

# **Constitution and By-Laws**

First Christian Church  
Blandinsville, Illinois 61420

**Revised and Adopted December 11, 2016**



## PREAMBLE

We, the members of the First Christian Church, a congregationally governed body, in order to promote more effectively the work of the church in the spirit of Christ, and thus advance His Kingdom, do hereby adopt this constitution on December 11, 2016.

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# **CONSTITUTION**

## **Article I – Name and Purpose**

### **Section A – Name**

The name of this organization shall be the First Christian Church of Blandinsville, Illinois, originally organized in 1849.

### **Section B – Purpose**

The purpose of this Church shall be as revealed in the New Testament, to win people to faith in Jesus Christ and commit them actively to the Church, to help them grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ that increasingly they may know and do His will, and to work for the unity of all Christians and with them engage in the common task of building the Kingdom of God.

It shall be the purpose of this congregation to work cooperatively with other Christians and in other communions, in such ways possible in order to testify to the unity of Christ's Church.

## **Article II – Membership**

### **Section A – Regular Membership**

A regular member of The First Christian Church of Blandinsville is considered to be a voting member of the congregation. Regular members are those that unite with the church by confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, giving expression to their faith through baptism by immersion and personal commitment to Him; and those who, having been baptized by immersion, unite by transfer of membership, thereby making a reaffirmation of their faith and commitment to Christ. Rev - 12/16

### **Section B – Associate Membership**

An associate member of The First Christian Church of Blandinsville is considered to be a non-voting member of the congregation. Associate members are those that unite with the church on a temporary basis; those in transition of residence, regular members who have relocated away from the immediate community area, or members in good standing of other churches not yet wishing to pledge regular membership to this church, as outlined in Article II, Section A of this constitution. An associate member is someone who will come under the care of the church in all rights, privileges, and responsibilities, except for voting and holding church office. Rev - 12/16

## **Article III**

This constitution acknowledges the incorporation of this congregation in the degree of incorporation number 345028, dated the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of July, 1955, and recorded on page 421, book 24, miscellaneous, in the Circuit Court of McDonough County in the State of IL.



## Article IV – Officers by the Congregation

### Section A – Officers elected by the congregation

The following officers shall be elected by the regular members of the congregation at its annual election, and will serve as members of the general board:

Church Clerk, one year term; Financial Secretary, one year term; Treasurer, one year term; Historian, one year term. Rev - 12/16

Elders, not fewer than three or more than eight, one-third of whom shall be elected each year for a term of three years, subject to re-election for consecutive terms.

Deacons, not fewer than 12 or more than 18, one-third of whom shall be elected each year for a term of three years, subject to re-election for consecutive terms.

Deaconesses, not fewer than 8 or more than 18, one-third of whom shall be elected each year for a term of three years, subject to re-election for consecutive terms.

Trustees, not fewer than three or more than five, one of whom shall be elected each year for a term of five years, subject to re-election for consecutive terms.

The chairmanship and vice chairmanship of the congregation and board shall rotate among the elected elders.

Junior Deacons and Junior Deaconesses may be elected at the decision of the general board, but they will not be members of the board.

### Section B – Additional Members of the Board

Additional members of the board shall consist of the minister, the president or chairman of auxiliary organizations such as the Christian Woman's Fellowship, Church School, Christian Youth Fellowship, etc. (Not including organized Church School Classes.)

### Section C – Qualifications of Officers

Officers of the church shall be regular members of this local congregation and shall promote good will and Christian fellowship within the church family, strengthening the varied program of the church, and aiding the minister and membership in making the total life and work of the church related to the purposes of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, and strive toward continual personal growth in Christian Stewardship. Elders and Deacons should meet the qualifications as outlined in Scripture; 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9. Rev - 12/16

### Section D – Duties of Officers

In general the duties for the officers are as follows:

1. The chairman of the board and congregation shall fulfill the usual duties of such an officer, call and preside at regular or special business meetings of the congregation, and serve as chairman of the general board.
2. The vice chairman of the board and congregation shall fulfill the usual duties of such an officer, assisting the chairman and substituting for him whenever necessary.
3. The elders shall promote the growth and welfare of the church, give spiritual oversight to the members with respect to regular attendance at the Lord's Supper, visitation of the sick, and concern for the morally delinquent and the spiritually indifferent, serve at the Lord's Table, directly supervise the minister, church clerk, financial secretary, treasurer, historian, and perform such other duties as may be assigned. Elders in turn will report and seek approval with the general board. Rev - 12/16

4. The deacons shall cooperate with the elders in promoting the growth and welfare of the church, be responsible for greeting and ushering the worshipers, distributing the emblems of the Lord's Supper, receiving the offerings, assisting with preparation of candidates for baptism, ministering to the needy of the church, stewardship of the building and property, and other duties as may be assigned. Rev - 12/16
5. The deaconesses, in cooperation with the elders and deacons, shall promote the growth and welfare of the church, take responsibility for the preparation of the communion emblems and care of the communion service.
6. The trustees shall, under the direction of the general board and subject to the approval of the church, act as legal agents of the church in business matters, hold legal title to church property and handle business transactions related thereto; be responsible for the care and maintenance of church property, including insurance coverage; and perform such duties as are required by laws of the state.
7. The clerk shall keep a complete record of the church membership and such vital statistics as births, deaths, baptisms, weddings, and weekly church attendance; receive applications for church letters and issue them under the authority delegated by the general board; keep minutes of all regular or special business meeting of the church and of the general board. Rev - 12/16
8. The historian shall, under the direction of the general board, prepare and keep up-to-date a history of the church, arrange for the preservation of items of historical significance, and help the congregation to be aware of the historical significance of this church.
9. The financial secretary shall receive and deposit all funds of the church according to authority designated by the general board, and shall make regular reports to the general board, shall keep individual account records of each contributor. In case of emergency, the financial secretary shall become acting treasurer of the church. The financial secretary shall be a member of the stewardship and finance committee.
10. The treasurer shall disburse all funds of the church according to authority designated by the general board, and shall make reports to the general board, and shall be a member of the stewardship and finance committee. The treasurer shall, when the term of office expires, turn over to his or her successor within ten days, all books and records relating to the office.

#### Section E – Election of Officers

1. A nominating committee composed of five members, at least two of whom shall be members of the board whose terms are not expiring, and at least three whom shall be regular members of the congregation who are not members of the board, shall be appointed by the chairman of the board, approved by the board, and announced to the congregation at least six weeks prior to the annual election before the beginning of the fiscal year, and shall serve on this committee throughout the following church year. If non-board members are not available to fill the committee, board members whose terms are not expiring may be substituted. Rev – 12/16
2. All suggestions from the congregation for nominees shall be in the hands of the committee at least three weeks before the annual election in December.
3. The committee shall consider qualifications, secure consent of the nominees, and prepare a slate consisting of one nominee for each vacancy, including church school officers and teachers.
4. The nominating committee shall report its nominations to the regular members of the congregation at least one week in advance of the annual election in December.



5. Nominations may be made from the floor for any office, providing that the one making the nomination has secured the consent of the nominee.
6. All nominees who receive a majority of the votes shall be declared elected.
7. Vacancies in an office of the church shall be filled for the unexpired term by nomination by the nominating committee in consultation with the chairman of the board and the minister, and by election by the general board.

## Article V – The General Board

### Section A – Membership

The general board shall consist of the church clerk, financial secretary, treasurer, historian, minister, elders, deacons, deaconesses, trustees; and the chairperson of each functional committee. (Not including organized church school classes). Rev – 12/16

### Section B – Duties

1. It shall be the duty of the general board:
  - a. To consider and recommend general policies to the regular members of the congregation.
  - b. To transact necessary business of the church.
  - c. To be responsible, directly and through such functional committees as it may delegate for the following phases of the church work: Rev – 12/16
    - (1) Worship and Devotional Life
    - (2) Christian Education
    - (3) Evangelism and Membership Development
    - (4) Outreach and Community Services
    - (5) Finance
    - (6) Property (including trustees)
    - (7) Christian Fellowship
    - (8) Christian Youth Fellowship
    - (9) Officer Nominations
    - (10) Pulpit
2. Such functional standing committees or special committees as required to administer properly the work of the church shall be nominated by the chairman in consultation with the minister, and elected by the general board. They shall serve for a period of one year or for such period as designated by the general board at the time of election of such committee.
3. It shall be the duty of the general board, in cooperation with the Worship and Devotional Life committee, to arrange for musicians and assistants.
4. The general board shall perform its duties according to the authority granted in this constitution or designated to it by this church.

## Article VI – The Minister

### Section A – The Role of the Minister

The minister of the church shall perform the duties which usually pertain to that office. As spiritual administrator of the church, he shall be an ex-officio member of all organized groups, auxiliaries and committees. The minister shall, in cooperation with the chairman of the general board, encourage orderly procedures in the life and work of the church through effective use of its constitution and bylaws.

### Section B – Selection

The minister shall be chosen by the church in the following manner:

1. The pulpit committee shall be composed of the chairman of the general board and four other members whom he may select with the approval of the board.
2. It shall be the policy of the congregation to consider only one prospective minister at a time. However, information may be secured on several in a given period.
3. The pulpit committee shall recommend a prospective minister to the general board. The recommendation must be accepted by at least a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at a regular or special called meeting of the board.
4. The general board will recommend the prospective minister to the regular members of the congregation.
5. The recommendation of the general board must be accepted by at least a two-thirds majority of the regular members present and voting in a regular or special called meeting of the congregation before a call may be extended.
6. In a situation where the minister will be called in conjunction with another church or churches, the committee will work with the pulpit committee of such other church or churches.
7. The clerk shall record the terms of the minister's call, unless other arrangements are made.
8. The term of the minister's call shall be for an indefinite period and may be terminated by either party upon 60 days' notice. If immediate termination is desired by the church, 30 days severance pay will be allotted.
9. An annual contract will be signed in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the current church year to be in effect for the next calendar church year. The terms of said contract are considered an addendum to this constitution. Rev – 12/16

### Section C – Resignation of the Minister

1. Voluntary resignation of the minister shall be submitted to the general board in writing.
2. Following action on the resignation by the general board, the board shall make a recommendation to the congregation as to the acceptance of the minister's resignation, which shall be voted upon by the congregation.
3. The congregation and minister shall remember that their relationship is more than a mere contract, and conduct themselves accordingly in the spirit of Christ.

### Section D – Joint Employment

If agreeable to the church and any other church or churches involved, arrangements may be made for two or more churches to employ the same minister or ministerial staff.



## Article VII – Meetings

### Section A – Meetings to be held

The congregation shall hold an election in December prior to the beginning of the next church year, January 1st. A general board meeting will be held each quarter for conducting necessary business.

### Section B – Notice of Meetings Rev – 12/16

Notice of all regular or special congregational (except for amending this constitution) shall be announced at a regular Sunday morning service of worship at least one week in advance of the meeting and/or sent by one or more of the following methods:

1. Sent by email at least three days before such a meeting.
2. Sent by text message at least three days before such a meeting. (should be accompanied by email message)
3. Sent by postal mail and postmarked at least three days before such a meeting.

The purpose of the meeting shall be indicated in each notice.

### Section C – Qualifications for Voters in Meeting of the Congregation.

Each voter shall be a regular member of the church, as outlined in Article II, Section A of this constitution.

## Article VIII – Amendments

This constitution may be amended at any business meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds vote of the regular members present and voting on the amendment, provided written notice of the proposed amendments has been sent through the mail to members of the congregation at least ten days prior to the time of the vote is to be taken, or the proposed amendment has been read at or following two regular Sunday morning services before the vote is taken.

## Article IX – Previous Statements

This constitution supersedes and takes precedence over any and all previous constitutions, articles, statements or declarations previously adopted or used.

## Article X – Christian Marriage

The church is subject to biblical authority on marriages. The First Christian Church of Blandinsville follows the living, holy, and God inspired Bible as God's instruction manual for all followers of Jesus Christ, including all leaders and members at The First Christian Church of Blandinsville. The Bible is the authority under which we make all ministry operating decisions and all church conduct and policies must be consistent with Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Our church, its minister, and its properties exist only to serve and be used for biblical principles and shall not be used for ungodly, unbiblical purposes such as performing non-Christian marriages, even if under government duress. Rev – 12/16

## **By-Laws**

1. The church year shall begin on January 1st.
2. The general board:
  - a. Shall hold a regular meeting once a quarter, on a date selected by the board.
  - b. Shall hold special meetings as required, on call of the chairman, minister, or upon the request of three or more members of the general board.
  - c. Shall consider one-third of the total number of board members as constituting a quorum.
  - d. Shall observe the following order of business:
    - (1) Call to order by presiding officer
    - (2) Devotions or prayer
    - (3) Reading and approval of previous minutes
    - (4) Reports of officers, committees and auxiliary organizations
    - (5) Action on recommendations in reports
    - (6) Consideration of unfinished business from previous meetings
    - (7) New business and program suggestions for future activities
    - (8) Adjournment with closing prayer. Rev – 12/16
3. All auxiliary organizations of this church shall make reports at regular interval to the general board, and receive recommendations from the board.
4. These by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members of the general board present and voting in a regular or special meeting, provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing to the membership of the general board at least seven days prior to the vote thereon.

## Revision History

*Previous Revision: May 3, 1998*

### Article II – Membership

*Revision 12/16:*

Split membership into Section A and Section B, to differentiate between ***Regular Member (voting rights)*** and ***Associate Member (no voting rights)***.

### Article IV – Officers by the Congregation

*Revision 12/16: General Revision throughout*

Section A – Officers elected by the congregation

Removed office: ***Outreach Fund Treasurer***

*Revision 12/16:*

Section C – Qualifications of Officers.

Added qualification statement:

***“Elders and Deacons should meet the qualifications as outlined in Scripture; 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9.”***

Section D – Duties of Officers

*Revision 12/16*

Paragraph 3:

Added the following:

***“directly supervise the minister, church clerk, financial secretary, treasurer, historian, and perform such other duties as may be assigned. Elders in turn will report and seek approval with the general board.”***

*Revision 12/16*

Paragraph 4:

Added the following:

***“stewardship of the building and property, and other duties as may be assigned.”***

*Revision 12/16*

Paragraph 7:

Added the following:

***“.....such vital statistics as births, deaths, baptisms, weddings, and weekly church attendance;”***



## Revision History continued

### Section E – Election of Officers

*Revision 12/16*

#### Paragraph 1:

Added the following:

***“and shall serve on this committee throughout the following church year. If non-board members are not available to fill the committee, board members whose terms are not expiring may be substituted.”***

### Article V – The General Board

*Revision 12/16*

#### Section A – Membership

Updated as follows:

“The general board shall consist of the church clerk, financial secretary, treasurer, historian, minister, elders, deacons, deaconesses, trustees; ***and the chairperson of each functional committee.*** (Not including organized church school classes).

### Article V – The General Board

#### Section B – Duties

*Revision 12/16*

Updated and added committee names per the following:

Paragraph 1: It shall be the duty of the general board:

- a. To consider and recommend general policies to the congregation.
- b. To transact necessary business of the church.
- c. To be responsible, directly and through such functional committees as it may delegate for the following phases of the church work:
  - (1) Worship and Devotional Life
  - (2) Christian Education
  - (3) Evangelism and Membership Development
  - (4) Outreach and Community Services
  - (5) ***Finance***
  - (6) Property (including trustees)
  - (7) ***Christian Fellowship***
  - (8) ***Christian Youth Fellowship***
  - (9) ***Officer Nominations***
  - (10) ***Pulpit***

## Revision History continued

### Article VI – The Minister

Revision 12/16

#### Section B – Selection

Added paragraph 9:

***9. An annual contract will be signed in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the current church year to be in effect for the next calendar church year. The terms of said contract are considered an addendum to this constitution.***

### Article VII – Meetings

Revision 12/16

#### Section B – Notice of Meetings

Updated by adding additional communication provisions:

Notice of all regular or special congregational (except for amending this constitution) shall be announced at a regular Sunday morning service of worship at least one week in advance of the meeting and/or ***sent by one or more of the following:***

- 1. Sent by email at least three days before such a meeting.***
- 2. Sent by text message at least three days before such a meeting. (should be accompanied by email message)***
- 3. Sent by postal mail and postmarked at least three days before such a meeting.***

The purpose of the meeting shall be indicated in each notice.

### Article X – Christian Marriage

Revision 12/16: Added Article X

***The church is subject to biblical authority on marriages. The First Christian Church of Blandinsville follows the living, holy, and God inspired Bible as God's instruction manual for all followers of Jesus Christ, including all leaders and members at The First Christian Church of Blandinsville. The Bible is the authority under which we make all ministry operating decisions and all church conduct and policies must be consistent with Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Our church, its minister, and its properties exist only to serve and be used for biblical principles and shall not be used for ungodly, unbiblical purposes such as performing non-Christian marriages, even if under government duress.***

### By-Laws

Revision 12/16

#### Paragraph 2.d line 8:

Added:

***"with closing prayer"***

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