

Constitution
of the
First Baptist Church
Sullivan, Illinois

Revised Fall, 2017

ARTICLE I: NAME AND AFFILIATION

- A. This Church shall be known as the First Baptist Church, Sullivan, Illinois.
- B. This church shall be affiliated with the Great Rivers Region of the American Baptist Churches, USA.

ARTICLE II: DOCTRINE

- A. The Word of God shall be the authority upon which this church is to act and shall be the basis for preaching in this church.
- B. Christ is the recognized Head of this church, who, by His Holy Spirit, will direct the pastor and the church membership. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this church shall exhibit unity in essentials, liberty in nonessentials and love in all things.

ARTICLE III: PURPOSE AND MISSION

- A. The purpose of this church is to maintain public services for the worship of God and for teaching and preaching of the Gospel, the religious training of youth, the spiritual development of its members and to share God through support of missions.
- B. The mission of this church is to increasingly know God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and to continually make Him known through worship, witness, nurture and ministry.

ARTICLE IV: POWER AND AUTHORITY

- A. The power and authority of this church is vested in the membership.
- B. The quorum for voting at a business meeting shall be 15 voting members.
- C. A simple majority of the voting members shall carry all issues except calling of a pastor, as set forth in Article X, and amending this constitution, as set forth in Article XIV.

ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

- A. The membership of this church shall consist of persons who believe in Christ as a personal Savior and have made public confession of such, have been baptized by immersion and have been received by vote of this church into membership.
- B. The membership of this church shall also include persons transferring by letter of membership from other churches, those persons who believe in Christ as a personal Savior and have made public confession of such, have been baptized by any method acceptable by the former member church doctrine and have been received by vote of this church membership.

ARTICLE VI: DUTIES OF MEMBERS

- A. Every member shall give consistently to the maintenance and support of this church and to the spreading of the Gospel to others. Members fourteen years of age and older who are active members in good standing shall be allowed to vote during a church business meeting.
- B. To be in good standing as an active member, a member must have contributed to the financial support of this church within the three months prior to the vote on any issue or have been in attendance at a regular worship service within the three months prior to the vote on any issue.

ARTICLE VII: OFFICERS

- A. The following individuals shall serve as officers: Moderator, Vice Moderator, Church Clerk, Sunday School Superintendent, Assistant Sunday School Superintendent, Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary, Church Treasurer, Assistant Church Treasurer, Building Fund Treasurer and Contact Communicator.
- B. The following groups shall also serve as officers: the Deacon and Deaconess as the Diaconate and the Trustees.

ARTICLE VIII: QUALIFICATIONS OF OFFICERS

All officers shall be adult members of this church who are at least 21 years of age. All officers shall have been consistent in Christian faith within this church.

- A. Moderator/Vice Moderator:

The Moderator and the Vice Moderator shall have the leadership abilities necessary to guide the church in a positive manner as willed by the church body.

B. Deacons:

1. As many as seven male adults may be elected.
2. Biblical qualifications as described in I Timothy 3:8-11 and Acts 6: 3-4 are incumbent upon the office. Deacons are further requested to live only the most exemplary lives before the membership, community and the world at large.

C. Deaconesses:

1. As many as seven female adults may be elected.
2. Biblical qualifications as described in I Timothy 3:8-11 and Acts 6: 3-4 are incumbent upon the office. Deaconesses are further requested to live only the most exemplary lives before the membership, community and the world at large.

D. Trustees:

1. As many as seven adults may be elected.
2. Trustees shall have the abilities needed to oversee the maintenance of church properties, as well as, evaluate short and long term programs concerning the church properties.

E. Church Clerk:

The church clerk should have the organizational abilities needed to record business minutes and keep membership records of the church.

F. Sunday School Superintendent/Assistant Sunday School Superintendent:

The Sunday School Superintendent and Assistant Sunday School Superintendent should have the leadership abilities needed to guide the Sunday School and Youth programs of the church.

G. Financial Secretary/Assistant Financial Secretary:

The Financial Secretary and the Assistant Financial Secretary should have the business abilities needed to keep accurate records of tithes and offerings of the church.

H. Church Treasurer/Assistant Church Treasurer:

The Church Treasurer and the Assistant Church Treasurer should have the business abilities needed to collect, dispense and account for moneys of the church.

I. Building Fund Treasurer:

The Building Fund Treasurer should have the business abilities needed to collect, dispense and account for moneys of the church.

J. Contact Communicator:

The Contact Communicator should have verbal and written communication skills which can be used to express and share church program information.

ARTICLE IX: DUTIES OF OFFICERS

A. Moderator/Vice Moderator:

1. The Moderator shall preside at church business meetings, shall appoint the nominating committee and shall be an ex-officio member of all committees. The vote of the moderator is sought only in instances of a tie vote.
2. The Vice Moderator shall assume the duties of the Moderator in case of absence of the Moderator.

B. Deacons:

1. The Deacons shall meet monthly with the Pastor to discuss activities necessary to the spiritual life of the church, They will review individual applications for church membership or church dismissal. They shall present recommendations concerning acceptance or dismissal to the church for action.
2. The Deacons shall assist the Pastor in the administration of Communion. In the absence of the Pastor, an experienced Deacon shall preside.
3. The Deacons shall administer the use of the Deacons' Fund love offering taken in conjunction with Communion. The Deacons' Fund shall be used to minister to the needy of the church and the community.
4. The Deacons shall assist the Pastor in the spiritual care of the church, including visitation of the sick and appropriate assistance with baptisms.
5. In the temporary absence of the Pastor, the Deacons shall have the responsibility of providing services.
6. The Deacons shall employ the secretarial services needed to produce church service bulletins and necessary reports.

7. The Deacons shall oversee and direct the evangelistic ministry of the church. Programs associated with visitation, revivals and individual and church encouragement are included.

C. Deaconesses:

1. The Deaconesses shall prepare and be the stewards of the emblems and effects of Communion, as well as, the effects necessary for baptism.
2. The Deaconesses shall assist the Pastor in the spiritual care of the church, including visitations of the sick and appropriate assistance with baptisms.

D. Trustees:

1. The Trustees shall have custody and supervision of all church property. They shall be the legal representatives and underwriters of this church, subject to the approval of the church membership.
2. The Trustees shall make and oversee general repairs, maintenance and alterations to the physical properties of the church.
3. The Trustees shall employ and supervise any personnel necessary for maintenance of the church properties. They will oversee the purchase of materials necessary for the maintenance of any church properties.
4. The Trustees Chairperson shall assume the duties of the Church Treasurer only if the Church Treasurer, followed by the Assistant Church Treasurer, followed by the Financial Secretary becomes unable to fulfill the normal duties of the Treasurer's office.

E. Church Clerk:

1. The Clerk shall keep an accurate record of church membership and shall keep an accurate record of all official acts of this church.
2. The Clerk shall issue certificates of Christian standing and shall issue letters of dismissal when so directed by the church membership.
3. The Clerk shall issue official reports to the church membership and to the denomination and shall be responsible for general church correspondence as directed by the church membership.
4. The Clerk shall maintain all records as open records to the church membership.

- F. **Sunday School Superintendent/Assistant Sunday School Superintendent:**
1. The Sunday School Superintendent shall preside at all Sunday School sessions, supervise the work of the Sunday School teachers, chair the Christian Education Committee and supervise the work of the Christian Education officers.
 2. The Assistant Sunday School Superintendent shall assume the duties of the Sunday School Superintendent in case of absence and shall serve as Youth Group Treasurer.
- G. **Financial Secretary/Assistant Financial Secretary:**
1. The Financial Secretary shall maintain a financial record of the regular and special contributions to the church. Each individual contribution will be recorded each week and a personal yearly statement shall be provided for each contributor of record.
 2. The Assistant Financial Secretary shall assume the duties of the Financial Secretary in case of absence.
 3. The Financial Secretary shall assume the duties of the Church Treasurer only if the Church Treasurer, followed by the Assistant Church Treasurer becomes unable to fulfill the normal duties of the Treasurer's office.
- H. **Church Treasurer/Assistant Church Treasurer:**
1. The Church Treasurer shall receive, bank and disperse by check all moneys received by regular and special contributions, except those paid directly into the Building Fund, Deacons' Fund, Deaconess' Fund, Ann Judson Society, BYF Fund, Memorial Fund and Christian Education Fund.
 2. The Church Treasurer shall produce quarterly and annual reports showing sources, requisitions and grants, and deposits and withdrawals. A monthly record shall be maintained with all records open for review by the church membership.
 3. The Assistant Church Treasurer shall assume the duties of the Church Treasurer in case of absence.
- I. **Building Fund Treasurer:**
1. The Building Fund Treasurer shall receive, bank and disperse by check all moneys received by regular and special contributions to the Building Fund.
 2. The Building Fund Treasurer shall produce quarterly and annual reports showing sources, requisitions and grants, and deposits and withdrawals. A monthly record shall be maintained with all records open for review by the church membership.

- J. Contact Communicator:
 - 1. The Contact Communicator shall distribute to the church information received from the regional office and submit publicity items to the regional office from the church membership.

ARTICLE X: PASTOR

- A. The calling of a Pastor to fill a vacancy shall occur at any regular or special business meeting of the church. The purpose of that meeting must be announced two Sundays prior to the vote on a Pastor.
- B. The election shall be by secret ballot. To call a Pastor, two-thirds of the special voting quorum is necessary. The special quorum is defined as at least 20 ballots, consisting of both in-person and absentee ballots properly cast .
- C. A member in good standing is only permitted to cast an absentee ballot for the calling of a pastor if the following conditions are met:
 - 1. The voting member has heard the candidate preach and has met the candidate.
 - 2. Business, vacation or illness prevents the voting member from attending the called business meeting.
 - 3. The absentee ballot has been received and approved by the Deacon Board not later than the Sunday prior to the called business meeting.
- D. With Christ as the spiritual head of the church, the Pastor will conduct services of public worship, advise all auxiliary and subsidiary organizations of the church and serve as an ex-officio member on all committees.
- E. The Pastor and the Deacons shall have mutual oversight of the spiritual affairs of the church. Together they will have mutual understandings as to the general discipline of the church and its fulfillment of the church mission. The Pastor will act for the church only after discussion and approval of activities at a Deacons' meeting. No individual has the authority of his own free will and initiative to act for the entire group.
- F. The pastoral connection to this church may be dissolved at any time by the formal request of the Pastor or by the formal vote of the church members. Any vote of dissolution must be announced two Sundays prior to the vote and have a two-thirds majority vote of the defined regular quorum of voting members.

ARTICLE XI: PLANNING COUNCIL

- A. The Church Planning Council shall consist of the Moderator, the Church Clerk, the Sunday School Superintendent, the Church Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, the Building Fund Treasurer, and one representative from each of the following groups: the Deacons, the Deaconesses, the Trustees, and each standing committee.
- B. The Church Planning Council will meet semi-annually to coordinate the events and projects of the church and to place those projects on a six month calendar. The Pastor shall preside.

ARTICLE XII: STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. Finance Committee:
 - 1. The Church Treasurer shall chair the committee which includes the Financial Secretary, Church Clerk, Sunday School Treasurer, Building Fund Treasurer and the Chair of the Trustees.
 - 2. The committee duties include preparation and proposal of a yearly budget and recommendation of compensation packages for all paid church employees.
- B. Christian Education Committee:
 - 1. The Sunday School Superintendent shall chair the committee which includes the Assistant Sunday School Superintendent, the Sunday School Secretary, Sunday School Treasurer and two elected At-Large members.
 - 2. The committee duties include promotion of the Christian Education of the Sunday School and the Youth Groups Program, recruitment and selection of teachers and assistants for Sunday School classes and Youth Groups, administration of Vacation Bible School and guide, train and encourage all teachers and assistants.
- C. Entertainment Committee:
 - 1. The committee shall consist of no less than five elected individuals.
 - 2. The committee duties include coordination of congregational meals at the church. Housing and meal arrangements for evangelists and visitors will be a shared responsibility with the Evangelism Committee.
 - 3. The committee duties include Church Homecoming events which will be planned for the fourth Sunday in September in those years ending in zero or five. A special subcommittee may be appointed by the Moderator to help the Entertainment Committee plan meals, speakers, music and invitations to former members and pastors.

- D. Flowers:
1. One person shall be responsible for sending flowers in the name of the congregation upon the death of church members or their immediate families.
 2. One person shall be responsible for the weekly presentation and care of flowers within the sanctuary.
- E. Ushers Committee:
1. The committee shall consist of no less than twelve individuals. Those elected individuals may serve as couples, families or pairs.
 2. The committee duties include welcoming persons entering the church, distribution of bulletins, seating the congregation, registration of guests, collection of tithes and offerings and procuring acolytes.
- F. Music Committee:
1. The committee shall consist of as many as five elected individuals, including the music staff.
 2. The committee duties include recruitment of appropriate pianists, organists, and choir directors, supervision of the maintenance of musical instruments and planning for the musical selections used during the church services.
- G. Service Committee:
1. The committee shall consist of no less than five elected individuals.
 2. The Committee duties include arrangements for serving a meal for the family of members lost to death, when desired by the family.
- H. Nominating Committee:
1. The committee shall consist of five adult church members appointed by the Moderator.
 2. The committee duties include preparation of a slate of nominees for all offices and committees as required by the church constitution and to present a nominee for any necessary office or committee vacancies which occur during the year.
- I. Nursery Committee:
1. The committee shall consist of no less than four elected individuals.
 2. The committee duties include supervision of nursery-sitters and assistants and maintenance of the nursery supplies.

- J. **Helpers and Assistants:**
 - 1. Committees may enlist additional helpers upon approval of the Deacons.
 - 2. Helpers are not committee members and have no voting powers.

ARTICLE XIII: SUBCOMMITTEES:

- A. **Memorial:**
 - 1. The subcommittee shall consist of no less than one trustee and one other adult appointed by the Trustees. The trustee subcommittee member shall be appointed Memorial Fund Treasurer.
 - 2. The subcommittee duties include administration of the funds resulting from memorials established within the church and seeking appropriate projects to reflect the wishes of the established memorials.
- B. **Financial Review:**
 - 1. The committee shall consist of no less than two individuals responsible to the Finance Committee.
 - 2. The committee shall inspect the financial records maintained by the church treasurer and the financial records maintained by the building fund treasurer.

ARTICLE XIV: AMENDMENTS

- A. The Affiliation of this church as set forth in Article I may only be changed by an eighty-five percent vote of a quorum defined as seventy-five percent of the active membership.
- B. All other articles of this constitution may be amended at a regular or called business meeting with a two-thirds vote of the defined regular quorum necessary for passage.
- C. Changes in the By-laws of this constitution may be proposed at a regular or called business meeting with a simple majority of the defined regular quorum necessary for passage.

ARTICLE XV: PARLIAMENTARY RULES:

Modified Robert's Rules of Order shall be the guide for questions of normal parliamentary procedure. Article XV, Section A will supersede normal parliamentary guidelines.

BYLAWS:

I. STATEMENTS OF BELIEF

1. As described in Scripture, the church believes that God grants redemption to all who confess and forsake their sins and receive His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.
2. As described in Scripture, the church believes that every person must be granted human compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity, following the examples recorded by Jesus Christ.
3. As described in Scripture, the church believes that the single meaning of marriage is the joining of one man and one woman in an exclusive union sanctioned by God.
4. In order to maintain the integrity of the church as a biblical role model, the church believes that volunteers and employees of the church abide by the statements of belief of the church.

II. STATEMENTS OF PROCEDURE

1. Regular worship services shall be held Sunday morning. Regular worship services shall be held Sunday evening. The Deacons shall use information concerning weather conditions and attendance to modify the yearly schedule regarding Sunday evening services
2. Adult Bible Study shall be held Wednesday evening. The Deacons shall use information concerning weather conditions and attendance to modify the yearly schedule regarding Wednesday Adult Bible study.
3. Regular business meetings shall be held the evening of the third Sunday of January, April, July and October.
4. The regular observance of Communion shall be held the first Sunday of each month.
5. A biennial review of the membership roll shall be made by the Deacons and the Church Clerk in order to establish an active membership list.
6. The fiscal year shall be the calendar year.
7. Prior to the general budget meeting, each committee is to present to the Finance Committee an estimate of budget for the new year. The proposed budget will be presented at the October business meeting.
8. The nominating committee will present a slate of officers and committees for the new year at the October business meeting.

9. The first named of each committee is responsible for calling the organizational meeting of the committee by the end of the first month of the new year.
10. Expenditures exceeding \$500 will require specific approval of the voting church membership.
11. The moderator calls the first meeting of the nominating committee in order for the chairperson to be elected.
12. Ushers will choose acolytes from responsible youth of the church. Ushers will choose collection ushers from the adults present and from those responsible youth of approximately 14 years old and older.