



Riverside Church

at Park and King

Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws 10.10.2021

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish these articles of incorporation to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to govern our church in an orderly manner. These articles shall preserve the liberties of each individual member of this church and the freedom of the action of this body in relation to other churches.

Article I NAME

This body is incorporated in the State of Florida as Riverside Baptist Church, a Florida Not For Profit Corporation, doing business as Riverside Church at Park & King.

Article II PURPOSE STATEMENT

Riverside Baptist Church is a fellowship of believers who follow the example of the life and teaching of Jesus, and who join ourselves together for the purpose of honoring the Triune God with our worship, for exercising our gifts for the good of our families and community, and for teaching and supporting God's people as they live the Christian life.

Article III STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEFS

We are a church in the Baptist tradition, believing that the freedom of conscience gives rise to authentic faith, sustainable community, equitable society. We speak of these freedoms in four ways:

1. **Soul Freedom:** we believe that every person is given agency by God to make choices in their spiritual lives, and that those choices. In our commitment to this freedom, we recognize that our pastors join us on the journey as guides and leaders.
2. **Bible Freedom:** because we are ultimately accountable to God for the choices in our spiritual lives, no interpretation of the Scripture is binding on another believer. Rather, we recognize the freedom of each person to study and interpret the Scriptures for themselves. In commitment to this freedom, we recognize that our church will have theological diversity without division; we will not force agreement.

3. **Church Freedom:** we recognize no ecclesiastical authority over our church, but rather assert the freedom of our local faith community to listen to the Holy Spirit and follow in the way that we believe that God is calling us. In commitment to this freedom, we will work cooperatively with the Alliance of Baptists, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and other connectional church bodies as deemed appropriate by two-thirds vote of the church, but those groups will not have control over the mission and ministry of our faith community.
4. **Religious Freedom:** we believe that these freedoms can only truly be exercised within a society where every person has the right to pray and worship – or not – as they choose. In commitment to this freedom, we will partner with those in the interfaith community to create a societal framework that promotes liberty and justice for all.

Article IV POLITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

The government of Riverside Baptist Church is vested in the Servant Leadership Team who are nominated by the Senior Pastor in consultation with the existing Servant Leadership Team and affirmed by the members of the congregation. Persons received by the members according to the policy established in the Bylaws under Article I shall constitute the membership. The Senior Pastor is nominated by the Servant Leadership Team and affirmed by the congregation and shall serve as defined in Article II. Persons duly nominated and affirmed to the Servant Leadership Team shall serve on the Servant Leadership Team as defined in Article V.

This church is subject to no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation common among Alliance of Baptists and Cooperative Baptists Churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support financially The Alliance of Baptists, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Florida, and their individual and collective mission efforts.

Riverside Baptist Church shall not participate in prohibited legislative or campaign activity as described under IRS 501(c)3 rules.

Article V Dissolution and Disposal of Assets

Riverside Baptist Church. may be dissolved at a special business meeting called for that purpose. This meeting must be called by two thirds of the Servant Leadership Team , and must be called by public announcement in a regular worship service two weeks in advance. The motion can only be approved by two-thirds of the congregation present and voting at the meeting.

In the case of the dissolution of Riverside Baptist Church, Inc, all assets shall be gifted to the Alliance of Baptists or other non-profit organization designated by the Servant Leadership Team.

Bylaws

Article I MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership Defined

Membership shall consist of persons who subscribe to the annual membership covenant, and who are received by vote of the Servant Leadership Team. Membership carries responsibility as well as privilege.

Section 2 Entering the Membership

New members shall be received each January and at other times as pastorally appropriate through the public commitment to the annual covenant of membership. Membership requests shall be approved by the Servant Leadership Team.

Section 3 Privileges and Responsibilities of Membership

Every member is entitled to participate in all programs and ministries of the church, to vote on all questions submitted to the church in any business meeting, provided the member is present, and to hold elective offices and positions of leadership in the church according to the eligibility identified in the Bylaws and/or policies of the church.

If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds majority of the Servant Leadership Team present and voting is required to dismiss a person from membership.

Upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation, the church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person and by a majority of the Servant Leadership Team present and voting.

Section 4 Leaving the Membership

Membership in the church may be terminated in any of these ways: transfer of membership by letter to another church; personal request to be dismissed; death; and dismissal by vote of the Servant Leadership Team .

Article II CHURCH OFFICERS

The Officers of this Church shall be: Senior Pastor, Associate Pastors, Servant Leadership Team Members (See Article V), Clerk, Treasurer, Deacons, and Directors of the Corporation. The Senior Pastor or their designee shall moderate all meetings of the Servant Leadership Team and congregation.

Section 1 Senior Pastor

Our Senior Pastor is called by God to oversee the staff and ministries of the church, to provide biblical teaching, and to lead the Servant Leadership Team in seeking to fulfill our vision and mission. The Senior Pastor is to guide and direct associate pastors and other church staff,

delegating as appropriate to the gifts and passions of various staff members. In consultation with the Servant Leadership Team, the Senior Pastor may recommend associate pastors to the church and employ other staff.

When the church is without a Senior Pastor, the Servant Leadership Team shall serve as search committee. An associate pastor shall always be called as the interim Senior Pastor unless there is no associate pastor available and willing to serve. All associate pastors may be considered for the role of Senior Pastor. Any associate pastor who is identified as a candidate for the Senior Pastor role will no longer serve on the search committee. The search committee shall prayerfully and carefully select one candidate to present to the church in view of a call, and in a special business meeting a three-fourths majority of the members present and voting in favor of the recommendation from the search committee shall constitute a call as Senior Pastor. They shall then serve as Senior Pastor until they resign, retire, or are dismissed.

Our pastors deserve our support. No public accusation may be brought against them without first trying to reconcile differences with them privately. If the differences are serious and persist, they may be brought before the Servant Leadership Team, who may decide how to resolve them, up to and including removal from office. Removing a pastor requires only a majority vote.

Section 2 Associate Pastors

Our associate pastors are called by God to serve along with and under the direction of our Senior Pastor in shepherding and leading the fellowship. They are added to our pastoral team to provide giftedness in specific areas of ministry, but they are to have a heart for the entire church as we all seek to follow Christ. Duly ordained Associate Pastors serve on the Servant Leadership Team of the church.

Section 3 Other Ministerial Staff

Other ministers may be called to serve on the staff but not to serve on the Servant Leadership Team of the church.

Section 4 Deacons

In their ministry role as servant-leaders, deacons free the pastors for increased Bible study and prayer, the spiritual preparation they need to preach the gospel. The deacons promote church harmony by engaging in the ministries of reconciliation and care. They provide for the welfare of members, and they strengthen the personal ministry of the church by actively participating in witnessing and disciple-making, leading through genuine service to the people of God.

Deacons are nominated by the Servant Leadership Team and affirmed by the congregation.

There will be a minimum of three deacons. More may be added as the growth of the church requires.

The term of a deacon is 3 years. A deacon may serve two consecutive terms and may serve future terms following a one-year hiatus.

Section 5 Directors of the Corporation

The three Directors of Riverside Baptist Church, Inc., shall be nominated by the Servant Leadership Team and affirmed by the congregation to serve for a three-year term. A director may serve two consecutive terms and may serve future terms following a one-year hiatus. The Directors shall follow the direction of the church. They have the power to execute documents on behalf of the corporation to buy, sell, encumber, deed, or dispose of any real property only upon the direction of a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the church present and voting at a regular or special business meeting that has been properly called as provided in Article VIII. The clerk of the church shall be the custodian of corporate records and the corporate seal, and the Senior Pastor shall be the registered agent of the corporation. The Directors of the Corporation may also serve on the Servant Leadership Team, including as pastoral staff.

Section 6 Clerk

The clerk is nominated by Servant Leadership Team and affirmed by the church each church year. A book of records of all the actions of the church is maintained in the church office.

Section 7 Treasurer

The treasurer and assistant treasurer are nominated by the Servant Leadership Team and affirmed by the church each church year. The treasurer is responsible for receiving and disbursing church funds. The treasurer and clerk will serve as designated signers of checks. The Servant Leadership Team may periodically name other check signers as necessary.

Article III CHURCH STAFF

Section 1 Pastoral Staff

The Senior Pastor and associate pastors are the pastoral staff, and the Senior Pastor is the leader of both the pastoral staff and other church staff, as detailed in various sections of these bylaws.

Section 2 Other Staff

The Senior Pastor and Servant Leadership Team may hire additional non-pastoral staff as necessary, in consultation with the Servant Leadership Team.

Section 3 Human Resources Manual

The Senior Pastor and the Servant Leadership Team shall maintain a human resources manual to govern the details of the relationship between all personnel and the church.

Article IV CHURCH MINISTRY AND MISSIONS ORGANIZATIONS

The church year is January 1 through December 31. The church shall organize and operate in any way it desires to accomplish the purpose of the church stated in Article II of the Articles of Incorporation.

Article V The Servant Leadership Team and Their Functions

The Servant Leadership Team of Riverside Baptist Church are the lay leaders and ordained pastors of the church. Leaders are qualified by their commitment to the church and to following Jesus with their lives; the Servant Leadership Team functions in the role of elders as seen in New Testament churches. Servant Leadership Team Members should be spiritually mature, showing good and consistent evidence of the fruit of the Spirit in their personal lives and the life of the church. Persons with administrative or business skill may be engaged by the Servant Leadership Team in the service of the church, but such skills do not qualify one to serve on the Servant Leadership Team of Riverside Baptist Church. The Servant Leadership Team is open to all qualified persons who are members in good standing of Riverside Baptist Church; no person shall be disqualified from the Servant Leadership Team because of their age, race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, or marital status.

The Servant Leadership Team may also present candidates for ordination to the office of pastor to the church. Candidates should only be presented to the church if they have shown consistent vocational calling to the office of pastor and have undertaken sufficient training toward that end. The church may then affirm these candidates in a special called business meeting.

Section 1 Nominating

The Servant Leadership Team seeks out and nominates qualified persons to serve in all of the church organizations. They are assisted by organization directors in their areas of ministry.

Section 2 Administrative

The Servant Leadership Team assists and advises the Senior Pastor on all personnel matters, making recommendations as needed to create or modify personnel positions, policies, or remuneration. They serve with the Senior Pastor in searches for associate pastors and consult with the Senior Pastor in employment of all other approved staff positions. The Senior Pastor, Associate Pastors, and all other members of the Servant Leadership Team shall recuse themselves from voting on all personnel matters that constitute a conflict of interest, especially those matters which involve their own or a family member's work evaluation or remuneration.

Section 3 Stewardship

The Servant Leadership Team provides stewardship education and promotion, review church financial reports, make adjustments within established guidelines, coordinate recommendations to the church when funds are needed beyond the budget, and with the Senior Pastor recommend an annual budget and maintain financial policies, including methods for counting and depositing offerings. They assist the treasurer in reporting to the church, coordinate special emphases on mission giving with local church support, and educate and encourage members to consider deferred giving via wills and trusts.

Section 4 Terms

The term of a lay member of the Servant Leadership Team is 3 years. A lay member of the Servant Leadership Team may serve two consecutive terms and may serve future terms following a one-year hiatus.

The Servant Leadership Team may, from time to time, appoint and form committees to report upon or oversee various areas of the life and ministry of the church. These committees may be time-limited or standing, and serve at the pleasure of the Servant Leadership Team.

Article VI CHURCH ORDINANCES AND PRACTICES

Section 1 Baptism

The church may receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior by personal faith, who professes him publicly with a commitment to follow Christ as Lord. Baptism shall be by immersion in water, or in limited cases, by pouring. The pastors or any that the Senior Pastor approves shall administer baptism as an act of worship during any worship service of the church.

Section 2 Communion

The church shall observe communion as a regular part of worship. It is to be a time in which participants rededicate themselves as they proclaim our Lord's death with the joyful anticipation of his coming again. The pastors, or any that the Senior Pastor approves shall lead the church in observing communion.

Section 3 Marriage

The pastors of Riverside Baptist Church shall, from time to time, conduct marriages. Riverside Baptist Church puts no hinderances on the consciences of its pastors as to which marriages they should and should not conduct, but leave that decision to the discernment of the individual pastors. Couples being married by the pastors of Riverside Baptist Church should undergo premarital counseling, either with their officiating pastor or another qualified professional.

Section 4 Funerals

The pastors of Riverside Baptist Church shall provide funeral services to all members of Riverside Baptist Church and their immediate families. All other funeral services will be left to the discretion of the pastors.

Article VII WORSHIP SERVICES

The church shall meet each Sunday, and other times determined by the church, to worship the Lord God. These regular services will include prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and other offerings of worship, all offered in a manner consistent with the purpose of the church. All worship services of the church will be under the direction of the pastors.

Article VIII BUSINESS MEETINGS AND VOTING

Section 1 Regular Business Meeting

A regular business meeting shall be held in November of each year to approve the budget and additions to the Servant Leadership Team for the coming year. This meeting shall be announced, with the proposed budget and those nominated to the Servant Leadership Team published, two weeks in advance during a regular worship service.

Section 2 Special Business Meeting

A special business meetings may be called by the Senior Pastor or the Servant Leadership Team. The purpose of any called special business meetings must be stated plainly, with at least a one week notice, announced in Sunday morning worship.

Section 3 Quorum

A quorum shall consist of those members in attendance at either a regular or a special meeting, provided only that the meeting has been properly scheduled or called.

Section 4 Voting Privileges

Any member who is in good standing and present in a properly scheduled or called business meeting is eligible to vote. There is no provision for either absentee voting or proxy voting.

Section 5 Parliamentary Rules

The most recent revision of Robert's Rules of Order shall be used as a guide for parliamentary procedure, with emphasis being placed on the Leadership of the Holy Spirit. All meetings shall be moderated by the Senior Pastor or their designee.

Article IX CHURCH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Senior Pastor and the Servant Leadership Team will maintain a church manual of policies and procedures. All activities of the church body or conducted on church property will be governed by these policies and procedures.

Article X CHURCH FINANCES

Section 1 Budget

The Servant Leadership Team shall recommend a comprehensive annual budget to the church for approval two weeks before the annual meeting in November. Any amendments to the budget may be adopted at regular or special business meetings. Membership in the church involves a financial obligation to support the church and its causes with tithes and offerings.

Section 2 Financial Accounting

All funds received by the church shall be properly recorded in the books of the church by the financial secretary. The pastor, treasurer, and Servant Leadership Team shall oversee a system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds. All undesignated gifts shall be received and disbursed through the budget. Riverside Baptist Church only receives designated gifts through special offerings approved by the Servant Leadership Team (example: missions offering).

The total giving and all church spending records are available to any member who has made a financial contribution during the current church year. Individual giving records are only available to the giver, the Servant Leadership Team, and any financial officer designated by the Servant Leadership Team. Staff salaries in published spending records are expressed as one account, i.e. "Staff salaries & benefits."

Section 3 Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year is January-December.

Article XI AMENDMENTS

The Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting, or at a meeting specifically called for that purpose, provided the proposed change has been laid before the church in writing not less than two weeks before the time of the proposed action.

Article XII PROVISIONALITY OF BY-LAWS

These Bylaws replace the previous by-laws that were amended in 2014. They will be in force for 18 months from the time their adoption. Prior to the conclusion of the 18-month period, the congregation will either:

- a. Permanently adopt these by-laws with the exception of this article (XII); or
- b. Permanently adopt these by-laws with amendments; or
- c. Revert to the previously amended and approved by-laws of 2014.

In the absence of action according to (a) or (b) above, the previously amended and approved by-laws of 2014 will automatically be the official by-laws of this church on the first day of the nineteenth month following the adoption of these by-laws dated October 10, 2021.