

RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH BY-LAWS
10775 Southwest 104th Street
Miami, Florida 33176

Adopted - May 1977
Revised - 1992
Revised - January 1996
Revised - April 30, 2000
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Revised - January 19, 2003
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Revised – August 6, 2008

ARTICLE I - Name

The name of this corporation is the Riverside Baptist Church of Dade County, Florida, Inc., located at 10775 Southwest 104 Street, Miami, Florida 33176.

ARTICLE II - Objectives

- A. To carry out the mission of our Lord for the Church as recorded in the scriptures:
1. To enjoy the presence of God in corporate worship, as provided for in Acts 2:42 and 47 and Psalm 95:6-7.
 2. To be a witness for Jesus Christ, as provided for in Acts 1:8.
 3. To be a people of cheerful and generous givers seeking to meet the needs of others, as provided for in Acts 4:32-35 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-7.
 4. To make followers of Jesus Christ, as provided for in Matthew 28:18-20.
 5. To be people who serve the least of these, as provided for in Matthew 25:37-40.
- B. To carry on its affairs in an orderly and Christ-like manner, "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," as provided for in Romans 12:11.
- C. To cooperate in Southern Baptist missionary enterprises, home and foreign, as the Church may elect. Cooperation with any Baptist associations or other conventions or institutions shall be entirely at the election of this Church.

ARTICLE III - Doctrines

We agree with the statement of the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on May 9, 1963, as amended June 9, 1998.

ARTICLE IV - Membership in Church

Section 1: Reception of Members

- A. By Baptism: Upon public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior.
- B. By Letter: A member of another Church of like doctrine upon receipt of a letter there from; provided that the member shall have experienced baptism by immersion after a public profession of faith.
- C. By Statement of Relation: A person who once was or now is a member of another Church of like doctrine, but for satisfactory reasons is unable to secure a letter of transfer, may be received upon giving testimony of Christian experience and baptism by immersion.
- D. By Reinstatement: A person who has been excluded from the Church for any reason may be reinstated when true repentance has been exhibited or demonstrated.
- E. All candidates who present, or who wish to present, themselves for membership must complete a new member's orientation class prior to being granted Church membership.
- F. Members may be received at any regular or special evangelistic meeting of the Church.
- G. Watch Care membership is available for college students, missionaries, short-term mission workers, or people who are long-term temporary residents of Miami-Dade County. They must have membership in another church of like faith and order that have similar requirements for membership. Watch care membership allows people to retain membership in their home church while being able to fellowship and serve in Riverside Baptist Church. Watch care membership allows people to share in all the privileges of church membership except for voting in church business meetings or holding church elected offices. A notice of watch care will be sent to the home church.

Section 2: Duties of Members and Church

- A. Duties of the Members to the Church.
 - 1. A member must further the objectives of the Church, as provided for Article II by:
 - a. Regular attendance at Sunday and mid-week services as far as the member is reasonably able.
 - b. Regular cheerful and generous giving according to one's means to the financial support of Riverside Baptist Church as provided for in 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 and 2 Corinthians 8:12, understanding that the tithe is the biblical standard of minimum giving, as provided for in Malachi 3:10.
 - c. Assuming and conscientiously fulfilling such duties and responsibilities for service as the member may be called upon to perform and as the member has agreed to fulfill.

- d. Upon moving from the Church locale, the member is encouraged to continue to communicate with the Church and to prayerfully continue their financial support until the member has joined another Church, which the member is requested to do as soon as is practical.

B: Duties of the Church to its Members

The members expect the Church to provide:

1. Biblical Instruction
2. Christian Friendship and Fellowship
3. Opportunity for Service

Section 3: Dismissal of Members

- A. By death.
- B. By letter: Upon written request from another Church of like doctrine, the Church shall grant a letter of dismissal for a member. The letter shall set forth, in a general way, the member's services to the Church. If the Church vote is affirmative, the member's name shall be removed immediately from the Church roll.
- C. Exclusion: In cases involving gross breach of Christian conduct or sinful acts, or failure to comply with the Church By-Laws, members may be excluded, only after the Pastor and the Deacons have endeavored to confront the issue according to the biblical principles set forth in Matthew 18:15-17, Ephesians 4:25-32 and Luke 6:31-36. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance with the goal of bringing an individual back into Christian community. If the Pastor and Deacons fail to resolve the issue, they may bring a recommendation to terminate membership, and if approved by a vote of three-fourth of the votes cast by members present at a duly constituted meeting of the Church, that member shall be terminated and removed from the Church Roll.
- D. Joining a Church not of like doctrine: If a member of this Church shall join a Church not of like doctrine, such member shall be dropped from the roll when the Church Clerk confirms such evidence and a report of this action is made to the Church.
- E. By erasure: when a member requests to be removed from the Church Membership Role.

ARTICLE V - Officers, Deacon Council, and Board of Trustees

Section 1: Elective Officers of the Church shall consist of:

- A. A Pastor who shall be elected for an indefinite term as provided in the By-Laws, Article XI, Section 2.

- B. A Council of Deacons that shall consist of one (1) Deacon per fifty (50) resident members. There shall be no less than fifteen (15) Deacons as provided for in the By-Laws, Article XI, Section 3. A Resident member is herein defined as those church members who reside in the tri-county areas of Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe County and continue to actively participate in accordance with Article IV, Section 2.
- C. The Board of Trustees:
1. A Board of Trustees shall be elected to serve as the legal custodians and oversee the business affairs of Riverside Baptist Church.
 2. The Board of Trustees will be composed of seven members.
 3. The Board shall consist of four members elected from the congregation (“Trustees-at-Large”) and the Chairpersons of Deacons, Stewardship, and Personnel Committees. Each Trustee shall serve for a term of 3 years. A Trustee who has served a full three-year term will be ineligible to serve as a Board of Trustee member before the expiration of one year, including the Chairpersons of the Committees. Each Trustee-at-Large will serve a three-year term. If any Chairperson is ineligible to serve, their respective committee will elect a designee to serve. The Senior Pastor, or his designee, shall serve as an advisor to the Trustees.
 4. All Trustees shall be members, who fulfill the duties of membership as stated in Article IV, Section 2 and have signed the Leadership Covenant. If a member does not sign the Leadership Covenant, the member is not eligible to serve as a Trustee.
 5. The Trustees-at-Large shall be nominated and elected by the Congregation at the October business meeting.
 6. The Board of Trustees shall elect, annually, a Chairperson, who will serve as President, a Vice Chairperson who shall serve as Vice-President, and a Secretary.
 7. The Board of Trustees shall report quarterly to the Church body.

Section 2: General Officers

- A. The General Officers for the Church are a Church Clerk, an Assistant Church Clerk, a Treasurer, three Assistant Treasurers, and a Sunday School Coordinator/Bible Study Coordinator, all of whom shall be nominated by Nominating Committee and ratified by the Church body.
- B. Sunday School Departmental Officers and Teachers, and such other officers as the Church may deem necessary, as provided for in Article XI, Section 1.

Section 3: Limitations

No general officer, except for Sunday School Teachers, shall fill the same position for more than three consecutive years, after which an interval of one year must elapse before regaining eligibility.

ARTICLE VI – Committees

Section 1: Committees

- A. The Standing Committees are Building & Grounds Committee, Child Development Center Committee, Hospitality/Solace Committee, Missions Committee, Nominating Committee, Personnel Committee, and Stewardship Committee.
- B. Each Committee will elect a Chairperson and a Secretary.
- C. Such other Committees may be formed as the Church deems necessary.

Section 2: Limitations

- A. No Standing Committee member shall fill the same position for more than three consecutive years, after which an interval of one year must elapse before regaining eligibility.
- B. An individual of a Standing Committee can serve only on one Standing Committee at a time, an exception being the Nominating Committee. If an individual is on the Nominating Committee, they can serve on one additional Standing Committee.
- C. No Chairman of a Standing Committee may serve consecutively as Chairman of another standing committee without an interval of one year between Chairmanships.
- D. No committee meeting can be called to order unless at least fifty percent of the members are present.

Article VII – Proposed Amendments and Suspension of By-Laws

Section 1: Submission

Proposed amendments to the By-Laws may be submitted by any Church member to the Church Moderator, as defined in Article XII, Section 3.

Section 2: Action on Proposed Amendments

Proposed amendments to the By-Laws may be made at any business meeting of the Church by vote of three-fourths of total votes cast by members, provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing at a prior business meeting not less than 14 days previously. No action can be taken on any amendment at the time of submission.

Section 3: Suspensions

Suspension of the By-Laws or any part thereof is permitted upon the submission of the By-Law(s) to be suspended, the term of the suspension and a subsequent vote by three-fourths of the votes cast by members.

ARTICLE VIII - Date Effective

The By-Laws shall be in full force and effect upon its adoption by the Church, except that no change in officers and committees shall take effect until the end of the Church year in which the By-Laws were amended and/or revised.

ARTICLE IX - Fiscal and Church Year

- A. The fiscal year shall be from January 1 through December 31. Upon recommendation of the Stewardship Committee or the Board of Trustees, an outside and independent professional audit firm shall audit the financial books of the Church. The recommending body shall determine the scope and time of the audit. All books shall be closed and properly reconciled at the end of each fiscal year.
- B. The church year shall be from October 1st through September 30th. This time period shall govern the beginning term of all general officers, defined in Article 5, Section 2.

ARTICLE X - Meetings

Section 1: For Worship

- A. Public services shall be held on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, unless an emergency arises requiring a change, and at such other times as the Church may elect.
- B. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least 12 times a year as provided for in the Church calendar.
- C. If changes in times of observance of the Lord's Supper are necessary due to unforeseen circumstances, the Pastor in consultation with Chairman of the Deacons or his designee shall decide upon the time of observance. Written and verbal announcements as to the time of observance of the Lord's Supper shall be made to the Church.
- D. All true believers in Jesus Christ, who hold the Lord's Supper to be symbolical and not sacramental, are welcome to participate in the Lord's Supper.

Section 2: For Business

- A. Quarterly business meetings shall be held on the fourth Wednesday following the end of each quarter at the conclusion of the Wednesday Worship Service.
- B. Postponed business meeting: Any regular business meeting may be postponed for good and sufficient reason by the Moderator for a period not to exceed fifteen days.
- C. The Board of Trustees Quarterly Business Meeting shall be held on the third Monday of each quarter or as often as necessary to ensure the orderly operation of the Church with the Pastoral Staff.
- D. Quorum: A quorum to do business shall consist of those members at a duly constituted business meeting.

- E. Special business meetings may be called by the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, Moderator, or Vice-Moderator on one week's notice at any regular worship meeting, as provided for in Article X, Section 1A.
- F. Parliamentary rules: All meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rule of Order.
- G. Only members as defined in Article IV, Section 2, shall have the privilege of voting in matters of Church business.

ARTICLE XI - Officers and Committees and Elections Thereof

Section 1: Annual Elections

- A. Nominating Committee of seven members including the Chairman shall be appointed and publicly announced by the Pastor at the April business meeting. This committee shall serve for a period of one year and shall bring before the Church nominations for Sunday school workers, Church officers, and Church committees.
- B. Nominations supplementing the committee's report may be made from the floor at the time of any election, provided such nominees have consented to serve prior to or during the meeting.
- C. Voting shall be by voice vote or by written secret ballot on a carried motion.
- D. All Church officers, Church committees, and Sunday school workers so elected by the Church shall be installed effective the first Sunday in October with the exception of Sunday school workers who will be installed the first Sunday in August coinciding with the school year.

Section 2: Calling a Pastor

- A. In case of a permanent vacancy in the position of Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons shall prayerfully consider and, in consultation with the other officers of the Deacons, shall nominate to the Church a Pastor Search Committee of seven members and two (2) alternates who will serve in the event one (1) or more members cannot fulfill their obligations. The committee shall be representative of the Church membership in terms of age, gender, specific interest(s), commitment(s) to Church service, and length of membership.
- B. The Church shall then vote by written ballot for each nominee. Any nominee not receiving three-fourths of the total ballots cast shall be substituted with a nomination from the floor. Another ballot will be presented to the Church Body at the same Business meeting.
- C. The Pastor Search Committee shall proceed in accordance with the following guidelines:
 - 1. The Duties of the Committee.

The Committee shall:

- a. Elect a chairperson, who shall convene the meetings and give general leadership to the committee.

- b. Elect a vice chairperson, who shall assist the chairperson and function at the request of the chairperson in the latter's absence.
- c. Elect a secretary, who shall keep records of all meetings, handle correspondence, and maintain a file of committee materials.
- d. (d) Report on the progress of its work to the Church Body in a timely manner, while maintaining confidentiality.
- e. (e) Choose an interim Pastor who has no interest in becoming the permanent Pastor nor will be eligible for the permanent Pastorate, and shall have a clear understanding with him as to his responsibilities as interim, and as to the compensation that he will receive. The committee shall make clear to any prospect for the interim Pastor that if he should express an interest in becoming a candidate for permanent Pastor he may not serve as interim Pastor.
- f. Develop informational materials on the Church and community to be shared with prospective Pastors.
- g. Determine the most helpful sources of reliable information about persons being considered, including but not limited to Associational Directors of Missions, Theological Seminaries, state denominational employees, members of the Church, in order to develop a list of names of prospective Pastors. The committee may contact several persons, but will deal in depth with only one person at a time, and shall never have before the Church more than one (1) person at a time.
- h. Send a preliminary letter of inquiry to the prospective Pastors to narrow the list and to discover interested persons. Interview the person who most closely meets the qualifications of the Church and arrange a visit to the Pastor's worship service. The committee will respect the prospect's present ministry by taking care not to disturb the Church, which he pastors. When a person is no longer being considered, the committee will notify him immediately.
- i. Maintain confidentiality to protect both the candidate and the Church of which he pastors.
- j. When ready to recommend a candidate, arrange for a preaching visit at Riverside Baptist Church. The committee should seek unanimity in its recommendation to the Church.
- k. Upon his selection by the Pastor Search Committee, notify the Chairman of the Board of Trustees as provided for in Article X, Section 2e, to call a Special meeting for nominating the candidate as Pastor of Riverside Baptist Church.
- l. Provide for a vote by written ballot. A vote of not less than 85 percent of the total cast shall be required to call a Pastor.
- m. Communicate the vote of the Church to the prospect, receive his reply, and communicate the reply to the Church.

2. Other responsibilities.

- a. The committee, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Personnel Committee, shall have a clear understanding concerning salary, benefits, and other considerations, to be offered the prospective Pastor.
- b. The Church shall be responsible for all reasonable expenses incurred by the committee. The Stewardship Committee shall approve such expenses.
- c. Arrange with the Personnel Committee for his employment as Pastor to Riverside Baptist Church.

Section 3: Election of Deacons

- A. When the number of ordained Deacons eligible and available is not in accordance with Article V, Section 1 B, or when the Council of Deacons deems it advisable to ordain new Deacons, the method of election for ordaining Deacons shall be as follows: at a meeting of the Church announced at least one week in advance, members shall be asked to list the names of at least twice as many nominees as needed to make up the number of Deacons required. Twice as many nominees as needed receiving the most votes shall be eligible for consideration by the Council of Deacons and from this list, the exact number of nominees needed to fill the vacancies shall be selected by the Council for ordination. Ordination services will be arranged as soon as practical after the election of new Deacon Candidates.
- B. A Committee of Deacons appointed by the Chairman shall confer with the Council of Deacons to determine the nominee's eligibility and willingness to serve as a deacon, based on 1 Timothy 3:10, and shall recommend the names to be nominated to the Church. All Deacons must be members as defined in Article IV, Section 2, and sign the Leadership Covenant annually. If a Deacon does not sign the Leadership Covenant, the Deacon is not eligible to serve for that year.
- C. The number of Deacons shall consist of at least one (1) Deacon per fifty (50) resident members.
- D. A Deacon may request to be placed on reserve status from performance of their duties but will be expected to adhere to the intent of the Leadership Covenant.

ARTICLE XII - Board of Trustees and Duties of Officers (Micah 6:8)

A. Church

This Church expects and has a right to expect the officers of the Church, teachers, and all its auxiliaries (e.g. WMU, GAs, and RAs) to set an example of loyal cooperation in the Church's core values and vision, or to resign their position. All officers, teachers, and all its auxiliaries shall be members of the Church and have signed the Leadership Covenant. If a member does not sign the Leadership Covenant, the member is not eligible to serve as a Trustee, officer or teacher in the Church for the period of time the Covenant remains unsigned.

B. Board of Trustees

The duties of the Board of Trustees are:

1. To serve as legal Trustees of Riverside Baptist Church Corporation and, as such, to perform all duties set forth under the laws of the State of Florida;
2. To execute all legal documents, agreements, contracts and other documents whether oral or written and to take such actions as may be required by federal or state law or as directed by Riverside Baptist Church;
3. To coordinate with Church staff all legal proceedings in which the Church is or might be a party;
4. To maintain an accounting of all Church all agreements referred to in 3) above and to report annually to the Church in a regular business meeting;
5. To make recommendations to the Church regarding acceptance of any proposed gifts to the Church requiring administration in perpetuity;
6. To receive and hold in trust Church approved bequests, devises, gifts, or trusts for the purpose specified by donors;
7. To meet at least quarterly, or as needed, with Church staff and/or appropriate standing Church committees; and
8. To have the authority to delegate such activities to Church staff to ensure the flow of daily operations.

C. Pastor

The Pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the Church. He shall be the Moderator of the Church; however he may delegate this responsibility to the Vice-Moderator. He shall also be an ex-officio member of all standing and special committees, and fulfill all duties and responsibilities as defined in the Personnel Manual.

D. Vice Moderator

The Chairman of the Board of Trustees shall be the Vice Moderator, shall act in the absence or disability of the Moderator, and shall act in an advisory capacity upon committees upon the request of the Pastor or the Committee Chairperson.

E. Clerk and Assistant Clerk

The Clerk and Assistant Clerk shall be custodians of the Church records and membership, and shall perform such duties as usually fall to the office, including taking minutes at Church Business meetings.

F. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurers

The Treasurer shall be a member of the Stewardship Committee, but not the Chairman or Vice Chairman. The Treasurer shall receive and disburse Church money under the direction of the Stewardship Committee in accordance with the budget adopted by the Church. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurers shall have the authority to sign Church checks. The Treasurer shall have the authority to sign purchase orders. It is their responsibility to examine and verify supporting documentation before signing Church checks.

G. Sunday School/Bible Study Director

The Director will support Sunday school/Bible Study teachers and collaborate with the Pastoral Staff to ensure appropriate materials, training and resources are available, provide for the collection of attendance rosters, and ensure accuracy. Additionally, coordinate the Outreach activities of Sunday school as directed by Pastoral staff.

H. Deacons

1. The Deacons at their October meeting shall elect a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary, and such other officers as the Deacons deem necessary. A Deacon shall serve as a Chairman for one year. He is eligible for annual re-election two more years but can serve no more than three consecutive years. The Deacon who has served three consecutive one year terms as Chairman will be ineligible for reelection as any Deacon Officer before the expiration of one year.
2. They shall have charge of the Lord's Supper and shall assist in the ordinance of Baptism in cooperation with the Pastor.
3. They shall be responsible for the fellowship and well-being of Church members. The Deacons shall be responsible for meeting the needs of those members in spiritual, physical, or financial distress; e.g., hospital and shut-in visits, administering the Lord's Supper to shut-ins (Acts 6:1-4).
4. Each deacon shall be governed by those principles set forth in the New Testament for the Office of Deacon (1 Timothy 3:8-13) and shall participate in the ordination of new deacons.
5. The Deacon body shall appoint a Deacon as Chief Usher. The Chief Usher shall appoint and have available at all Church services a sufficient number of capable ushers who shall act under his direction and supervision.
6. They shall serve as an advisory committee to the Pastor in the spiritual matters of the Church.

ARTICLE XIII - Duties of Committees

Section 1: Buildings and Grounds Committee

- A. Shall be responsible for the care, maintenance, and supervision of all buildings, grounds, and furnishings. The committee shall delegate the day-to-day responsibility of maintaining the facilities to a Pastoral staff member.
- B. Shall be responsible for recommending the purchase of new equipment and furnishings to the Stewardship Committee.
- C. Shall cooperate with Church staff for devising, updating (as necessary), and administering guidelines for use of the Church kitchen and its contents as well as the Fellowship Hall and its contents when used in conjunction with the Church kitchen. Shall work with all persons/groups using the kitchen to assure its safe, clean operation thereof.
- D. Shall have one member of the Hospitality/Solace Committee as an ex-officio member.
- E. Shall keep the Board of Trustees informed of any physical plant issues that could cause potential liability.

Section 2: Child Development Center Committee

- A. Shall collaborate with the Child Development Center (CDC) Director and personnel of the school under the direction of a Pastoral staff member on the operation of the CDC.
- B. Shall review and recommend to the Stewardship Committee the budget for the CDC as prepared by the CDC Director and the supervising Pastoral staff.
- C. Shall recommend the salaries, benefits, and bonuses of the CDC personnel to the Personnel Committee who shall in turn review and make the recommendation(s) to the Stewardship Committee.
- D. Shall review the monthly operation of the CDC and recommend to Stewardship Committee and Buildings and Grounds Committee for the approval of purchases of non-budgeted furniture, equipment, and for non-budgeted repairs.

Section 3: Hospitality/Solace Committee

- A. Shall be responsible for arranging Church-wide social events and shall provide arrange for decorations and refreshments as needed.
- B. Shall be responsible for appointing a Wedding Coordinator in consultation with the Senior Pastor or his designee. The Wedding Coordinator shall be a Church member.
- C. In the event of a death in the family of a Church member, the committee shall contact the family to express sympathy and to determine how the Church can be of help. If a meal is desired, the committee shall contact the Church organization of which that person is a member. When there is no connection with any Church organization, the committee shall use its own discretion in furnishing a meal.

Section 4: Missions Committee

- A. Shall provide support to mission auxiliaries such as Royal Ambassadors (RA's), Women's Missionary Union (WMU) and Girls in Action (GA's).
- B. Shall recommend the Church goals for the Annie Armstrong, Florida Baptist Children's Home, Lottie Moon, Florida State Missions, and World Hunger to the Stewardship Committee.
- C. Shall plan, recommend, and advise of local, national, and international mission projects and programs to the Church congregation.
- D. Shall evaluate mission projects and receive recommendations for changes or discontinuation of projects, as it deems advisable.

Section 5: Nominating Committee

Responsibilities as outlined in Article XI, Section 1A.

Section 6: Personnel Committee

- A. Shall serve as an advisory committee to the Pastor in all matters related to staff personnel.
- B. Shall make recommendations to the Stewardship Committee concerning salaries, benefits, and bonuses of all personnel and employees.
- C. Shall create and maintain a Personnel Manual.

Section 7: Stewardship Committee

- A. Shall be responsible for overseeing the receipt and disbursement of all Church funds.
- B. Shall review and recommend a proposed Church budget to the Church congregation.
- C. Shall review and recommend a proposed CDC budget to the Church congregation.
- D. Shall be responsible for promotion of the budget and stewardship.
- E. Shall be responsible for arranging for an internal audit of the Church's financial records by qualified individuals, if deemed necessary.
- F. Shall recommend prices for Church meals to the Church Body.
- G. The Chairman of Stewardship shall be authorized to sign purchase orders subject to procedures outlined in the Church's policies and procedures manual.

ARTICLE XIV - Committee Reports

- A. Any committee shall report to the Church Body, if so requested, or if they desire to report. All standing committees shall report at least once annually.
- B. All committees shall provide in writing minutes of committee meetings to the Church Clerk within 30 days of the meeting.

ARTICLE XV - Superseding Previous Action

The adoption of these By-Laws shall supersede and render null and void all rules and regulations of the Church not in accordance therewith. Notwithstanding anything contained herein to the contrary, this shall not apply to the Church's Charter.