

THE CONSTITUTION OF JUDSON BAPTIST CHURCH

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CONSTITUTION

Judson Baptist Church of Oak Park Oak Park, Illinois

Article I. Name

The name of this church shall be *Judson Baptist Church of Oak Park*, located in Oak Park, Illinois. It shall continue in its status as a not-for-profit corporation under the Illinois Not for Profit Corporation Act of 1986.

Article II. JBC Purpose, Values, and Vision

The family of Judson Baptist Church commits itself to the following Corporate Calling Statement as the expression of our desire to continue to grow as a community of believers in spiritual vitality and effectiveness.

A. Biblical Purpose.

Judson Baptist Church of Oak Park exists to passionately love God, to pursue the glory of God in all things and to partner with Him in the pursuit of people near and far to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. Values.

We are committed to the following values:

1. Recognizing Christ's supremacy with "Yes, Lord!" living;
2. Demonstrating a passion for truth by striving to understand and apply biblical knowledge to life;
3. Exercising risk-taking faith by prayerful, yet daring, dependence on God;
4. Cultivating a team environment and being a community where acceptance, forgiveness, grace, and humility prevail;
5. Encouraging sacrifice, that is, the surrender of the control of our time, energy, money and service to the Lord;
6. Accepting people as individuals and expressing genuine concern for them;
7. Being an inclusive congregation and being intentional in matters of race and class diversity;
8. Equipping and unleashing people within the church and the community to use their gifts for the building of Christ's Kingdom;
9. Reaching lost people through personal and corporate evangelism and holistic ministry;
10. Focusing on fruit-bearing, while striving to be relevant, innovative, excellent and accountable.

C. Vision.

We envision Judson Baptist Church being one church in many locations, demonstrating the oneness of the body of Christ across ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic boundaries, having kingdom impact in Oak Park, Austin, Chicagoland, and the world for the glory of God and for the growth of Christ's Kingdom.

Article III. Doctrinal Statement

- A. We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired of God, and free from error in their original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and practice.
- B. We believe in one God, externally existing in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- C. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true Man.
- D. We believe that man was created in the image of God, and he (man) sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word and deed.
- E. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice; and that all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood.
- F. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into heaven, and His present life there for us as High Priest and Advocate.
- G. We believe in the blessed hope: the personal return of Jesus Christ for those who have trusted Him as Lord and Savior.
- H. We believe that those who have been regenerated (born again) by the Holy Spirit and have received the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are the true children of God.
- I. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the redeemed, and everlasting conscious punishment of the lost.
- J. We believe that marriage is a God-ordained, sacred union between a man and a woman and that such unions are meant to last until death separates the two.

Article IV. Ordinances

- A. **The Lord's Supper**, or Communion, shall be administered as frequently as the Elders shall schedule. All individuals who have accepted Christ as their personal Savior are welcome to partake of the Lord's Supper.

- B. **Baptism** shall be administered under the direction of the Elders by immersion in water and is to demonstrate love and commitment to Jesus Christ.

Article V. Membership

Section 1. Qualification.

- A. Membership in Judson Baptist Church shall in no way be regarded as a means of obtaining Divine grace or exceptional standing within God's family. The church wants to be responsible to those who commit themselves to our fellowship. The following shall be qualifications for membership:
1. The candidate is to state his/her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and give a testimony of a salvation experience;
 2. The candidate must have been baptized as a believer. Candidates who have not expressed their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior through Christian baptism must do so prior to being received into membership;
 3. The candidate must agree with and support the Doctrinal Statement;
 4. The candidate must indicate a willingness to respect authority vested in the leadership of the church;
 5. The candidate must not be involved in any sin that would disgrace the name of Christ and/or discredit the testimony of the church.
- B. The candidate and the Elders mutually commit themselves to the following:
1. The member agrees to support the work God has given Judson Baptist Church by:
 - a. Regular attendance in the worship services;
 - b. Prayer and personal Bible study;
 - c. Consistent financial support of the church (2 Cor. 8, 9); and
 - d. Regular Christian service.
 2. The church, as represented by the Elders, agrees to support the candidate by:
 - a. Providing for the teaching of God's Word;
 - b. Spiritual oversight by the Elders;
 - c. Regular communication to the congregation regarding major decisions by the leadership;
 - d. Direction and training in Christian service; and
 - e. Help in times of genuine physical, financial and emotional needs (where possible).
- C. All potential members will be interviewed by at least two Elders or their designees for the purpose of hearing the candidate's testimony of faith in Christ and their commitment to the above agreement.

Section 2. Admission.

Those who are eligible for membership may be received into the Church by baptism, by letter, by experience, or by restoration, upon recommendation of the Board of Elders.

Section 3. Categories.

A current membership list will be kept by Judson Baptist Church containing these three categories of members:

- A. *Resident Members*: This category is for residents within commuting distance of Judson Baptist Church.
- B. *Non-resident Members*: This category is for those who are separated from our fellowship but who wish to retain their identification and maintain their membership with Judson Baptist Church.
- C. *Associate Members*: This category is for those who have current membership in another church but for some reason (i.e. living here and away from their home church) wish to enter into the above covenanted relationship with Judson Baptist Church. These people will not be able to vote in business meetings and will be dropped from the roll when they leave the Judson Baptist Church area or by notice to the Church.

However, under certain circumstances of high degree of ministry involvement, an associate member shall have voting rights as approved by the Elders.

Section 4. Termination of Membership.

Members who fail to regularly attend and support the ministry of Judson Baptist Church may be removed from the church membership by recommendation of the Elders but only after a congregational vote supporting the recommendation at a church business meeting. The membership roll is to be reviewed annually and any member with whom there has been no communication for one year or more shall be contacted concerning their desire to maintain their membership.

A member may be removed from membership by any of the following means:

- A. By notice being received that the member has joined another Church;
- B. By the member requesting a letter of transfer or Christian character to be sent to another Church;
- C. Death;
- D. Requesting that his/her name be dropped from the roll (erasure); or
- E. Church discipline (exclusion).

Section 5. Discipline.

Church discipline shall be administered only in cases where clear Scriptural grounds are apparent. The Elders shall establish the procedure for discipline following the Biblical principles in Matthew 18 and I Corinthians 5. A unanimous minus one vote of the Elders (except where an Elder or immediate family member is being considered and in that case the Elder shall not participate in

that vote) and 75% of the congregation present in a duly called meeting shall be required to remove that person from the rolls of the church.

Section 6. Voting Rights.

Resident members, 18 years of age or older, and those associate members with voting rights, shall have the right to vote on any question or matter that may come before the Church membership at any Church meeting, each such member having one vote in person. Voting by proxy shall be available under special circumstances including but not limited to illness, or temporary change of residence, however, the right may only be exercised by written request by the member in connection with a particular matter being considered by the congregation.

Article VI. Government

The Head of the church is Christ Jesus. He makes His headship and leadership known through men that He chooses and equips to carry on the spiritual oversight of His work as affirmed by the congregation under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The spiritual leadership, administrative and executive authority shall be vested in the Board of Elders elected by and accountable to the congregation. The actions of the Board of Elders shall be subject to review by the church at any duly called business meeting of the church. The elected Elders, including the Senior Pastor, make up the Board of Elders. They shall be spiritual overseers of the church and are responsible to God for the spiritual welfare and proper functioning of the church.

A. Elders.

1. Selection of Elders.

A Board of Elders shall be established consisting of a minimum of three men (including the Senior Pastor). The number during any given year will be based on the number of qualified, willing men and is to be reviewed during the month of October.

Any man in the church may serve as an Elder if he has been a member in good standing for at least two years, has demonstrated a pastor's heart, is considered spiritually mature, and meets the biblical requirements for Elders as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

Any member of Judson Baptist Church may nominate another member for the office of Elder. Such a nomination must be in writing and given to the Elders by October 15 (the person nominating must identify himself/herself). This is to be done without his knowledge to avoid offense to the nominee.

The nominee shall be invited to be examined privately by the Board of Elders as to his desire to serve and his biblical qualifications.

Elder nominees shall be considered candidates after agreement among the Elders.

The name of each candidate shall be presented to the church in writing two weeks in advance of a vote in order to allow anyone to contact the Board of Elders should he/she have any question about the nominee's qualification.

Every Elder and candidate for eldership shall be voted upon by the congregation in the Church Election Meeting (with the exception of the Senior Pastor). Vote shall be by closed ballot. Election and re-election of Elders shall require a quorum consisting of 25% of eligible voting members with a 2/3 majority vote of the voting members present.

2. *Term of Office.*

The term of office shall be one (1) year. For service in the next term, an Elder does not have to go through the Elder nomination process above, however, said service must be approved by the congregation at the annual Church Election meeting. An Elder is accountable to the Lord as to the number of consecutive terms served.

3. *Officers.*

The officers of the Board of Elders shall be chosen by the Elders in December for the coming year for the following positions:

- a. Chairman. The Chairman shall be chosen from among the Elders. The Senior Pastor may not hold this office. The Chairman shall serve as both Chairman of the Board of Elders and as Church Moderator.
- b. Vice-chairman. The Vice-chairman shall preside in the absence of the Chairman. The Vice-chairman also shall be chosen by the Elders.
- c. Secretary. The secretary shall maintain accurate records of the minutes of the Board. He shall distribute unofficial minutes to the Elder Board for approval at the next Elder Board business meeting. After the Board approves the minutes (to make them official) the secretary shall distribute the official minutes to all Elders, Deacons and any other member who requests them, within 10 days.

4. *Conduct of Meetings.*

The Board of Elders shall meet monthly or more often as they deem necessary. Reasonable attempts shall be made to notify all Elders in advance of any meetings of the Board. The Board of Elders shall establish their own rules for conduct of their meetings in accordance with the Scriptures. A quorum for the meeting of the Elders shall consist of at least 51%.

5. *Duties.*

It shall be the responsibility of the Elder to:

- a. Pray weekly for the members of the church and the ministries of the church;
- b. Study God's Word on a personal basis for the sake of maintaining sound doctrine and biblical practice in all ministries of the church and in order to be equipped personally for shepherding ministry;
- c. Join with the other Elders in contacting families of the church to stay informed of their needs and concerns; and

d. Join the other Elders in overseeing the Church.

6. *Removal or Resignation of an Elder.*

No accusation against an Elder will be considered unless supported by the testimony of two or more witnesses. If an Elder is found unqualified for his position he may be removed from office by a majority vote of the eligible members present in a called business meeting that has been publicized two weeks in advance. A quorum for this meeting shall consist of 33% of members eligible to vote. An Elder may step down from his position with the submission of a letter of resignation (to be received by the Board of Elders).

B. Deacons.

Nominations for the office of Deacon shall be made by the Board of Elders and voted upon by the congregation in the Church Election Meeting in November. The Deacons do not function as a board, but will meet with the Elders periodically for prayer and coordination of activities.

1. The number of Deacons shall be established by the Board of Elders as they recognize the need for the care of the church family. As the need becomes apparent to the Elders, ministry positions will be established, and men and women filling these positions will be designated Deacons.
2. A Deacon is to officially represent the congregation of Judson Baptist Church in his/her lifestyle in the community and to assist the Elders in administration in the church.
3. Deacons must meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3 and Acts 6 pertaining to deacons and shall be accountable to the Elders.
4. Each Deacon will be delegated an area of ministry to administrate under the direction of the elders. An Elder shall not serve in the capacity of Deacon (except the Senior Pastor who shall administrate the church staff).
5. In the event that there are not enough spiritually qualified Deacons to meet the administrative needs of the congregation the Board of Elders will appoint members of the church to fill the particular need, though they will not be recognized as Deacons. Any such ministry appointee shall be accountable to the Board of Elders.
6. Men and women members of Judson Baptist Church may serve as Deacons.
7. Areas of administration that will be headed by deacons will be finances, Christian Education, music and worship, body life, facilities, missions, church staff, or other areas recognized by the Board of Elders needing such attention.
8. Deacons shall recruit and maintain personnel to work in their ministry area as they see fit. All appointments made by a Deacon are to be approved by the Elders. Deacons are to delegate authority and responsibility to these appointees in order to build up the body and utilize the willing and gifted people of the congregation.

9. Each Deacon (or person serving in the place of a Deacon) is to prepare a written ministry plan. This plan shall include; general guidelines, job descriptions, a mission or strategy statement, long term goals or objectives, specific goals and plans on what that ministry is attempting to accomplish in the given year and policy for that ministry in that year. Each Deacon is to assist the Minister of Finance by submitting data for construction of the annual budget as the Minister of Finance directs. Each Deacon is to submit a report of progress to the Board of Elders by the first day of each calendar quarter as the Board directs.
10. No accusation against a Deacon will be considered unless supported by the testimony of two or more witnesses. If a Deacon be found unqualified for that position, he or she may be removed from office by a majority vote of the eligible members present in a business meeting called by the Elders, that has been publicized two weeks in advance. A quorum for this meeting shall consist of 33% of members eligible to vote. A Deacon may step down from his or her position by submitting a letter of resignation to the Board of Elders.

C. Other Offices.

Other offices, including but not limited to a church treasurer (who shall not be the same person as the Minister of Finance), church clerk and church historian, shall be established as is necessary to carry out the functioning of the church by the Board of Elders. The establishment of any office other than Elder and Deacon shall be published in advance and approved by the congregation. The Board of Elders shall nominate members for these positions which must be approved by a simple majority vote of the congregation in a duly called business meeting.

D. Committees.

Committees may be formed by the Board of Elders, or by Deacons, to carry out a specific task or function. All committees are to be approved by the Board of Elders and shall be supervised by the Board, or officer, creating that committee. Any remaining questions or issues concerning committees that are not specifically answered in this document shall be referred to the Board of Elders who shall decide what is appropriate concerning the forming, functioning, and/or dissolution of appointments or committees.

Article VII. Pastoral Staff

All full-time paid staff positions with the exception of the Senior Pastor must be created by the Board of Elders and approved by the congregation. The filling of any such position shall be by nomination of the Elders, publicized in writing to the church body at least two weeks prior to election, and elected by the congregation by a 75% vote of the church. All part-time paid or unpaid staff positions shall be nominated by the Elders and approved by a majority vote of the eligible members present. The Board of Elders has the authority to dismiss part-time and unpaid staff present. Dismissal of a full-time person shall require a recommendation from the Board of Elders followed by a majority of the eligible members present.

Section 1. Senior Pastor.

The Elder designated as Senior Pastor, along with the other Elders, shall oversee the work of Judson Baptist Church. He shall have primary responsibility of ministering the Word of God at the

regular public services of the church, spend his time as a servant to the members of the church and shall supervise any other pastoral and office staff.

Section 2. Calling and Dismissing The Senior Pastor.

The Board of Elders shall serve as the pulpit committee in the case of vacancy of the office of Senior Pastor. Such duties may be delegated if the Board so desires. The Elders are responsible to examine and approve any candidate nominated to fill the office. The Elders must be unanimous in such a decision. The church must be advised two weeks in advance of any vote to elect a Senior Pastor at a specially called business meeting which must be publicized by mail to all members. The minimum vote required to elect any nominee for this office must be 75% of members present. A quorum of 33% of the eligible voting members is required for calling or dismissing a Senior Pastor.

Dismissal of a Senior Pastor requires a simple majority vote of the congregation in a specially called business meeting that shall be publicized by mail to the members two weeks in advance of such a meeting. The Senior Pastor may elect to resign by writing to the Board of Elders. The resignation shall be effective ninety days after being received by the Board. If dismissed by the church as a result of a church vote, the Senior Pastor shall have ninety days to vacate or be paid for ninety days work as a severance whichever the Board of Elders decides.

Article VIII. Amendments

This constitution may be amended at any regular or special business meeting of the church by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present. Notice in writing stating the proposed amendment or amendments shall be given to the members of the church at least two weeks prior to such meeting, and notice of the meeting shall be announced two consecutive weeks preceding the date of the meeting.

Article IX. Elections/Appointments

All officers of the church shall be elected at the Church Election Meeting. The Church Election Meeting shall be held in November as set and announced two weeks in advance by the Board of Elders. Those voted into office in the November Church Election Meeting shall take office the following January 1st. If an office is vacated, the Elders shall nominate a qualified candidate who shall then be voted upon by the church as described in Article VI of this constitution.

Article X. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of this church shall be the calendar year.

Article XI. Business Meetings

Business meetings may be called by any Elder, Deacon, or 10% of the regular members on the roles by written request to the Board of Elders.

The annual budget(s) of the church shall be prepared by the Minister of Finance under the direction of the Board of Elders and presented to the congregation for approval in November. The Elders also will be responsible to see that an audit, independent of the church treasurer and the Minister of Finance, shall be conducted each year.

The Annual Business Meeting of the church shall be in January as scheduled by the Board of Elders and publicized to the members two weeks in advance of the meeting. The purpose shall be to report concerning the previous fiscal year of Judson Baptist Church's activities.

Quarterly business meetings shall be held to conduct necessary business of the church. These meetings will be held in the months of April, July, and October. Exact dates and times of these meetings will be set by the Elders and publicized to the church in advance.

A quorum for the transaction of general church business shall consist of 25% of the eligible voting congregation. The eligible voting congregation is all members with voting rights as defined in Article V, sections 3 and 6. Upon the transaction of business to call or dismiss a Senior Pastor, or to purchase, sell, mortgage or transfer church real estate, a quorum shall consist of at least 33% of the eligible voting congregation (a 2/3 vote is required to pass the purchasing, selling, or mortgaging of church real estate). For the purpose of voting at any given business meeting members who abstain from a particular vote shall be considered part of the quorum required for the meeting but shall not be considered as part of the total vote.

Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the proceedings of the business meeting, unless the procedural matter is addressed in the constitution.

Article XII. Signatures

The signatures of the Chairman of the Board of Elders, the Vice-chairman of the Board of Elders, and the Secretary of the Board of Elders under the corporate seal of the Church, shall be recognized as representing the authority of the Judson Baptist Church for all documents, contracts, and other papers (except as otherwise specified herein, or otherwise provided by law or other action of the Church with respect to designated instruments).