



By-Laws

Preamble

“The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.”

(Psalm 19:7-8, Today’s New International Version)

The law of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) presupposes a fellowship of men and women with their children in voluntary covenanted relationship with one another and with God through Jesus Christ. The law rests upon the fellowship and is not designed to work without trust and love.

Article I: Name

Section 1. This congregation shall be known as the Brookdale Presbyterian Church, and is a member of the Presbytery of Mid-America in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, and incorporated under the laws of the state of Missouri.

Article II: Government

Section 1. These bylaws embrace the provisions relating primarily to the structure, government and operation of Brookdale Presbyterian Church. Robert’s Rule of Order (Newly Revised) shall be used for parliamentary guidance.

Article III: Objective

Section 1. Those within the Church are called by God to honor Him. Acknowledging their own sin, they are the more to acknowledge the power and love of God in overcoming sin by the gift of Jesus Christ the Savior, and to offer their lives in thankful devotion to His service.

Section 2. God, having established the Church, has also commissioned it to be the means by which his redemptive love may be extended to all mankind; the Church is, therefore, to declare the wonderful deeds of Him who calls people out of darkness into His marvelous light; and who in His grace reaches out to pardon, redeem, and empower undeserving people, through Jesus Christ.

Article IV: Pastors

Section 1. The Pastor

- . (a) The pastor is moderator of the session and is the person looked to for leadership in a particular church in its whole life and program, subject to the duly expressed will of the session.

- . (b) The pastor shall, along with other duties, direct and lead the public worship of the congregation, with special responsibility for the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the sacraments.

Section 2. The Associate and/or Assistant Pastor(s)

- . (a) The associate and/or assistant pastor(s) takes the direction for work from the pastor, in consultation with the session.
- . (b) The associate and/or assistant pastor(s), by and under the authority of the pastor, will be responsible for the worship services in the pastor's absence.
- . (c) The associate and/or assistant pastor(s) may moderate a meeting of the session upon the invitation of the pastor, with the consent of the elders.

Article V: Officers

Section 1. The officers of the congregation shall be:¹

- a. The senior pastor, associate pastor(s) and/or assistant pastor(s) (if applicable), and all duly elected elders, the number of which shall be at the discretion of the congregation, shall constitute the Session.
- b. The Board of Deacons shall consist of duly elected members, the number of which shall be at the discretion of the congregation.
- c. The Board of Trustees shall consist of duly elected members, the number of which shall be at the discretion of the congregation.
- d. Church Treasurer.

The pastor, as moderator of the Session, shall be the moderator of the congregation unless for some reason it is deemed not practical or wise by the Session with the concurrence of the pastor. In that event, the session with the concurrence of the pastor shall appoint one of its members to call the meeting to order and to preside. In case of sickness or temporary absence of the pastor, the same expedient may be adopted. When there is no pastor, or in cases involved in judicial process, or when the pastor refuses to moderate or to concur with the Session's appointment of one of its members to preside, a minister of the Presbytery may be appointed by presbytery to moderate.

The clerk of session shall serve as secretary of the congregation. If the clerk is not present or is unable to serve, the moderator shall appoint a temporary secretary.

Section 2. Only members in full communion (either men or women) shall be eligible to hold office. To be eligible for nomination as a church officer, the following criteria must be met:

- . 1) Regular worship attendance
- . 2) A record of giving to the ministry of Brookdale Church
- . 3) Participation in a church ministry

Section 3. A full report of the year's activities of all church officers, boards and organizations must be submitted for approval to the stated congregational meeting in January.

Article VI: Nomination and Election

Section 1. Election of officers shall be held at the stated congregational meeting in October.

Section 2. Nominations shall be made by a representative Nominating Committee of communicant members of the church.

Section 3. Full opportunity shall be given for nominations from the floor by any eligible voter, provided said nominees shall have been contacted and indicated their willingness to serve if elected.

Section 4. Only confirmed members will be permitted to vote.

Section 5. Proxy votes will not be allowed.

Section 6. No person shall be a member of more than one of the three (3) boards simultaneously (session, Board of Deacons, Board of Trustees).

Section 7. The offices of elder, deacon, and trustee shall be open to all persons without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, marital status or disability.

Article VII: Term of Office

Section 1. Elders, deacons, and trustees shall be elected for three-year terms, and may succeed themselves for one additional term of three years. Following an accumulated term of six years, an elder, deacon, or trustee is ineligible for reelection until one year has elapsed.

Section 2. The terms of office for elders and deacons shall begin with their installation, which shall take place no later than the twelfth (12th) Sunday after the election.

Section 3. Criteria for removal from office shall be:

- a. Violation of clear Scriptural norms, including but not limited to ethical misconduct.
- b. By due process in conformity to, and for reasons outlined in, the Book of Order of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

Article VIII: Duties of Session

Section 1. Elders should be persons of faith, dedication, and good judgment. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian Gospel, both within the church and in the world.

Section 2. Elders, the immediate representatives of the congregation, are chosen by them. Together with Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, they exercise leadership, government, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of the Brookdale Church as well as the Church at large, including ecumenical relationships.

Section 3. Recognizing conflicts are inevitable in all life and certainly in the church, the session shall be responsible for leading the church in conflict resolution.

Section 4. The particular responsibilities and powers of the session are outlined in the Book of Order. These include, but are not limited to

- Providing for the worship of the congregation
- Receiving members into the church and keeping an accurate roll of the membership of the church
- Establishing and administering the annual budget
- Developing and supervising the programs of the church
- Leading the congregation in participation in the mission of the church in the world
- Providing for the growth of members and their equipping for ministry
- Electing the Church Treasurer annually

Section 5. The session shall oversee the use of buildings, grounds, and other properties belonging to the congregation.

Section 6. The session will delegate and supervise the work of the Board of Deacons, and the Board of Trustees, and all other organizations and task forces within the congregation.

Section 7. The session will provide for the administration of the church programs, including employment of non-ordained staff with concern for equal employment opportunity, fair employment practices, personnel policies, and the annual review of the adequacy of compensation for all ordained and non-ordained staff.

Article IX: Duties of Clerk of Session

Section 1. Minutes and all other official records of the session, which should include congregational meetings and records of other boards of the church, are the property of the Session, and the clerk is responsible for their preservation.

Section 2. Provides to the nominating committee the list of people eligible for church office.

Article X: Duties of Deacons

Section 1. Those persons of spiritual mind, exemplary life, friendly spirit and sound judgment should be chosen to the office of deacon.

Section 2. Deacons should also visit the people in their homes, minister to those in need, to the sick, to the friendless and to any who may be in distress, in accordance with the Scriptural duties of the office, and such other duties and responsibilities as may be delegated to the Board by the session, or set forth in the Book of Order.

Article XI: Duties of Trustees

Section 1. The trustees are the responsible officers of the corporation, and shall be entrusted with the responsibility the civil law assigns to it. Their duties are therefore in general to govern the affairs of the corporation to the best interests of Brookdale Presbyterian Church.

Section 2. The Board of Trustees shall organize as soon as possible after the congregational election, and shall elect a chairperson and a secretary who shall serve for one (1) year, and shall adopt such rules for its own government and appoint such committees as may be necessary.

Section 3. The session of Brookdale Presbyterian Church, having exercised its constitutional authority, has assigned the following duties and responsibilities to the Board of Trustees:

- . (a) To have charge of the maintenance and improvement of the physical properties of the congregation, payment of all taxes and assessments upon said properties, and the purchase of adequate insurance upon the same.
- . (b) To hold in trust all valuable papers, deeds and insurance policies, and to perform such other duties and responsibilities as may from time to time be assigned to them.

Article XII: Other Organizations and Associations

Section 1. Such organizations and associations as may from time to time be deemed desirable for the promotion of the work of the church, may be organized – subject to approval of the session who shall have the power to dissolve such organizations or associations when it shall be deemed necessary.

Article XIII: Committees

Section 1. Nominating Committee

- a) The nominating committee shall be representative of the congregation. Only members in full communion are permitted to serve.
- b) Five members from the congregation at-large will be elected at the congregational meeting in October to serve for the following year.
- c) Two members of the committee shall be active elders, designated by the session, one of whom shall be appointed as moderator of the committee.
- d) One member each shall be elected by and from the Board of Trustees and by and from the Board of Deacons.
- e) The elder, deacon and trustee representatives shall be appointed no later than the January meetings of those boards.
- f) No member of the committee shall serve more than three years consecutively.
- g) The senior pastor shall be an ex-officio member of this committee without vote.
- h) Any active member of the congregation may propose names of potential candidates to the nominating committee. Opportunity to present names shall be published in the church bulletin at least twice during the month prior to the nominating committee's deliberations.
- i) The nominating committee shall convene no later than February to begin the process of nominating and preparing the officer candidates for service pending their election, and the five members-at-large of the nominating committee, all of whom are to be elected at the October congregational meeting. The committee shall contact all nominees prior to the election to determine their willingness to serve if elected.
- j) The nominating committee shall convene throughout the year as needed to fill vacancies to unexpired terms of office of elders, deacons, trustees and elected members of the nominating committee. The session may call a special congregational meeting for the purpose of filling these vacancies.

2. Personnel Committee

- . (a) The Personnel Committee shall consist of six (6) members appointed by the moderator with approval of the session, for a term of three (3) years with two (2) appointed each year.
- . (b) This committee shall develop and recommend to the Session for approval a code of personnel policies governing employment conditions, a schedule of staff positions, job descriptions and salary scales, and assist the session and the Head of Staff in serving staff persons.

- . (c) This committee shall consult with the pastor(s) as to the adequacy of his (their) terms of call, and after counseling with Session's finance committee, recommend to the Session the necessary changes in terms of call.
- . (d) This committee shall, at least annually, review the adequacy of compensation for other employees, and, after counseling with Session's finance committee, shall recommend necessary adjustments.
- . (e) This committee will hear grievances and act as liaison between employees and the session.

Section 3. Special Committees

Special committees as are needed to promote the work of the church, shall be appointed by the moderator with the approval of the session. The session may dissolve any special committee or committees when it deems such action beneficial to the congregation.

Article XIV: Christian Stewardship

Section 1. Proportionate giving being a distinct and positive command in the Scriptures, all persons becoming members of this church will be urged to contribute to the support of the church such proportion of their income as God requires, according to the principle laid down in 1 Corinthians 16:2, and in other well known Scripture passages.

Section 2. In view of this position, care must be taken so that the church work and mission is not overly dependent on money raising projects such as suppers, sales or entertainment for profit. When such projects are undertaken, permission must be granted by the session or a committee or team acting on session's behalf.

Section 3. No general solicitation of the church membership and its constituency, or any considerable part thereof for items not contained in the annual budget of the church shall be made by any person or group of persons, unless the item and solicitation has been approved by the session.

Article XV: Congregational Meeting

Section 1. The stated congregational meetings shall be in January and October, at a date, time and place determined by the Session.

Section 2. Called meetings of this congregation may be called by action of the session, by order of the presbytery, or by written request from at least one fifth of the active membership of the congregation.

Section 3. At least two Sundays notice shall be given for all stated and called meetings of this congregation

Section 4. The purpose for which a called meeting is requested or has been called shall be clearly stated and no other business shall be transacted at such meetings.

Section 5. If the membership of the congregation numbers less than 100 members, a quorum shall be one-fifth of the active membership. If the membership of the congregation is more than 100, a quorum shall be one-tenth of the membership, but not less than 20.

Section 6. Following shall be the order of business at all stated meetings: Call to order by moderator; Prayer; Devotions; Reading of minutes of previous meeting; Special order of business; Unfinished business; New business; Adjournment; Prayer.

Article XVI. Amendments

Section 1. The bylaws can only be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those members present and eligible to vote at a stated congregational meeting or a special called meeting for that purpose.

Section 2. Notice of the general nature of the proposed amendments shall be announced to the congregation at least ten (10) days prior to the date of the meeting at which the proposed changes shall be considered.

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