

CONSTITUTION OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

Article I. NAME

The name of this church shall be the FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS. The church is incorporated under this name under the laws of the State of ILLINOIS.

Article II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is to give visible form to the faith and fellowship to which God has called his people. The members acknowledge themselves to be a local manifestation of the Universal Church in and through which Jesus Christ continues to minister to the world by his Holy Spirit. The church shall seek to fulfill this calling through congregational worship services, through a program of Christian nurture by which members may be built up in their faith and love, through proclamation of the gospel by word and deed, and through ministering to human need in the name of Christ.

Article III. GOVERNMENT

Recognizing Jesus Christ as the only head of the Church, this congregation shall seek to ascertain and to obey the will of the Lord in all matters of faith and practice. This church holds that the authority to reach decisions for governing its affairs has been given to its members by Jesus Christ. In carrying out the world-wide ministry for which Christ has made his Church responsible, it shall adhere to and be a member of the American Baptist Churches, USA, and the American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region. In matters that pertain to the peace of this congregation and the peaceful relationship with other Baptist churches, this church recognizes its duty and responsibility to ask for and heed the counsel of duly appointed representatives from said bodies.

Article IV. DOCTRINE

This church accepts the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired record of God's revelatory actions in human history, and as the basis for the Church's doctrine and practice. Any confessions of faith adopted by this church as an expression of the Christian doctrines set forth in the scriptures shall be subject to revision by this church as it receives new insights into the Word of God.

Article V. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 – Admission

Any person confessing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and having been prepared for membership and recommended by the pastor and Church Board, may by vote of this church become a member in any of the following ways:

- A. Baptism by immersion.
- B. Transfer of letter from another Christian church.
- C. Statement of Christian experience when he/she does not have a letter of transfer from another Christian church.
- D. Restoration after having lost his/her membership in this church

Section 2 – Dismissal

A member may be dismissed from membership by action of the Church Board for the following reasons:

- A. Letter of dismissal upon request from another church.
- B. Erasure, when a member:
 - a. has died;
 - b. has joined another church;
 - c. has requested the removal of his/her name from the rolls;
- C. Who as resident member has voluntarily failed to attend a regular worship service or contribute financially to the support of the church for an extended period of time. This action will only be taken after a concerted effort has been made to reactivate such member;
- D. Who as a non-resident member has voluntarily failed to respond to letters that urge transfer of membership to a local church or failed to provide continuing financial support of this church for an extended period of time. This section does not pertain to members who are students or military personnel.

Section 3 - Responsibilities of Membership

We believe that God revealed in the scriptures that he is pleased to be in covenant with his people, and that we are to trust in his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and to confess this trust by baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Because of this belief, we now solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with God and with one another as one body in Christ. We covenant together, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love. In so doing, we strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and peace. As members, we commit to sustain its worship, faith, and practice and to contribute regularly to the expenses of the church as a means of expressing appreciation to God for his blessings. We also covenant together to maintain family and private worship and Christian teaching, to seek the salvation of our acquaintances, to walk as children of God in the world, and to be zealous in our

efforts to serve the kingdom of God. When we remove from this place, we will without delay unite with some other church where we may continue to carry out the spirit of this covenant.

Article VI. OFFICERS

Section 1 - Names

The officers of the church shall consist of the pastor, moderator, vice moderator, church clerk, church treasurer, and such other church staff members as designated by the Church Board.

Section 2 - Term of Office

Each officer, except the pastor and church staff members, shall be elected to serve a term of three (3) years and until his/her successor is elected. He/She may be re-elected to the same office for two consecutive terms after which the person will not be able to serve in the same capacity until one (1) year after his/her term has expired.

In the event an officer, other than the pastor, church staff members or the moderator, is unable to fulfill his/her elected term, the board shall appoint a replacement until the next regular election of officers occurs. At that time an officer will be elected to the vacated position for a regular three year term.

Section 3 – Duties

A. Moderator

The moderator shall preside at all business meetings of the church and shall serve as chairman of the Church Board and as a non-voting member of the Committee on Pastoral Relations.

B. Vice Moderator

The vice moderator shall act in the absence of the moderator and serve as the chair of the nominating committee (see Article VIII, section 3).

The vice moderator shall also be responsible for ensuring the Board performs an annual review of the Manual on Committees and performs other duties as assigned by the Church Board.

In the event the Moderator is unable to fulfill his/her elected term, the vice moderator shall serve as moderator until the next regular election of officers occurs. At that time, a moderator will be elected for a regular three-year term.

C. Church Clerk

The church clerk shall keep a record of the name, manner, and date of admission, date of birth and a record of the dismissal of all resident and nonresident members; all official acts of the church; minutes of meetings of the Church Board; and annual reports filed by other organizations. He/She shall issue letters of dismissal, and shall be custodian of all records of the church. For statistical purposes, non-resident members, that is, those who live beyond the community shall not be reported as members.

D. Church Treasurer

The church treasurer shall keep itemized and systematic accounts of all receipts and disbursements, according to standard accounting practices as established by the stewardship committee, of funds in his/her custody. The treasurer shall render a summarized report, in writing, of all receipts and disbursements of church monies during the preceding month as well as other financial information as requested at the regular meeting of the Church Board. He/She shall have custody of all funds of the church. He/She shall keep a bank account in the name of the church in a bank approved by the stewardship committee and shall deposit in such account all monies received to the account of the church. He/She shall keep a savings account or accounts as directed by the Church Board. All disbursements shall be only by check after approval of payment in the manner specified by the stewardship committee. Any auxiliary organization may have an account on the church books in the name of such organization. Such account shall be managed in the same manner as other church funds except that approval of disbursements shall be by the proper officer of such auxiliary organization.

All disbursements shall be within the budget appropriation and no disbursement not in conformity with the budget appropriation shall be made unless approved by the stewardship committee and the Church Board. All checks shall be signed on behalf of the church by the treasurer or the assistant treasurer. The church treasurer and assistant church treasurer will be bonded as required by the Church Board.

Article VII. PASTORAL RELATIONS

Section 1 – Duties

A. Pastor

The pastor shall be the leader of the church in all its activities and shall preach the gospel, administer baptism and the Lord's Supper, have

charge of the stated services of public worship, direct the spiritual welfare of the church, participate in denominational and ecumenical work and supervise the work of the employed staff. He/She shall be an ex-officio member of all boards, committees, and all auxiliary organizations in the church. The pastor shall also perform such duties as are assigned and in accordance with the job description for the pastor.

B. Other Church Staff Members

The other church staff members shall perform such duties as assigned and in accordance with the current job descriptions.

Section 2 - Selection

A. Pastor

When a vacancy occurs in the office of pastor, a search committee of nine (9) members including five (5) members of the Committee on Pastoral Relations shall be elected by the church. Appointments for members of the search committee shall be made by the Church Board and shall be representative of church membership. The search committee shall make a recommendation to the Church Board, and after its approval, to the general membership. A new pastor shall be called upon a favorable vote of 3/4 of the members present and voting at a special business meeting.

B. Associate or Assistant Pastors and Director of Christian Education

When a vacancy occurs in any of these positions that the Church Board decides to fill, it shall be filled by following the same general process as used for selecting a pastor: the Church Board shall appoint a committee of at least 9 church members that shall include the Pastor and at least one representative from the Church Board and the Pastor Relations Committee.

C. Committee on Pastoral Relations

The church shall elect a free-standing Committee on Pastoral Relations to foster constructive communication between the congregation and its pastoral leadership, and to address the congregation's responsibility for the pastor's professional and personal well-being. The committee's structure and functions shall be stated in the Church Manual on Committees.

Section 3 - Staff Qualifications

The pastor shall be a regularly ordained Baptist minister, according to the standards adopted by the American Baptist Churches, USA and shall agree

to cooperate with and promote the general aims and objectives of the American Baptist Churches, USA. Associate or assistant pastors shall be regularly ordained Baptist ministers. Directors of Christian Education shall meet qualifications for that position as established by the Church Board in cooperation with the pastor.

Section 4 - Dissolution of Relationship

The relationship may be dissolved by either the pastor, associate / assistant pastor, or director of Christian Education, or by the church, or by mutual consent upon at least sixty (60) days' notice to the other. Action by the church shall be by a vote of a majority of the members present and voting at a special business meeting. Any such meeting shall be called only upon the recommendation of the Church Board.

Article VIII. CHURCH BOARD

Section 1 -. Functions

The Church Board shall decide upon, supervise, direct and coordinate the total program of the church and shall assist in administering the ordinances of the church. Decisions of the Church Board affecting the purpose and governance of the church shall be reported to and ratified by the membership of the church before becoming effective. The Church Board shall hold title to all real and personal property of the church. It shall authorize the execution of all notes, mortgages and legal instruments except that the purchase or sale of any real estate shall be authorized by the membership. All legal documents shall be executed by the moderator or vice moderator and the church clerk or church treasurer. The Board shall adopt an annual budget of income and expenses prior to the beginning of each fiscal year after holding a hearing on the budget open to the membership. All meetings of the Church Board shall be open to the membership and members may present any church matter to the Church Board.

Section 2 – Organization

The Church Board shall consist of the officers of the church and the chairperson of designated committees of the Church. Board members will be elected for a three (3) year term so arranged that 1/3 will be elected each year.

The Church Board will meet monthly or at such other times as called by the moderator or the pastor.

A simple majority of the members of the Church Board shall constitute a quorum.

A simple majority of all members present shall be required for passage of any questions submitted to the Board for a vote.

The Church Board may appoint special committees as needed.

Section 3 - Committees

- A. The Vice-Moderator shall nominate for Board appointment a nominating committee to serve under the Vice Moderator's leadership. The nominating committee's primary responsibility will be to present a slate of nominees to the Church Board for Church Officers and committee chairs.
- B. Work and activities which are subject to the direction and decision of the Church Board shall be assigned to committees by the Church Board. The Church Board shall prepare and keep up to date a Manual on Committees which shall contain the title of each committee and describe the duties for which each committee is responsible as well as any other information determined by the Church Board to be pertinent to the functioning of the respective committee.

Section 4 - Committee Chairpersons and Members

- A. Committee Chairpersons shall be recommended to the Congregation by the nominating committee at the annual meeting. Committee members shall be appointed by the Church Board at the first meeting of the Church Board in each year following the annual meeting of the church.
- B. Committee members shall be approved and appointed by the Church Board. A committee member shall serve a term as designated by the Church Board and until his/her successor is appointed. Each committee shall elect a secretary.

Section 5 Unfulfilled Terms of Office

- A. In the event a committee chairperson is unable to fulfill his/her elected term, the nominating committee shall nominate for board approval a replacement to fulfill the vacated position until the next regular election of committee chairs occurs. At that time a replacement will be elected to the vacated position for a regular three year term

Article IX. FISCAL YEAR AND BEGINNING OF TERMS

The fiscal year of the church for business will correspond to the calendar year. The term of office for members, and committee members shall begin during the month of June unless they are filling a vacant position in which case their term of office shall begin the month following their election.

Article X. MEETINGS

Section 1 - Religious meetings

The church shall meet for public worship each Sunday morning. The number of services and the time shall be determined by the Church Board. Other public worship services shall be held as determined by the Church Board. The Lord's Supper shall be observed once each month and at other times as determined by the Church Board.

Baptism shall be administered in a worship service as needed.

Section 2 - Business Meetings

- A. Annual Meeting

The annual meeting shall be held during the month of May to elect officers and members of the Church Board to serve their designated terms, and to receive written reports of the staff, officers, Church Board and committees, and to conduct such other business as may come before the membership.

B. Quarterly Meetings

Quarterly meetings shall be held in February, May, August, and November.

C. Special Meetings

Special business meetings, except a meeting called to vote on the calling of a pastor, may be called upon a written request of three (3) members of the Church Board, or by seven (7) church members, or by the moderator.

D. Notice

Notice of a special meeting to fill a vacancy in an office or to dissolve the relationship with the pastor, associate or assistant pastor or director of Christian education shall be given by mail to all members at least ten (10) days prior to said meeting. Notice of all other meetings shall be given by publication in the church bulletin or by announcement from the pulpit on the Sunday preceding said meeting.

Section 3 - Rules of Order

A quorum shall consist of thirty-five (35) members except as otherwise provided. All members shall be entitled to vote at all business meetings. Robert's Rules of Order shall prevail in the conduct of the business of this church at all meetings of its members, including the Church Board, and committee meetings.

Article XI – AFFILIATION

This church is affiliated with the American Baptist Churches, USA and the American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region. In the event this church shall cease to cooperate with and promote the general aims and objectives of the American Baptist Churches, USA or terminates its affiliation with either the American Baptist Churches, USA or the American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region by any manner, then all of the property of this church, including real property and personal property shall become the property of the American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region. Title to all property of the church shall be held on the above conditions and instruments of conveyance to the church shall include a clause containing the last preceding sentence. When any organization named in this constitution with which this church is affiliated changes its name, merges, or goes out of existence, then the Church Board shall direct that appropriate change to reflect such action be made in this constitution upon the next printing of this constitution.

Article XII – AMENDMENTS

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Section 1 - Denominational Affiliation

Article XI of this constitution may be amended by an 85% majority vote at both of two meetings at least one (1) year apart at which a quorum shall be 75% of the resident members.

Section 2 - Other Amendments

An amendment to any other article of this constitution shall require a majority vote of resident members present and voting. Such a vote will require at least 35 members in attendance at any meeting in which a constitutional amendment is decided.

Section 3 - Notice of Amendments

Notice of a meeting to vote upon any amendment shall be given to the membership at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting. Such notice may be given by announcement from the pulpit and reading the terms of the amendment from the pulpit or by written notice mailed to all members of the church stating the time and place of the meeting and enclosing copies of the proposed amendment.

<i>Adopted</i>	<i>October 29, 1967</i>
<i>Amended</i>	<i>June 22, 1969</i>
<i>Amended</i>	<i>January 19, 1975</i>
<i>Amended</i>	<i>May 3, 1981</i>
<i>Amended</i>	<i>November 7, 1982</i>
<i>Amended</i>	<i>May 1, 1994</i>
<i>Amended</i>	<i>February 18, 2007</i>