

Bylaws of the
Washington Presbyterian Church



Washington Presbyterian Church
Washington, Illinois

By-Laws of the Congregation

Adopted February 26, 1977

Revised November 2011

The Washington Presbyterian Church was organized by the Presbytery of Sangamon, of the Synod of Illinois, of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA on November 16, 1834. It is subject to all the requirements contained in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and to the deliverance of Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly. Nothing in these By-Laws therefore shall be interpreted as being contrary to the standards and deliverances of the Presbyterian Church USA and in any instance of conflict the Constitution of the said church shall prevail.

1. THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION. There shall be an annual meeting of the congregation in the church edifice. At its annual congregational meeting there shall be a recess during which the annual corporation meeting is held and the budget presented along with the election of corporate officers after which the corporation meeting shall be adjourned back to the congregational meeting. Any proposed change in what is to be provided the pastor for his or her services must be submitted to the congregation for action. **This may be done at a special congregational meeting prior to the annual meeting.** Transfer of restricted assets from any fund to another must first be approved by vote of the congregation.
2. THE ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS. There shall be a stated meeting of the congregation and corporation in the church edifice ~~on~~ **no later than** the second Sunday of February each year for the election of corporate officers. The Session shall set dates for the ordination and installation of congregational officers in accord with the *Book of Order* with ordinary date occurring no later than January 1 of the year in which they will take office.
3. SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION. Special meetings may be called by the session or the presbytery. Such calls shall state clearly the purpose of such special meeting, and no other matter save that specified in the call may be considered.

4. NOTICE. Public notice of a time, place, and purposes of all meetings of the congregation shall be given from the pulpit on the two Sundays preceding the meeting.
5. MODERATOR. The pastor shall be the moderator of all meetings of the congregation. When the church is without a pastor, the moderator of the session appointed by the Great Rivers Presbytery shall preside at all congregational meetings. If it is impractical for the pastor or the moderator of the session appointed by the presbytery to preside, he or she shall invite, with the concurrence of the session, another minister of the presbytery to preside. In addition, the moderator of the session of a church with a vacant pulpit may request an elder who is a member of the presbytery's committee on ministry, the stated clerk, executive presbyter or associate executive presbyter to preside; such elder may not moderate the meeting of the congregation of which that elder is a member. When this is not expedient and when both the pastor or the moderator of the session and the session concur, a member of the session may be invited to preside.
6. CLERK. The clerk of the session shall be secretary of the meeting of the congregation. If unable to attend, the session shall designate a secretary in his or her stead.
7. QUORUM. A quorum for any meeting shall consist of the moderator, secretary, and ten percent (10%) eligible voters. A quorum for meetings of the session and the board of deacons shall be ~~as provided in the Form of Government.~~ **the pastor for session or moderator of the board of deacons and one third of the Ruling Elders, but no fewer than two, except for the reception and dismissal of members, when the quorum shall be the moderator and two members of the session**; a quorum for the transaction of business as trustees shall be a majority of the trustees then in office.
8. VOTERS. As required by the laws of the State of Illinois, only members of full age (21 years) shall be eligible to vote on questions dealing with property and matters that are strictly the business of the corporation. Otherwise, all active members of the church are eligible to vote at all stated and special meetings of the church. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted, except in those situations where voting by proxy in religious corporations is expressly required by state statute.
9. METHOD OF VOTING. All votes shall be by voice or hand except in the case of calling a pastor. A ballot vote may be called for by a simple majority of those attending a meeting. A majority of the votes cast shall be necessary to elect.

10. RULES OF ORDER. All meetings of the congregation shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, or a comparable parliamentary authority adopted by the congregation, except in those cases where the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA)* provides otherwise.
11. PRAYER. All meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer.
12. NOMINATIONS FOR CHURCH OFFICERS. The Committee on Nominations shall be responsible for a slate of nominations for the existing vacancies among the church officers. The committee shall be composed of active members of the congregation as provided by the *Book of Order*. It shall be the duty of this committee to receive suggestions for nominations for such officers at any meeting called for the purpose of electing officers. The committee shall serve for one year following appointment, or until its successors are chosen. Nominations may also be made by any members of the congregation from the floor.
13. NUMBER OF RULING ELDERS AND TERM OF SERVICE. The session shall consist of ~~eleven (11)~~ **no more than ten (10) and no less than nine (9)** Ruling Elders. Ruling Elders shall be chosen under the mode for "term service," i.e., each class to serve for a period not to exceed three years. Ordinarily no Ruling Elder will serve a second consecutive three-year term. However, by terms of the *Book of Order*, the congregation may choose to elect a Ruling Elder with their consent, to serve a second consecutive three-year term. In such case, no Ruling Elder shall be eligible to succeed to that office until at least one (1) year shall have elapsed after the expiration of his or her term of office. Terms of Ruling Elders shall expire when their successors have been ordained and installed.
14. NUMBER OF DEACONS AND TERM OF SERVICE. The board of deacons shall consist of ~~six (6)~~ **five (5)** deacons. Deacons shall be chosen in the mode of "term service," i.e., each class to serve for a period not to exceed three years. Ordinarily no deacon will serve a second consecutive three-year term. However, by terms of the *Book of Order*, the congregation may choose to elect a deacon with their consent, to serve a second consecutive three-year term. In such case, no deacon shall be eligible to succeed to that office until at least one (1) year shall have elapsed after the expiration of his or her term of office. Terms of deacons shall expire when their successors have been ordained and installed.
15. NUMBER OF TRUSTEES AND TERM SERVICE. All trustees must be Ruling Elders of this congregation, whose terms of office are concurrent with the terms of office as trustee.

Their number shall be equal to the number of currently serving ruling elders who are of legal age as defined by laws of the State of Illinois, but not fewer than eight (8). Trustees shall be chosen under the mode of "term service," i.e., each class to serve for a period not to exceed three years. Ordinarily no trustee will serve a second consecutive three-year term. However, by terms of the *Book of Order*, the congregation may choose to elect a trustee with their consent, to serve a second consecutive three-year term. In such case, no trustee shall be eligible to succeed to that office until at least one (1) year shall have elapsed after the expiration of his or her term of office. Terms of trustee shall expire when their successors have been ordained and installed.

16. CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF RULING ELDERS, DEACONS, AND TRUSTEES. The number of Ruling Elders, deacons, and trustees may be changed at any stated or special meeting of the congregation by a majority vote of those present qualified to vote.
17. CONDITIONS OF SERVICE. When a Ruling Elder or deacon has three (3) consecutive unexcused absences from stated meetings, the session may, at its discretion, declare that seat vacant and instruct the nominating committee to recommend a candidate for the unexpired term. A special meeting of the congregation may be called to act on the recommendation or elect by nomination from the floor.
18. MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION AS A CORPORATION. The session, acting in the capacity as the board of trustees, may call a special meeting of the corporation when the business at hand requires. The presbytery may direct the session to call a special meeting of the congregation as a corporation. The purpose of the corporation is to receive, hold, encumber, manage and transfer property, and to facilitate the management of its civil affairs in such a manner as may be directed by the session according to the *Constitution of the ~~United~~ Presbyterian Church (USA)*.
19. PRESIDING OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION AS A CORPORATION. The chairman of the meetings of the congregation shall be the president of the trustees, or other member of the board designated by the trustees unless by majority vote the corporation shall elect another member in his or her place. The secretary of the board of trustees (clerk of session) shall be the secretary of the meetings of the corporation. In the absence of the secretary, a temporary secretary shall be appointed by the trustees.
20. QUORUM FOR MEETING OF CONGREGATION AS COPROATION. Unless otherwise required by state law, ten percent (10%) of active members who are of full legal age as

defined by the laws of the State of Illinois shall be a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the corporation.

21. DUTIES AND AUTHORITY OF TRUSTEES. The trustees shall be the guardians of the property of the church, of all kinds, and shall make suitable arrangements for its security, preservation, and protection. They shall provide insurance to cover casualty losses, as well as to protect the corporation from loss due to liability for damages. All actions of the trustees are to be governed by the limitations and requirements of civil statutes.
22. FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS. Financial obligations involving an encumbrance shall be approved by vote of the corporation at a duly called meeting, and by the presbytery, before execution. The trustees shall have authority to sign, in the name of the corporation, notes and other necessary documents related to obligations which have been authorized by vote of the corporation.
23. INDIVIDUAL ACTS. No act of an individual trustee is legal unless authorized by the board, acting in accordance with authority given by the corporation at properly called meetings. No trustee shall contract or pay obligations that have not first received the approval of the corporation and the presbytery. Financial responsibility resides in the corporation, not in individuals.
24. AMENDMENTS. These by-laws may be amended subject to the charter of the corporation, the laws of the State of Illinois, and the *Constitution of the ~~United~~ Presbyterian Church (USA)* at any annual meeting or at any special meeting by a majority of the members present, provided that a full reading of the proposed changes or a printed distribution for the same shall have been made in connection with the call of the meeting.
25. AUTHORITY OF THE CONSTITUTION. These by-laws or the charter of this corporation may not be amended contrary to or so as not to include the provisions of the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA)*.