



BACKGROUND

Since its inception, Riverside Baptist Church (RBC) has abided by its Constitution and By-Laws as unanimously adopted on September 20, 1953. While we are grateful to the Lord for this constitution which He has used for this church for nearly seventy years, it has become necessary for the 21st century church to revise it. A copy of the 1953 constitution is provided as a matter of record, and a copy of the revision is hereby proposed. May the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Head of the church, guide us in adopting this proposed revision!

CONSTITUTION

of Riverside Baptist Church, Riverside, California

Preamble

We, the members of Riverside Baptist Church, having placed our faith solely in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, having been scripturally immersed in baptism following our salvation, and accepting the Bible as the inspired and inerrant Word of God, do band together as a local expression of the body of Christ. This document declares our beliefs and the procedures that will help us to accomplish the Lord's work consistently, decently, and in order.

Article I - Name

The name of this congregation shall be Riverside Baptist Church of Riverside, California.

Article II - Purpose

Riverside Baptist Church exists to glorify God by pointing unbelievers to new life in Christ (evangelism of the lost), and also by leading believers into a fuller life through Christ (Christian growth through discipleship which includes the equipping of the saints).

Article III - Articles of Faith

Please see *RBC Articles of Faith* as unanimously adopted on December 29, 2019.

Article IV - Membership

Section 1 - Admission

Any person desiring membership of Riverside Baptist Church shall notify a member of the Pastoral staff of their desire. Upon such notification, he/she shall become a candidate. A candidate shall meet with a member of the Pastoral staff and/or the Deacons to verify that he/she meets the conditions of membership. Candidates for membership must profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and be scripturally baptized by immersion.

Candidates shall be received into the church body in one of the following ways:

- A. Profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ followed by scriptural baptism.

B. A letter of transfer from church of like faith.

C. Persons under discipline from another church of like faith and practice may be admitted subsequent to examination and approval by Pastor and Deacons.

Members are expected to have read the Constitution and the Articles of Faith and to be supportive of the doctrine and practice of Riverside Baptist Church. Membership is granted upon a unanimous vote of the church members following a recommendation of the Pastor and Deacons. Membership may be voted on at a public service.

Section 2 - Responsibilities

All members are expected to obey the moral precepts and principles taught in the Word of God and to support the church through attendance, giving, prayer, and faithful service.

Section 3 - Legal Action

Each member of Riverside Baptist Church agrees that he/she will not initiate legal action against the church, nor against the Pastors, Deacons, Trustees or church staff/leaders in connection with their performance of official duties. Any Church member considering legal action against another Church member (especially concerning church matters) is encouraged to heed Biblical teaching on this matter. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander (1 Cor 6:1-8; Eph 4:31-32).

Section 4 - Dismissal

A member may be dismissed from the membership in one of the following ways:

A. By death.

B. By request. Any member, not under church discipline, who personally wishes to withdraw from the fellowship of the church for any reason—no letter is granted.

C. By letter. Any member in good standing who wishes to transfer to another church of like faith and practice—a letter of recommendation is granted to the church.

D. By continued absence. Any member who is absent for a consecutive period of one year, may be removed from the active membership upon the Pastor and Deacons' recommendation.

E. By discipline. Any member, including the Pastor and staff members, may be dismissed after the exercise of scriptural church discipline (see Section 5 below).

Section 5 - Discipline

Our Lord Jesus Christ gave the responsibility of discipline to the church. Each local church must guard its doctrine (1 Tim 3:15), discipline its members (Matt 18:15-17; 1 Cor 5:4-5; 2 Thess 3:6), and maintain internal unity (1 Cor 1:10). It is the duty of the church to fulfill this responsibility, even when it means excluding from its fellowship any member who persists in sin and disobedience to God's Word (Matt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5). Understanding that the

primary goal of church discipline is the restoration of the sinning member, we have established the following guidelines.

A. Grounds. Should any member become an offense to the church and a stumbling-block to the ministry by means of non-Christian conduct, by consistent breach of the Constitution and By-Laws, or by reason of heretical beliefs, the church may terminate his/her membership.

B. Procedures:

1. Every effort will be made according to the Scripture (Matt 18:15-17), prayer, and persuasion to restore the individual to fellowship (Gal 6:1-2).

2. When every effort has failed to restore such a member, the Pastor and Deacons shall, by majority vote, recommend to the congregation disciplinary discharge from the membership of the church. A public recommendation to consider termination of membership shall be made only by the Pastor or Deacons.

3. The member in question shall then be notified by the Pastor or an appointed Deacon as to the time of when such a recommendation is to be presented to the church. This notification shall be given at least one week before the day of the business meeting.

4. The recommendation of the Pastor and Deacons need not include any more information than that which is necessary to indicate clearly sufficient grounds for disciplinary discharge. The repentance ought to be as public as the sin is notorious. That is, publicly known sins are to be repented of publicly.

5. Members of the church shall be notified at least one week in advance of the meeting to recommend disciplinary discharge.

6. Only voting members may attend such a meeting, and a majority vote of an ordinary quorum shall be required for passage of recommendation.

7. The person discharged for disciplinary reasons shall be regarded lovingly by the church. All contact by church members with the disciplined member should be for the purpose of restoration (Matt 18:17; 1 Cor 5:11; 2 Thess 3:15). However, the church shall endeavor by prayer and invitation to win him back into fellowship with Christ, hoping constantly for restoration with the church.

Section 6 - Restoration

Upon confession to God of personal offenses and giving satisfactory evidence to the church of repentance, those who have been disciplined from the membership of the church may have their membership restored by a two-thirds majority vote at a regular service or business meeting of the church, following recommendation by the Pastor and Deacons.

Article V - Meetings

Section 1 - Regular Services

A. The primary services of the church will be held on Sunday. The number and times of which will be determined by the church to meet the needs of the church upon the recommendation of the Pastor, Deacons and Trustees. Additional meetings may be held throughout the week for further instruction, fellowship and service.

B. Observance of the Lord's Table. The church shall normally observe the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper once per month, on the first Sunday of the month. Special observance of the Lord's Table may be called and conducted as the Pastoral staff may deem necessary.

Section 2 - Business Meetings

A. Regular Business Meetings of the church shall be held as needed and according to a predetermined, publicized schedule.

B. Special Business Meetings, including, but not limited to, meetings in which a vote will be taken for the purchase or sale of real estate, shall be called by the Pastor or upon his approval. Special meetings may be called at any time provided notice is given in two regular services prior to the special meeting.

C. Moderator. The Pastor shall moderate all business meetings; in his absence, there shall be no meeting to transact Church business.

D. Quorum. Those voting members present at a scheduled business meeting shall constitute a quorum.

E. Voting. All members eighteen years of age and older in good standing and present in person may vote on matters of business which are legally and properly presented at any business meeting. Except as otherwise specified herein, a simple majority vote of all members present as stated above shall be required for passage of any motion, resolution, or any transaction of business.

Article VI - Responsibilities of Officers and Leaders

Since officers and leaders are in positions of respect and example, all those who have been elected or appointed to offices and leadership positions must conscientiously endeavor to live faithfully to the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God. All personnel must be born-again Christians, striving to live blameless lives in service to the Lord and his work.

Endeavoring to live lives that are above reproach in heart and in conduct they should abstain from those things that could cause a fellow Christian to stumble or hinder their testimony (1 Cor 8:13, Mt 5:16), such as the use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, gambling/gaming, ungodly dancing, secret societies, and other amusements and organizations dishonoring to God.

They shall also endeavor to be faithful in personal Bible study and prayer, evangelism and discipleship, stewardship and attendance to this church, and to be exemplary in matters of Christian conduct, such as modesty in dress and appearance, use of language, attitude, etc.

Article VII - Church Officers

Section 1 - Pastor

A. Qualifications. The Pastor shall be a male called of God to preach and meet the scriptural demands set forth in 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-11. He must believe and without qualification adhere to the Word of God, constitution, and articles of faith, spiritual and moral standards as set forth in this document, and be uncompromising in the preaching of these truths.

B. Call. The Deacons shall act as the pulpit committee. Other spiritually-minded men may be placed on the committee by the recommendation and approval by vote of the pulpit committee. In case of death or resignation of the Pastor, the pulpit committee shall call several preachers that the congregation may hear them speak and know their form of teaching. Upon unanimous vote, the pulpit committee may submit to the congregation one man as candidate. After careful examination of his person, family, ministry, and beliefs, he shall be asked to preach at both Sunday services as a candidate and to be interviewed by the congregation. (The committee shall inform the congregation of his credentials prior to his appearing.) He shall have been previously informed by the committee concerning the proposed call, responsibilities, tenure, financial stipulations, and all facets of the church's ministry.

Upon proper announcement by the committee, the membership shall vote by secret ballot the following Sunday on his being called to the pastorate. He shall be elected by a three-fourths majority of voting members present. The candidate will be informed of the result of the vote and be asked if he will accept the call. (He must desire the office and meet the Biblical qualifications.) Should he not accept the call, the committee will then consider another candidate. Only one man shall be considered at a time. He must be voted on by the congregation before another may candidate for the position.

C. Tenure. The Pastor shall continue in office until he resigns or is dismissed by a three-fourths majority vote of the members present at any business meeting where his dismissal has been announced at least two weeks in advance and in at least three services of the church. At least thirty days notice shall be given by either party in case of desired separation.

D. Responsibilities. The Pastor, as the under-shepherd responsible to the Lord Jesus Christ, shall preach the Word of God and administer the ordinances of the church. He shall be the leader of the church and shall advance the spiritual life of the congregation. He is the overseer of all phases of the church life, work and ministry from worship, evangelism, baptism, teaching to the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry. He is at liberty to schedule special meetings such as Bible conferences, evangelistic meetings, missionary conferences, and special guest speakers as he is led of the Lord.

The Pastor is an ex-officio member of every committee and organization of the church.

E. Salary. The Pastor's salary and allowance(s) shall be fixed prior to the time of election and may be changed at any regular business meeting of the church provided that prior notice has been given to the church (see Business Meetings Article V, Section 2). The amount shall be reviewed at least annually by the budget committee and its recommendation made subject to approval of the church.

Section 2 - Deacons

A. Qualifications. Deacons shall be male and meet the scriptural qualifications of the office set forth in Acts 6:3 and 1 Tim 3:8-13, and shall have been active members of the church for at least twelve months.

B. Election and Tenure. The congregation shall elect Deacons by ballot. Deacons shall serve a term of one year and may be re-elected each year so long as they fulfill their office godly and satisfactorily to the church. The number of Deacons shall be determined by the needs of the church and the men scripturally qualified to serve. Installation of new Deacons will be by a dedication service following their election.

C. Responsibilities. Being directly accountable to the Pastor, Deacons shall assist the Pastor in carrying on the work of the church. They shall relieve the Pastor of many responsibilities in order to better meet the needs of the church including, but not limited to ministering to the sick, benevolence, care of property, and visitation. They shall be vitally active in the discipleship and evangelism ministries of the church and shall assist in the ordinances of the church. (The duties of the Deacons wives are the same as the duties of the Deacons with the exception of usurping any authority of the Worship Service.)

The Pastor shall call a Deacons' meeting when such need arises, giving sufficient notice to all, considering the circumstances. All Deacons are expected to be faithful to meetings. Any Deacon who is remiss in his responsibilities or whose life or family brings reproach to his office should resign or the Pastor may recommend his dismissal to the congregation.

D. Miscellaneous. The Deacons may also serve as Trustees in case that state requires a different number than the current number of Trustees.

Section 3 - Church Staff

In order to meet the needs of the congregation adequately, the Pastor is at liberty to fill positions, salaried and unsalaried with personnel who are equipped for the task and meet the spiritual qualifications as well as in full agreement with the Articles of Faith previously set forth. The salaried positions may be filled upon approval of the Deacons and Trustees and to be voted upon by three-fourths majority of the active members of the church. These positions include Executive Pastors, Assistant/Associate Pastors, Youth and/or Music ministers, Musicians, Church Secretaries, Custodial Staff, Superintendents, Ushers and other staff positions. It is expected that the Pastor make a wise and prayerful decision after seeking the council of the Deacons and in the best interest of the church. Salaried personnel may be

hired only after the congregation has allocated the funds for that position in the budget. The Pastor is entrusted with the responsibility of dismissing staff members. This may include, but is not limited to those who violate the conduct required of the officers of the church, the RBC Articles of Faith, or who are remiss in their duties. The staff is directly responsible to the Pastor in their duties.

Section 4 - Trustees

A. Qualifications. Trustees will be nominated by the Pastor and Deacons, and voted on by the congregation at the annual business meeting.

B. Election and Tenure. The congregation shall elect Trustees by ballot. Trustees shall serve a term of one year and may be re-elected each year so long as they fulfill their office godly and satisfactorily to the church. The number of Trustees shall be determined by the needs of the church and the men scripturally qualified to serve. Installation of new Trustees will be by a dedication service following their election.

C. Responsibilities. They shall act as the legal agents of the church. They are the guardians of the church's legal papers and valuables. The Trustees are the officers of this corporation in legal matters; they shall audit or arrange for an audit of the church finances as needed, and maintain the church insurance. They are also in-charge of maintaining proper care of church property but have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any such property without the specific vote of the church authorizing such action. They may act only by direction of the congregation.

Section 5 - Treasurer

A. Election and Tenure. The Pastor and Deacons shall nominate a Treasurer and/or Assistant Treasurer to the congregation at the annual business meeting. The congregation shall elect Treasurer/s by ballot. Treasurer/s shall serve a term of one year and may be re-elected each year so long as they fulfill their responsibilities in a godly and satisfactory manner. Installation of new Treasurer/s will be by a dedication service following their election.

B. Responsibilities. The treasurer shall have custody of all church money, shall keep an accurate record of all offerings and expenditures, and shall without special order pay all expenditures authorized by the church budget. All other bills shall be paid only after they have been approved by the church. A report of such shall be given at least monthly as well as a yearly report at the annual business meeting.

Section 6 - Financial Secretary

A. Election and Tenure. The Pastor and Deacons shall nominate a Financial Secretary to the congregation at the annual business meeting. The congregation shall elect Financial Secretary by ballot. Financial Secretary shall serve a term of one year and may be re-elected each year so long as they fulfill their responsibilities in a godly and satisfactory manner. Installation of new Financial Secretary will be by a dedication service following their election.

B. Responsibilities. The financial secretary shall keep a just, accurate, and confidential record between the church and its members of all money received from any source in behalf

of the church and provide the same to the Treasurer/s. He/she shall submit reports as needed by the Pastor and annually and shall provide a record of giving to individual members who so desire at the end of each year.

Section 7 - Clerk

A. Election and Tenure. The Pastor and Deacons shall nominate a Clerk to the congregation at the annual business meeting. The congregation shall elect Clerk by ballot. Clerk shall serve a term of one year and may be re-elected each year so long as they fulfill their responsibilities in a godly and satisfactory manner. Installation of new Clerk will be by a dedication service following their election.

B. Responsibilities. The clerk shall keep a correct and permanent record of all the business meetings of the church, shall present the minutes at each business meeting, shall be the custodian of all the legal documents of the church, shall keep in his/her possession all deeds, insurance policies, securities and valuable papers, subject to the order of the church and in service to the Trustees, and shall keep a register of all the members of the church, and send appropriate letters to other churches in regard to the receiving and dismissing of members.

Section 8 - Ancillary Ministries

All missionaries, mission boards, and ministries shall be dismissed if they no longer follow the RBC Articles of Faith.

Article VIII - Church Government

Section 1 - Autonomy

This church, as a corporation, shall be non-stock, non-profit, and an exclusively religious corporation. This church is an independent Baptist church that is totally self-governing.

Section 2 - Authority

Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd, is the highest authority of the church. God has commissioned the Pastor to oversee the local church and to shepherd His sheep. The Pastor leads by the call of Christ and the consent of the congregation, the government of this church being vested in its membership.

Section 3 - Associations and Fellowships

Riverside Baptist Church shall be and shall always remain independent and autonomous. However, it may participate in fellowship and activity with other local churches or organizations of like faith and practice which consistently uphold the truth of God's Word and the spirit of this constitution and by-laws. Although said churches or organizations may have common interests, none of those interests may be pursued to the detriment of this local congregation.

Article IX - Separation

This church is opposed to any and all compromising movements, persons, and organizations. Therefore, Riverside Baptist Church shall refuse to collaborate with, or will withdraw cooperation from, any ecclesiastical organization or religious leader that clearly and/or purposely deviates from the Word of God in doctrine and practice

Article X - Committees

Section 1 - Budget Committee

The budget committee shall consist of the Treasurer/s, Trustees, Pastoral staff, Deacons, and at least one at-large member appointed by the Pastor. Prior to the annual business meeting, the budget committee shall prepare a recommended budget for the church, which shall be submitted at the annual meeting and considered for adoption by the congregation for the ensuing year.

Section 2 - Nominating Committee

The nominating committee shall consist of the Deacons and the Pastoral staff. They will announce a list of the offices to be filled at least three weeks prior to the election of officers. Members may suggest qualified persons by submitting their names to the committee. The committee will review all names and add any which they consider qualified. The committee will then recommend qualified and willing persons to the church for vote. No further nominations will be made from the floor. Voting for officers will be done by secret ballot.

Section 3 - Other Committees

All other committees and committee positions shall be considered, set up, and appointed by the Pastor and Deacons. All such committees and officers shall be responsible to the Pastor and the congregation. Job descriptions and/or responsibilities will be approved by the Pastor and Deacons.

Article XI - Ministries

All ministries, departments, organizations, classes, and groups are subservient parts of the church and shall under no circumstances be considered as separate and apart from the church or as operating independently of the church, its Pastor, and the Deacons.

Article XII - Finances

The financial needs of the church shall be met by the voluntary offerings and contributions of its members and friends. No entertainment venues, suppers, bazaars, rummage sales, or other similar methods for fund-raising shall be given by the church or auxiliary organizations whatsoever. Special offerings may be received apart from those collected in regular services.

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall

remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the Pastor and the board of Deacons. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church.

Article XIII - Property and Equipment

Decisions relative to the acquisition or sale of real property shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the members at a properly called congregational business meeting. All buildings, property, and equipment shall be used only by permission of the Pastor, Pastoral staff, Deacons, and/or Trustees. Use shall be principally for the use of this church, its functions, and related activities of the church.

Article XIV - Adoption and Amendments

Section 1 - Adoption

Upon adoption, this constitution bears immediate and complete constitutional authority upon this church.

Section 2 - Amendments

A. Procedure

This constitution may be revised or amended at any business meeting of the church, provided the meeting has been announced at least two weeks in advance and in at least three services of the church. The amendment shall be ratified by a three-fourths vote of the members present and voting.

B. Recording

A record of all amendments to this constitution and by-laws shall be kept in a book solely for that purpose. All said amendments shall be added to later additions of the constitution with the amendment date noted.

Article XVI - Dissolution of Corporation

In the event this church becomes incapable or unwilling to carry out its purposes, the church may be dissolved by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at a meeting called for the consideration of dissolution. In the event of dissolution, the title to all remaining assets of the church, after all debts are paid, shall pass to (a) non-profit organization(s) standing for the fundamental truths of the Word of God as outlined in Article III of this constitution. No remuneration will go to any of the members or officers of this church.