted upon request by the member and by vote of the Diaconate. Notice will be given to the church to which the member requests transfer.
- By exclusion: Members who habitually abstain from attending church for a period of six months without valid reason, (e.g., military service, employment, travel, physical inability) will be contacted by the Diaconate to determine the reasons. In some cases, they may become associate member. An associate member does not vote nor serve on a committee or board. If there are irreconcilable differences, they may be removed from membership.
- By dismissal: As a last resort of church discipline after the process according to Matthew 18:15-18 has been followed. Any member of this church who teaches or insists on holding false doctrine, and persistently conducts himself or herself in a manner inconsistent with biblical teaching, or who persists in disturbing the unity or peace of the church may be removed from membership.

Article VI Services

Section 1: Worship services will be held each Sunday at set hours unless temporarily suspended by a vote of the Church Council. Additional services will be held upon the recommendation of the Pastor and the Diaconate.

Section 2: The ordinance of the Lord's Supper will be celebrated at such times as the Pastor and the Diaconate determine. Baptisms will be performed by the Pastor or when not available, a supply minister approved by the Diaconate.

Article VII Congregational Meetings

The fiscal year for the church will begin February 1 of each year. Salaries will continue at the previous level until the new budget is approved.

Section 1: The Annual Meeting will be held in January of each year at a time and date set by the Church Council. The purpose of the Meeting is to hear reports from the officers, the organizations, and the committees, to adopt a budget, and to make plans for the new year.

Section 2: Additional congregational meetings may be called by the Pastor, the Moderator or the Church Council. Notice of any congregational meeting must state the purpose, time, and place; the notice may be given orally from the pulpit, printed in the bulletin, or mailed to each member at least seven days before the meeting. Any meeting called for corporate business will be noted as state law requires.

Section 3: The Moderator will preside at all congregational meetings. In the absence of the Moderator, an officer will preside according to the following order: Chairperson of the Diaconate, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. If none of the above officers are able to preside, those assembled will choose a chairperson protem.

Section 4: A quorum needed to transact church business will be 25 % of the voting membership of the church. Unless otherwise stated, all motions require a simple majority vote to be carried.

Article VIII Officers

Section 1: All elected officers must be members of this church.

Section 2: Pastor

Paragraph a: *Selection and Term.* When a vacancy occurs in the pastorate, the Church Council will appoint a Pastoral Search Team which will be made up of seven members of the church. The Team will conduct the following business: agree upon a candidate to be called, request the candidate to appear before the congregation at a regular Sunday service, and propose the election of the candidate at a duly called Congregational Meeting. The candidate will be called upon a two-thirds majority vote of the members present. The Pastoral Search Team will immediately inform the candidate of the congregation's decision. Upon the candidate's acceptance of the call, the Pastoral Search Team will be dissolved. The call will include a written statement of the contractual arrangement, including but not limited to, salary, housing allowance, insurance, and other benefits. The Pastor's term will be indefinite. The church may request the resignation of the Pastor by a 2/3 vote of the Church Council. The resignation should be presented within 30 days. Should the Pastor decide to leave, notice should be given within 60 days of the anticipated departure.

Paragraph b: *Duties:* Upon an acceptance of the call, the Pastor will have charge of the spiritual welfare of the church with the assistance of the Diaconate. The Pastor will preach the Gospel, seek to enlist men and women as followers of Christ, and administer the services of the church in cooperation with the various boards and committees. The Pastor shall ordinarily attend all meetings of the church and be an ex-officio advisory member of all boards, committees and organizations.

Section 3: Additional Pastoral Staff may be called or dismissed according to the same procedure as provided above.

Section 4: Moderator

a: *Selection and Term:* The Moderator will be elected by the congregation at the Annual Meeting. He or she will serve a two-year term and is eligible to serve one additional consecutive term.

b: *Duties:* The Moderator will preside at all congregational meetings and Church Council meetings. This person will be the administrative head of the church and, as such, will share with the Pastor the responsibility for the general welfare of the church and its organizations. The Moderator will be the lay spokesperson when necessary. Upon authorization by the congregation and/or the Board of Trustees, the Moderator will execute any documents required for the management, acquisition and transfer of property, acting as the chief officer of the church and president of the corporation. He or she will be an ex-officio advisory member of all boards and committees. In the instance of a vacancy occurring midterm on any committee, the Moderator will have the authority to appoint members to fill said vacancy.

Section 5: Clerk

a: *Selection and Term:* The Church Clerk will be elected at the Annual Meeting for a term of two years and may serve one additional consecutive term.

b: *Duties:* The clerk will keep a record of the proceedings of all congregational and Church Council meetings. The Clerk will be a member of Church Council. The Clerk will also keep the register of the following: names and addresses of members of the church, dates and modes of their reception or departure from the church, baptisms, deaths, and marriages. The Clerk will report the above information at congregational meetings.

Section 6: Financial Secretary

a: *Selection and Term:* The Financial Secretary will be appointed by the Board of Trustees.

b: *Duties:* The Financial Secretary will receive all payments on current expenses, all offerings and special collections. He or she will also keep an accurate account of each member and furnish members with annual statements. At a minimum of once a week, the Financial Secretary will deposit all funds into accounts designated by the Board of Trustees with instructions to receipt and forward a copy of the deposit slip to the Treasurer. The Financial Secretary will also weekly provide the Treasurer with a statement of funds showing the purpose for which they were given.

Section 7: Church Treasurer

a: *Selection and Term:* The Church Treasurer will be elected at the Annual Meeting and will serve for a term of two years and may serve one additional consecutive term.

b: *Duties:* The Church Treasurer will receive all funds from the Financial Secretary as recorded by a deposit slip to the account of the Wakeman Congregational Church from the accounts designated by the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer will keep a record of the total amounts received from various sources according to the totals shown on the reports from the Financial Secretary. The Treasurer will be responsible for disbursing salaries and amounts due for utilities and other obligations of a recurring nature as provided for in the annual budget. All other funds of the church will be disbursed by the Treasurer only upon a pay order from the Board of Trustees issued at their meeting.

Section 8: Historian

a. *Selection and Term:* The Church Historian will be elected at the Annual Meeting for a term of two years and may serve one additional consecutive term.

b. *Duties:* The Historian will keep a journal of all occurrences of interest to the church and make a written report of these events at the Annual Meeting. Following the Annual Meeting, the journal will become part of the permanent record of the church.

Article IX Boards

Section 1: The Diaconate

a. Board Members: The Board of Deacons and Deaconesses will be comprised of a minimum of four and as many as eight members who are to be elected at the Annual Meeting. Members will serve a two-year term. Elected members may serve multiple terms, if nominated. The Board will elect its own chairperson and any other officers it deems necessary. In the event the Moderator is temporarily unable to perform the required duties, the Diaconate Chairperson will assume those duties.

Duties: The Board will meet regularly. The duty of this Board is to cooperate with the Pastor in ministering to the spiritual needs of the church, community, and visitors. Together with the Pastor, they will be responsible for assisting with worship services and the preparation and serving of Communion. This Board will supervise the ushering at all regular and special church services.

The Board will introduce new members into the life of the church and do everything possible to maintain a spirit of good Christian fellowship and harmony within the church.

In the case of a vacancy in the pulpit or in the absence of the Pastor, the Board will arrange for an interim or supply Pastor. It will also have under its care all matters of Pastor /church relationships together with the support and cooperation of the Pastoral Relations Committee. The Diaconate will submit names of proposed Pastoral Relations Committee to the Nominating Committee at least three months prior to the Annual Meeting.

The Board, in conjunction with the Pastor, will be responsible for creating a general worship plan for the church year which will provide opportunities within our church and our community for fellowship and sharing.

Section 2: Board of Trustees

a. Board Members: The Board of Trustees will be comprised of a minimum of three and as many as five members who are to be elected at the Annual Meeting and will serve a term of two years. Elected members may serve multiple terms, if nominated. The Board will elect its own officers and committees and determine its mode of procedure.

b. Duties: The Board will meet regularly to transact business; a quorum will consist of three members. Under the direction of the church and existing regulations and laws, except as otherwise stated above, this Board shall have the custody of all property of the church and shall have general oversight of its financial affairs. The Board will have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer property without specific authority by vote of the congregation. They have the power to contract with all paid church personnel and advisors. The Board will receive and order payment of bills following the budget as voted by the congregation. The Board will present a financial statement to the church at least once each quarter. The Board will appoint an independent Auditor to examine the

accounts of the Treasurer and Financial Secretary annually, who in turn will report at the Annual Meeting.

c. Giving Policies: The Trustees will uphold these donation policies: monetary donations to Wakeman Congregational Church (apart from regular offerings) which are given without a specified purpose by the donor, will be allocated at the discretion of the Trustees. Monetary donations given for a specific purpose by a donor, are subject to approval by the Board of Trustees and Church Council. Non-monetary donations will not be accepted without approval from the Trustees and Church Council.

Section 3: Board of Christian Education

a. Board Members: The Board of Christian Education will be elected at the Annual Meeting and will consist of a minimum of three and as many as six members who will serve for a period of two years, with no term limits, if nominated. Sunday School teachers are to be considered ex-officio members of the Board. The Board will elect its own chairperson and any other necessary assistants to carry on its responsibilities. The Board may also appoint any other sub-committee needed from its ranks.

b. Duties: This Board will meet regularly. The purpose of the Board will be to study and evaluate the Church's total educational program, to establish the general policy and practices of the program and recommend ways of improving upon it. The Board should give consideration not only to Christian Education as it applies to the Sunday School, but also to adult groups as well. The Board has the specific responsibility of supervising the program of the Sunday School, with full authority to recruit, appoint and assign teachers, as well as to approve the course of study in the various departments. The Youth Fellowship also falls under the direction of this Board. The Pastor will work with the Board in planning and carrying out the decisions and policies. This Board will also have the responsibility to provide educational information, and opportunities for study.

c. The Director of Children's Ministries will be a voting member of the Board of Christian Education.

Article X Standing Committees

Members of each standing committee will be elected at the Annual Meeting and serve for a period of two years, if nominated.

Section 1: Mission Committee: The Mission Committee will consist of a minimum of three and as many as five members. They will elect their own Chairperson and will meet regularly.

The purposes of this Committee are as follows:

- To present mission goals to the congregation.
- To plan activities and experiences for the church which will result in a deeper concern for its mission in the world.

Section 2: Music Committee: The Music Committee will consist of a minimum of three and as many as five members. The Committee will elect its own Chairperson and will meet regularly. It is the duty of the Music Committee to act in coordination with the Diaconate and the Pastor for the musical interests of the church. The Music Committee will present the Church Council with recommendations for:

- an Organist
- a Choir Director
- and/or an Organist/Choir Director

Section 3: Reception and Social Committee: The Reception and Social Committee will consist of a minimum of three and as many as six members. They will elect their own Chairperson and meet regularly. It is the duty of this Committee to provide greeters on Sunday mornings. This Committee will also have the duty of assisting with the social life of the church, as may be planned in cooperation with the church boards and committees.

Section 4: Nominating Committee: The Nominating Committee will consist of the Pastor, Moderator, and one representative from each board. The Committee will elect their own Chairperson and will meet as often as necessary to meet their obligations. It is the duty of this Committee to prepare a slate of candidates from suggestions from each board and committee to be filled at the Annual Meeting. These nominations will be printed and be made available at the church no later than two Sundays prior to the Annual Meeting. People nominated by this Committee will be contacted at least one month in advance of the Annual Meeting to gain their consent.

Section 5: The Planned Giving and Stewardship Committee: This Committee will consist of a minimum of five and as many as seven members. The Moderator and the Treasurer of the church will be full members of the committee during their terms of office. The other five members, including at least one trustee, will be elected at the Annual Meeting. The PGSC will meet regularly and will elect its own Chairperson. The PGSC will establish, promote and maintain the church's planned giving programs based on the following stewardship principles: Giving is private. Matthew 6:1-4. Giving should be cheerful and with purpose. 2 Corinthians 9: 7. Giving is sacrificial. Giving is a result of receiving God's grace. Our first gift to God is ourselves. 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 The PGSC will set policies and procedures to manage the assets in the program. Confidential records of the Planned Giving Program will be kept. The PGSC is responsible for regular reporting of the assets value, disbursements, and accounting of costs for the program's maintenance. The PGSC will consider proposals of areas where assets could be applied. The Committee will, with the Board of Trustees, decide how the income will be disbursed to continue God's work in our church, our community, and beyond, as specified in Article IX, Section 2, Part c of this Constitution.

The PGSC will help organize prayerful giving of our time, talent, and treasure at least annually. They will promote the stewardship principles mentioned above in paragraph 2 prior to our pledging and budgeting process every year. In the event the PGSC should be dissolved, the assets will be transferred to the control of the Board of Trustees of the Wakeman Congregational Church.

Section 6: Strategic Planning Committee: The Strategic Planning Committee will consist of a minimum of five and as many as seven members, two of whom are trustees. The committee will be appointed as needed by the Church Council. Due to the long-range nature of the Committee's duties, they may be re-appointed with no time limitation. The Committee will elect their own Chairperson.

The primary duty of the Committee is to develop plans for the use and the development of the church's physical properties. They will work closely with the Board of Trustees. The Strategic Planning Committee will facilitate the spiritual growth of the church and the community.

Article XI Communication Between Boards and Standing Committees

Each board and standing committee is given autonomy to accomplish the duties specified in this constitution. However, there is often a close parallel in functions or tasks of different boards and committees. To reduce potential conflict and insure continuity, boards and committees are expected to coordinate their activities with other boards/committees when these activities might affect another group. The communication can be limited, but should always afford the contacted group an opportunity to voice objection, offer alternatives, and strive for consensus.

Article XII Church Council

The Church Council will be composed of all elected officers of the church, two representatives from each board, one representative from each Committee and one representative from each of the auxiliary organizations. The Pastor is a member ex-officio. The Church Council will meet at least quarterly, at an appointed time or on a special call of the Pastor or Moderator. Five members present will constitute a quorum.

The function of the Church Council is to visualize the entire workings of the church and give guidance and counsel to the various groups within the congregation to achieve a greater unity of purpose and action. Officers, boards, committees, and auxiliary organizations will present to the Church Council, for their information and approval, a report of their plans and programs which may affect the church or other groups individually. The Council may also initiate plans, programs, and goals for the general welfare of the church and assign the responsibility for carrying them out.

Further, it is the duty of the Church Council to study and approve an annual budget as produced by a Budget Committee. The Budget Committee will be composed of the Trustees, the Moderator, the Financial Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Chairpersons of the Stewardship Committee, the Missions Committee, the Diaconate, the Music Committee and the Board of Christian Education. The Chairperson of the Trustees will serve as Chairperson for the Budget Committee. The budget will be presented to the congregation for approval at the Annual Meeting.

When a vacancy occurs in the pastorate or other staff positions, Church Council will appoint a Pastoral Search Team to proceed with the search for a new person as outlined in Article VIII, Sections 1 and 2. The church may request the resignation of the Pastor by a 2/3 vote of the church council. The resignation should be presented within thirty days. Should the Pastor decide to leave, notice will be given within sixty days of the anticipated departure.

The Church Council will appoint a committee at least every four years to study the constitution and recommend any necessary changes to the congregation.

Article XIII Auxiliary Organizations

All organizations related to the church and using its facilities will be under the general supervision of the Church Council.

Article XIV Electronic Voting/Virtual Attendance

It is the expectation of all volunteers serving the Wakeman Congregational Church as officers, board or committee members to attend and participate in regularly scheduled meetings in order to not only complete the work of the church, but to fellowship and encourage one another in the work of Christ. (Hebrews 10:24-25).

However, Wakeman Congregational Church recognizes that it may be necessary to attend meetings virtually and/or vote by electronic means. Each board, committee, and council will be responsible for establishing and defining guidelines applicable to its respective members.

This provision will not apply to the scheduled Annual Meeting or any special congregational meetings.

Article XV Amendments

This Constitution may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote at any regular or special congregational meeting, provided that the notice specifying the time of the

meeting and substance of the proposed amendment(s) are given in accordance with Article VII, Section 2.