

Riverside Community Church

Revised April 2007

Constitution

ARTICLE 1 - Name

The name of this church shall be the Riverside Community Church.

ARTICLE 2 - Purpose

The specific and primary purposes for which this church is formed and in fulfillment of which it shall operate are as follows:

To associate together voluntarily as a local church of the Lord Jesus Christ adhering to the Bible as it's guide for doctrine and practice for the following purposes:

1. To glorify God and enjoy Him in worship.
2. To proclaim clearly the gospel of Jesus Christ to any and all people.
3. To promote spiritual growth.
4. To engage in Christian missionary work.
5. To provide for religious, charitable, educational meetings, services, campaigns and schools.

ARTICLE 3 - Doctrine

This church believes the following doctrines:

1. We believe in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as inspired of God and inerrant in the original writings and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life. II Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:21.
2. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19,20.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, and is true God and true man. Matthew 1:20-25; John 1:1; John 1:14.
4. We believe that all mankind is by nature and by choice sinful and in need of salvation. Romans 5:12-21; Romans 3:23.
5. We believe that salvation is the gift of God offered to man by His grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, was buried, was bodily resurrected from the dead, and is presently at the right hand of the Father as our Mediator. Ephesians 2:8,9; I Peter 1:18,19; Romans 4:25; I Corinthians 15:1-4; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:21-26; I Timothy 2:5.
6. We believe that all genuine believers are eternally secure, being kept by God's power. John 6:37-40; John 10:27-30; Romans 8:28-39; I Peter 1:3-5
7. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again by the Holy Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer to enlighten, enable, guide and control him in life and service. John 3:6,7; I Corinthians 2:12; John 14:16,26; I Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:22,23; Ephesians 5:18, II Corinthians 5:17.

8. We believe in the local church.

Section A: The nature of the local church.

We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, are placed into His body, the Church. We believe they are placed into the church by God at the same moment they receive Jesus Christ by faith and have the Holy Spirit placed in them. We believe the local church consists of all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who have publicly professed Him, and who God in providence has brought together in a local area. Acts 2:37-47; Romans 1:7; Romans 12:4,5; I Corinthians 1:1; I Corinthians 12; II Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 2:19-22; I Peter 2:4-10.

We believe that each believer in the local body is spiritually equipped for and capable of relationship with God, worship and ministry. We believe each believer is also directly responsible to God for his spiritual walk, including his sin. John 1:11-13; Acts 2:37-47; Romans 12:6-21; I Corinthians 12:4-27; Ephesians 4:11-16; I Peter 2:4-10; I Peter 4:10,11; I John 1:6-2:2.

We believe the church is God's primary agent for accomplishing His divine work here on Earth. Ephesians 4:4-6; Romans 12:1,2,4-5; I Corinthians 11:20-34; I Corinthians 12:12-27; Acts 2:1-4, 41-47; Acts 8:36-38; Acts 18:8; I Peter 2:4-5,9-10; Matthew 28:19-20.

Section B: The purpose of the local church.

We believe the church's purpose in relationship to God is to bring glory to God both on earth and in heaven (I Peter 2:9; Ephesians 3:8-10) resulting in true worship to the triune God (John 4:20-24).

We believe the church's purpose in relationship to each other is to build each other up, which is accomplished by each member ministering to one another as each is gifted and empowered by the Spirit of God (Romans 12:1-16; I Peter 4:7-11), advancing toward maturity (Ephesians 4:11-16), while attaining a unity in relationship to one another and to Christ (I Corinthians 12:13-14; Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 4:13,16).

We believe the church's purpose in relationship to the world is the effective local and worldwide proclamation of the gospel (Acts 1:8; Acts 2:47; Matthew 28:18-20; II Timothy 2:1,2), for the conversion of sinners and their addition into the Body of Christ for fellowship, growth and protection.

Section C: The government of the local church

We believe that the church is a theocracy, ruled by its Head, Jesus Christ, through a plurality of elders who are devoted to serving the congregation. These elders have authority under God, and the people are committed to their serving leadership. The primary requirement for eldership is spiritual maturity as evidenced in a person's character. The elders are responsible for the shepherding and maturing of the believers and to give the church order. Colossians 1:18; Colossians 2:19; Ephesians 1:22,23; Ephesians 4:11,12; Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17-38; Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1-13; I Timothy 5:17,18; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-5

9. We believe that water baptism is for believers and that it is the act of personal obedience and public declaration signifying His death, burial and resurrection to new life in Christ. We believe that this baptism is best symbolized by and taught in scripture to be by immersion. Romans 6:1-6; Matthew 28:19,20; Colossians 2:12.

10. We believe that the Lord's Supper is the memorial service ordained by Christ, in which the believers do remember Christ's death on the cross as our only hope of salvation. I Corinthians 11:23-26

11. We believe spiritual gifts are God-given abilities given to born-again believers for the purpose of glorifying God and building up the body of Christ. The distribution of these gifts is by the Holy Spirit and it is essential that each member develops and employs his spiritual gift(s) for the church to accomplish its' task. Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians 12:4,31; I Corinthians 14:1-40; I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:6; I Peter 4:10-11

12. We believe in the personal, pre-millennial and imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Revelation 19:11-21

13. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost. Luke 16:19-31; Revelation 20:11-15; Revelation 21:3,4.

These statements may be expanded upon or restated to more clearly reflect scriptural teaching upon unanimous agreement of the elders.

ARTICLE 4 - Elders

1. The elders shall carry out those functions given elders in the New Testament and shall carry them out in the manner and spirit directed in the New Testament.

2. The only body entitled to act on behalf of this church as a duly recognized corporation shall be its elders acting as a unit.

3. The qualifications for becoming an elder in this church shall be:

a. to be a believing man, who exhibits the qualifications listed in I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9.

b. to sign his name annually to the statement of doctrinal beliefs of this church as an expression of his own personal beliefs, which shall be kept in the official church records.

4. Admission to the eldership of this church shall be by invitation of the existing elders, which shall invite only those it unanimously agrees on. There shall be no compensation for elders.

5. The minimum number of elders shall be 3. If the number falls below 3 the remaining elders shall be empowered to appoint those necessary to bring it up to this number immediately.

6. The elders shall elect corporate officers for a period they shall determine. These officers shall be chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer. The function of these officers shall be that which is customary to their positions.

7. The elders may, in addition to the treasurer, appoint a vice -treasurer as members of the finance committee, chaired by an elder. The finance committee shall have overall responsibility to the elders for church finances and shall submit reports and financial statements to the elders and church body as directed by the elders.

8. The elders shall bring their preliminary decisions before the church for their prayerful input if it deems wise to the elders in the situation. The expression of the body shall be carefully considered, but shall not be binding on the elders.

9. All persons appointed to ministries in the body shall be responsible to the elders and shall not act contrary to their guidance.

10. The first elders meeting of the calendar year shall be considered an annual meeting and the elders shall meet at other times as necessary. A meeting of the elders to conduct official business may be called by any of the officers. Business may also be conducted at any meeting of the elders if all elders are present or have given written approval to conduct business in their absence. This approval shall be kept in the official records of the church by the secretary.

11. A majority shall constitute a quorum of the elders.

12. An elder may be removed from eldership by a 2/3 vote of the current elders.

13. The elders may appoint and support persons to aid the church in preaching and teaching and in whatever other ministries they may deem necessary. Any person appointed to the ministry as senior pastor shall serve as an elder. All supported staff shall sign their name annually to the statement of doctrinal beliefs of this church as an expression of his/her personal beliefs, which shall be kept in the official church records.

14. The elders shall hold family meetings with the church at least annually. In these meetings they shall report on the Church's finances and significant actions taken and place before the church possible projections and plans. The elders shall seek the evaluation and input of the church in and through these meetings, as well as continuously through personal contact.

15. The elders shall fulfill the role of directors as provide for by the "General Not For Profit Corporation Act" of Illinois.

ARTICLE 5 - Deacons

1. The elders may appoint from the fellowship deacons to facilitate the ministry of the church in particular areas.

2. Those appointed shall:

- a. be believing men and women who meet the qualifications of a deacon as given in I Timothy 3:8-12.
- b. sign their name annually to the statement of doctrinal beliefs of this church as an expression of their own personal beliefs, which shall be kept in the official church records.

3. These shall have authority as granted by the elders in relationship to their specific ministry and shall themselves carry out their ministry under the supervision of the elders. Within their specific ministry, a deacon shall be vested with the authority of a leader. Those working with them shall assist and participate under their leadership.

ARTICLE 6 - Discipline

This church believes that Jesus Christ calls us to practice loving discipline toward one another when our behavior is contrary to Biblical guidelines. (Galatians 6:1, Matthew 18:15-20)

1. In obedience to Christ's command we practice discipline of those who have chosen to declare their faith in Jesus Christ and to declare their commitment to participation in this church.
2. The pattern we shall attempt to follow in love toward one another is laid out for us by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-20.
3. A person's withdrawal, or revocation of the declaration of commitment, once the discipline process has begun, will not preclude our responsibility before Christ to complete this process.

ARTICLE 7 - Dissolution

In the event that this church as a corporation should dissolve itself, all remaining assets shall be dispersed to a like christian organization or organizations who are in agreement with this church's statement of doctrine, at the direction of its final elders. No donor or grantor, or heir of donor or grantor, or any individual shall receive any of the assets.

ARTICLE 8 - Amendment

This constitution may be amended by agreement of all current elders. The amended constitution shall be recorded in the minutes of the elder meeting and be made available to the church body.

ARTICLE 9 – Corporate Charter

This constitution is considered to be the by- laws of the Riverside Community Church's Incorporation as provided for by the 'General Not For Profit Corporation Act' of Illinois.