

## Statement of Religious Authority

The First Baptist Church of Wellsburg (WV) charges its Pastor and Deacon Board with oversight of all areas of church governance, particularly issues of faith, practice, theology, moral and scriptural interpretation. The Pastor and Deacon Board are the final authority on scripture, faith, morals, and employee/member discipline; formal employment or membership requirements vis-à-vis eligibility, morals, discipline, removal, and rescission; Statements of Faith and Doctrine; standards of morals and conduct; internal dispute resolution; matters of church discipline and, enforcement of conformity of belief and practice relating to religious teaching and practice. Ecclesiastical government of all members, congregations, and officers within the general association is unquestioned.[1]

The Pastor and Deacon Board retain authority for decisions of controverted questions of faith within the First Baptist Church of Wellsburg.[2] The decisions of the Pastor and Deacons Board are binding in all cases of ecclesiastical cognizance, subject only to appeals as the church itself provides for. [3]

The Pastor and Deacons of the church find their purpose and motivation for the above-referenced matters in Matt 18:15-17; Acts 15:1-2, 1 Tim 3:1-10, 12-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-3.

Religious authority necessarily pervades all aspects of the First Baptist Church of Wellsburg (WV) governance and operations.[4] Everything that occurs in the First Baptist Church of Wellsburg (WV) affects its ministry and mission and is therefore under its religious authority. The religious purpose in exercising said authority is for the First Baptist Church of Wellsburg (WV) to practice its religion, foster, repeat, advertise, and disseminate the First Baptist Church of Wellsburg (WV)'s view, message, and statements.[5]

[1] *Connor v. Archdiocese of Phila.*, 601 Pa. 577, 588-591 (Pa. 2009) (quoting *Watson v. Jones*, 80 U.S. 679, 728-29 (1871)).

[2] *See id.*

[3] *Id.*

[4] *See Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 U.S. 602, 617 (1971).

[5] *HEB Ministries, Inc. v. Tex. Higher Educ. Coordinating Bd.*, 235 S.W.3d 627, 644, 800 (Tex. 2007); *see Hurley v. Irish-American Gay*, 515 U.S. 557 (1995)