
Constitution Articles and By-Laws

Village Church of
Barrington

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ARTICLES

Preamble

We, the members of Village Church of Barrington, in order to carry out more efficiently the commission given by Jesus Christ to his Church, do ordain and establish the following Constitution and Bylaws, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

Article 1: Name

1. The name of this church shall be The Village Church of Barrington (hereafter referred to as VCB).

Article 2: Standing and Affiliation

1. VCB is affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America (hereafter referred to as EFCA) and accepts the responsibilities of mutually promoting the work and ministry of the Gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
2. VCB willingly cooperates with other churches in this denomination for the purposes of fellowship, education, charitable work, missions, church planting and other Christian activities. It also participates in the denomination's credentialing program for the licensing and ordination of pastors.

Article 3: Purpose and Mission

1. The purpose of VCB is to glorify God by keeping the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) and fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). To those ends, VCB shall engage in activities such as: promoting public and private worship; engaging in personal and public evangelism; encouraging Christian fellowship; preaching and teaching the Word of God; administering the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; showing compassion to the poor and needy; supporting missionary endeavors at home and abroad; and multiplying healthy churches among all peoples.
2. VCB is organized and shall be operated exclusively for religious and charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, under a group listing with the EFCA.

Article 4: Statement of Faith

1. The VCB Statement of Faith shall be aligned with the EFCA. If changes to the EFCA Statement of Faith are ratified at the District and/or National levels, the congregation of VCB must vote to adopt or reject the modified statement in its entirety per the procedure for amendments to the Articles of the Constitution (see Article 8).
2. If VCB rejects changes to the EFCA Statement of Faith, the VCB shall no longer be affiliated with the EFCA.

Article 5: Property Rights

1. VCB shall have the power to receive property, either by gift or purchase, and to hold such property as authorized by the laws of the State of Illinois and as deemed necessary for the business of the church. VCB shall have the power to pledge or dispose of such property by mortgage, deed or otherwise.
2. If a division occurs in the church, the name and all property will be retained by those adhering to this Constitution. In the event of a dispute as to which members are adhering to the Constitution, the Board of Directors of the EFCA will review the dispute and make a decision binding on all members.
3. In the event of dissolution of the church, the property rights shall be assigned to the EFCA, to enable the denomination to renew the work or to use the values thereof for further Gospel enterprises. VCB shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the membership of the church by a vote of two-thirds or greater, or when the church has not held a congregational meeting for three years, or when less than ten members remain.

Article 6: Government

1. The ultimate authority of VCB lies in the person of Jesus Christ, who is the head of the church, and in Scripture, which is the basis for all faith and practice. At the earthly level, this church's authority is vested in its membership, and administrated by its Elders, staff, Deacons, and Officers.
2. The membership shall affirm and authorize biblically qualified leadership to carry out the purpose and mission of the VCB as described in the By-Laws.

Article 7: Directors and Officers

1. The Directors of VCB shall be the Elders of which there shall be at least four in number.
2. The Officers shall be as described in the By-Laws.

Article 8: Amendments

1. Amendments to the Articles of the Constitution may be proposed to the church membership in either of the following manners:
 - a. By recommendation from at least three-fourths of the then serving Elders, or
 - b. By proposed amendment signed by at least 10% of the church membership in good standing (not under church discipline as defined in the By-Laws – Section 1). Such amendment will be submitted in writing to the Elders with at least two weeks to review and follow the submission guidelines below.
2. A proposed amendment to the Articles of the Constitution must be submitted in writing to the church membership at least four weeks before the congregational meeting at which the amendment will be presented for a vote. Announcement of the proposed amendment to the constitution will be made from the pulpit each week for two weeks before the congregational meeting.
3. Any properly called congregational meeting with a quorum may consider a properly presented amendment.
4. A three-fourths majority of votes cast by the church members attending the called meeting is required to approve an amendment to the Articles of the Constitution.
5. Amendments to the Articles of the Constitution shall be effective immediately unless otherwise specified therein.

BY-LAWS

Section 1: Eligibility for Membership

1. Any person who meets the following qualifications is eligible for membership:
 - a. Has repented of their sins and has accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.
 - b. Is faithfully endeavoring by the grace of God and the working of the Holy Spirit to make their life conform to Christian principles.
 - c. Has attended the church for at least 12 weeks.
 - d. Subscribes to the Doctrinal Statement and Fellowship Pledge (see Appendix 1 and 2).
 - e. Is 13 years or older.

Section 2: Process for Membership

1. Those who wish to become members of VCB must first complete the Application for Membership. Upon receipt of a completed application, a personal interview with at least two Elders, Deacons, or Officers is required. Scheduling of personal interviews will be overseen by the Clerk.
2. Upon the recommendation of those conducting the interview, the name and copies of the application form of a membership candidate shall be sent to the Elders, Deacons, Officers, and Pastoral Staff by the Clerk. If no concerns are voiced within one week, the name of the applicant shall then be presented to the congregation for approval.
3. If no concerns are voiced from the congregation within three weeks of being presented to the congregation, the Application for Membership is deemed approved and the candidate thereafter considered a member of the congregation.
4. Any concerns voiced will be directed to the Elders for review and determination of the acceptance of the Application for Membership.
5. Staff positions requiring congregational approval automatically become members upon approval of their hiring by the congregation.

Section 3: Dismissal of Members

1. Any member of the church who has not attended the regular services of the church for a period of six months and has not responded to contact from the church for two months will be dismissed from membership.
2. Members who notify the church of their leaving will be removed from membership at that time.
3. Dismissed members may be returned to the membership roll by request to the Church Clerk after re-establishing regular attendance at church services and prayerful support of the church for a twelve week period of time.

4. Upon request to the Clerk, members desiring to unite with another church of like precious faith shall be granted a church letter confirming their membership in VCB.

Section 4: Discipline of Members

1. Any member who may be found not living in accordance with the express teaching of Scripture and who may be bringing reproach upon the testimony of Christ, shall be subject to church discipline.
2. The ultimate purpose of church discipline is the restoration of the erring member. However, should a member consistently conduct himself in a manner that is in direct violation of clear biblical commands and remain unrepentant at the end of the process, that member is subject to loss of membership privileges through removal from the membership roll.
3. Jesus provided a process by which discipline could be done redemptively (Matthew 18:15-17). In progressing through each of these steps of church discipline, ample time for repentance must be allowed at each step.
 - a. Private confrontation: The erring member should be approached directly in private by the concerned and informed fellow Christian and confronted with his or her sin. If repentance does not follow this step, the next step should be followed.
 - b. Private conference: If the erring member is unrepentant, then he or she should be confronted about his or her sin by two or three believers. If repentance does not follow this step, the elders should be informed of the situation.
 - c. Public meeting: The Elders should ensure that the biblical ideals of discipline, love and concern have been communicated to the erring member. Care must be taken that fairness, evidence, and a right to be heard imbue all proceedings. If the Elders determine that the erring member is guilty and remains unrepentant after being given ample evidence, warning and time, the Elders shall present the matter at a congregational meeting.
 - d. Public exclusion: After the Elders and members have made clear, fair, and consistent efforts to bring the erring member to repentance without results, they may then dismiss the erring member from membership in VCB. The erring member shall thus lose his or her membership in the church and will be asked to stay away from any church activity.
4. After a period of time, the elders shall attempt at least once more to bring the dismissed member back into repentance, discipline and fellowship.
5. If the member repents, then appropriate accountability will be instituted and if the fruits of repentance are manifest, the matter will be closed.
6. The discipline process outlined above may be expedited at the discretion of the Elders if the safety of a member or the safety of the congregation is at risk.

7. No resignation from a member under discipline will be accepted after the situation has been turned over to the Elders. The discipline process will continue once initiated until the member is removed from the membership role or the matter is closed.
8. A person who has been dismissed from membership may be restored by confession of his or her sin and by giving satisfactory evidence of repentance. The congregation shall forgive, restore, and demonstrate love toward any such repentant person (2 Corinthians 2:5-11).

Section 5: Church Governance

1. The membership is responsible for approving the annual budget and electing qualified leaders.
2. The elected leaders are comprised of the Elders, the Deacons, the Officers, the Senior Pastor, and other Pastoral Staff members as identified by the Elders. The Deacons together with the Officers make up the Deacon Board. The Elder Chairman will chair and is a voting member of the Deacon Board.
3. The elected leaders of the church shall not execute any legal documents outside the approved budget that obligate the church, such as mortgages or contracts pertaining to the real property of the church, in an amount greater than \$50,000, without express consent by a simple majority vote of the membership in good standing.
4. Members 18 years of age and older are eligible to hold office and serve on a Nominating Team.

Section 6: Elders

1. The Elders shall be four to ten in number and will include the Senior Pastor. The number of Elders will be at the discretion of the Elders. The Elders shall appoint from among themselves a Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Elder Chairman or 50% of the Elders may call a meeting of the Elders.
2. The Chairman of the Elders:
 - a. Presides at all meetings of the Elders, the Deacon Board, and all congregational meetings. The Chairman may request the Vice-Chairman, Senior Pastor or another Elder to lead an Elder meeting, Deacon Board or congregational meeting in his absence.
 - b. Sees that meetings are conducted in an appropriate manner
 - c. Signs legal documents for the church or may delegate this authority to other Deacons, Elders, or Officers in writing.
3. Elder responsibilities include oversight and shepherding of the church. The oversight of the church will include strategic planning, establishing church doctrines, enforcing church discipline and determining whether pastoral positions require congregational approval. The shepherding will include visiting and anointing the sick with oil, prayer, teaching the Word, leading Communion, and

discipling other leaders in the church. If there is a difference of opinion among the leadership of the church regarding budget allocation or financial decisions, the Elders shall have the final authority.

4. Candidates for Elder will be nominated by the Nominating Team. Elders shall be men who meet the general qualifications for church leaders outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Elders should model Christ in character and self-sacrificing behavior. All candidates for Elder must be approved by the existing Elders.
5. The Elders will be elected by a vote of the members present at the Fall Congregational Meeting.
6. Elders will serve three-year terms and are eligible to be re-elected twice for a total of nine years of continuous service. When an Elder has served the maximum number of terms, he must wait at least one year before being eligible to serve again as an Elder. Terms will be staggered so that not more than one-third of the Elders will be subject to retirement or re-election in any given year. If an Elder position becomes open for any reason, the position will be vacant until the next election. If the number of Elders becomes less than four, then a special congregational meeting shall be called to select the necessary number of interim Elders. The interim Elders will serve until new Elders are elected through the normal process described above. Serving as an interim Elder does not count toward years served.
7. Elders may be removed from office by a three quarters vote of the remaining Elders or by a majority vote by secret ballot of the congregation at any congregational meeting. The Elders will be held accountable by each other and the membership. No accusation shall be brought against an Elder except on the testimony of at least two members in good standing. The matter shall then be taken up by the remaining Elders for investigation. If the offending Elder continues in unrepentant sin, the congregation will be informed (1 Timothy 5:19-21).

Section 7: Deacons

1. The Biblical model for a Deacon is one who serves (Acts 6:1-6). The Deacons shall be six to eight in number and meet as needed. The number of Deacons will be at the discretion of the Elders. Officers are not counted as Deacons.
2. The Deacons are responsible for the operational readiness of the church and all matters regarding church facilities.
3. The Deacons should develop an annual budget to be presented to the congregation for approval.
4. The Deacons should expend monies and take all actions deemed necessary or appropriate to operate the church and complete the projects and ministries of the church each year as planned in the approved annual budget. The Deacons are authorized to adjust expenditures within the approved total budget.

5. The Deacons may approve additional expenditures of funds up to 5% of the approved total annual budget. They shall notify the membership of any such action in an appropriate manner.
6. The Deacons are authorized to allocate surplus funds.
7. All policies related to the handling of funds must be approved by the Deacons.
8. The signatures of at least two Officers or Elders of the church are required to execute legal documents that obligate the church, such as contracts, mortgages, or other documents pertaining to the purchase or sale of real property. Exceptions to this requirement include signing for titles or registrations for church-owned vehicles and contracts for less than \$25,000. In these cases, the Deacons may delegate this authority to the appropriate staff.
9. The fiscal year of the church will be determined by the Deacons.
10. The financial statements and internal controls of VCB shall be subject to an annual audit by an independent accounting firm approved by the Deacon Board. The Deacon Board will receive the report from the independent auditor, including any recommendations for improvement in internal controls.
11. Candidates for Deacon will be nominated by the Nominating Team. Deacons shall be men or women who meet the general qualifications for church leaders outlined in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Deacons will be elected by a vote of the members present at the Fall Congregational meeting.
12. Deacons shall be elected for a term of three years. When a Deacon has served the maximum number of terms, they must wait at least one year before being eligible to serve again as a Deacon. Terms of Deacons shall be staggered so that not more than one-third is subject to retirement or re-election in any given year. Partial terms served do not count towards total years served. If a Deacon is no longer able to serve for any reason, the position may remain vacant until the next election.
13. Deacons may be removed from office by a three-quarters vote of the Elders or a majority vote by secret ballot of the membership at a congregational meeting called for this purpose. The Deacons are held accountable by the Elders and the membership. No accusation shall be brought against a Deacon except on the testimony of at least two members in good standing. The matter shall then be taken up by the Elders for investigation. If the offending Deacon continues in unrepentant sin, the congregation will be informed (1 Timothy 5:19-21).

Section 8: Officers

1. Three positions with specific responsibilities are designated as Officers. If an Officer resigns or for any reason is unable to serve, the Elders may appoint a replacement to complete the remaining term of the Officer.
2. The selection and removal of Officers is the same as described for Deacons above.
3. Officers shall be elected for a term as specified below. They are eligible to be re-elected for a total of six years of continuous service as an Officer. Partial terms

served do not count towards total years served. The terms of office of the Treasurer and Financial Secretary will be staggered so that they do not expire in the same year.

4. Church Clerk

- a. The Church Clerk shall be elected to serve for a one-year term.
- b. The Church Clerk shall keep the minutes of all congregational meetings, all Deacon Board meetings, and an accurate list of members. The Church Clerk shall be notified of any changes in membership. The books and records of the Church Clerk shall be open for inspection at any time.

5. Treasurer

- a. The Treasurer shall be elected to serve for a two-year term.
- b. The Treasurer:
 - i. Shall oversee and safeguard the funds of the church
 - ii. Shall ensure that an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements are made in the accounting records, will supervise the bookkeeper or accounting staff, and provide financial reports to the Congregation at each regular congregational meeting
 - iii. Will oversee the cash, investments, debt, line-of-credit and banking relationships for the Church
 - iv. Will be primarily responsible for developing and maintaining financial policies and procedures that help ensure compliance with sound financial practices and IRS regulations related to churches
 - v. Will be the primary contact with the independent auditor, and oversees the conduct of the external audit each year
 - vi. Will work with the church staff to see that financial records are maintained but does not keep or alter financial records
 - vii. Is authorized to sign legal documents for the church
 - viii. Is the primary signer of church checks

6. Financial Secretary

- a. The Financial Secretary shall be elected to serve for a two year term.
- b. The Financial Secretary shall oversee the receipt, count and deposit all offerings and gifts received by the church. He or she shall keep detailed records of individual gifts and offerings where these may be identified, and shall issue reports as requested for individuals or church leadership.

Section 9: Church Staff

1. The church staff consists of the Senior Pastor, the Pastoral Staff, the Directors and the Associate Staff.

2. The church staff will lead the Ministry Teams and run the day to day operations of the church. They will be responsible to implement the policies approved by the Elders and the Deacon Board. They will work with the Deacon Board to develop an annual budget for their respective ministries. All job descriptions and policies related to church staff will be included in the Staff Manual. Changes to the Staff Manual must be approved by the Elders and the Deacon Board.
3. No accusation shall be brought against any member of the staff except on the testimony of at least two members in good standing. The matter shall then be taken up by the Senior Pastor for investigation and the Elders notified. Any accusation against the Senior Pastor should be presented to the Elder Chairman. The Elders may then present the matter to the church for final settlement if deemed necessary. (I Timothy 5:19-21).
4. The Senior Pastor
 - a. The Senior Pastor's responsibilities shall be as identified and approved by the Elders in the VCB Senior Pastor Job Description. He shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees. The Senior Pastor shall render a report to the membership at the Spring and Fall Congregational Meeting and interim reports to the Elders as requested.
 - b. It shall be the responsibility of the Elders, whenever the need occurs, to provide a candidate for Senior Pastor who shall be in full accord with the doctrinal position of this church as stated in the Constitution. Prospective candidates must meet the qualifications of an Elder, with particular attention being given to soundness of doctrine, spiritual perception and evangelistic zeal. The Elders will appoint from among members of the congregation who have been members for at least two years, a search team which shall secure candidates for Elder review. The search team will then make a recommendation to the Elders, who then must vote unanimously to present the candidate to the congregation for approval.
 - c. After a candidate is approved by the Elders, the Elders will provide an opportunity to present the candidate to the congregation and have him preach at one or more services. Upon a three-fourths majority vote by secret ballot of the membership, a call shall be extended to the candidate to become Senior Pastor of VCB. Only one candidate shall be voted upon by the membership at any one meeting.
 - d. Dismissal of the Senior Pastor shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the total membership by secret ballot at a meeting called for this purpose by the Elders and announced by a letter to the membership at least two weeks prior to the meeting. The Elders are authorized to suspend the Senior Pastor at any time with a congregational meeting to vote on his dismissal or reinstatement within three weeks of the suspension.

5. Pastoral Staff

- a. The Pastoral Staff are those identified as such in their job description.
- b. The responsibilities for Pastoral Staff will be determined by a job description approved by the Elders and Deacon Board and included in the Staff Manual.
- c. Pastoral Staff positions are authorized by inclusion in the annual budget.
- d. The Elders will determine the process to identify one or more candidates for any open Pastoral Staff positions.
- e. Each Pastoral Staff job description will identify whether the role requires congregational approval. If no congregational approval is required, a three-fourths majority of the Elders and Deacon Board will approve a candidate. If the job description requires congregational approval, a three-fourths majority vote of the membership at a congregational meeting, by secret ballot, will be required to approve a candidate.
- f. The Elders have the authority to remove any member of the Pastoral Staff.

6. Directors and Associate Staff

- a. The responsibilities for Directors will be determined by a job description approved by the Elders and Deacons and included in the Staff Manual. The job descriptions for other staff positions are determined by the Senior Pastor.
- b. Director and Associate Staff positions are authorized by inclusion in the annual budget. The Deacon Board may vote to approve staff positions during a fiscal year within the budget guidelines described previously.
- c. Candidates for Director and Associate Staff will be presented by the Senior Pastor.
- d. Hiring of Directors must be approved by a majority of the Elders and Deacon Board.
- e. The Elders have the authority to remove a Director. All other staff may be dismissed by the Senior Pastor.

Section 10: Ministry Teams

1. The Elders are responsible for defining the necessary Ministry Teams and their mission. Each Ministry Team has the responsibility to carry out its mission in accordance with the direction established by the Elders. Each Ministry Team will be under the leadership of and accountable to an assigned church staff member.
2. Each Ministry Team is responsible for development of their organizational structure and policies within their areas of ministry. All Ministry Team policies shall be maintained by the Deacon Board and made available to any member of the congregation upon request. All church policies are subject to review by the Elders.

3. Ministry Team members will be selected by the assigned church staff person based on appropriate gifting for the ministry.
4. Ministry Team members may be removed by the assigned church staff person.

Section 11: Nomination and Election of Elders, Deacons, and Officers

1. Candidates for Elders, Deacons, and Officers will be selected from the membership of the church by a Nominating Team (Acts 6:3, 5). The Nominating Team will be selected by the Elders and presented to the congregation for approval at the Spring Congregational Meeting. Candidates for the Nominating Team must be members at the VCB for two years, and be regular attenders at worship and congregational meetings. The Team will consist of the Senior Pastor, a Deacon not subject to re-election and four other members. The chairman of the Nominating Team will be the Deacon not subject to re-election.
2. The Elders will provide the Nominating Team a list of the leadership positions that need to be filled.
3. The Nominating Team will review the membership list for candidates to fill the open leadership positions and prepare a list of potential candidates for review by the Elders. At least two candidates for each open position shall be presented.
4. The Nominating Team will then investigate the character and qualification of each candidate for church office. Candidates must be members for at least two years who regularly attend services and meet the qualifications of the office. Nominations must have the consent of the candidates and the Elders.
5. The Nominating Team will submit a written report of their selections for church offices by mail to members at least two weeks prior to the Fall Congregational Meeting.
6. No nominations for elected offices will be received from the floor of the membership during any Congregational Meeting.
7. All Elders, Deacons, and Officers must be elected with a two-thirds majority vote.

Section 12: Congregation Meetings

1. Two regular congregational meetings will be held each year in the fall and spring. The spring meeting (typically in the second quarter of the calendar year) will, at a minimum, present the financial reports and offer a proposed budget. The fall meeting (typically in the fourth quarter of the calendar year) will, at a minimum, include the election of the Elders, Deacons, and Officers. The VCB membership must be notified of the date of the regular congregational meetings at least four weeks in advance of the meeting date.
2. A quorum will be one third of the church membership.
3. Additional congregational meetings may be called by the Elders. The church membership must be notified of any additional congregational meeting at least two weeks in advance of the meeting date.

4. Congregational meetings will be moderated by the Chairman of the Elders. In the event of his absence, the Chairman of the Elders will select another Elder to take his place.
5. Proposals may be presented to the church membership for action upon the recommendation of the Elders or Deacon Board at any scheduled congregational meeting.
6. Written proposals may also be presented to the Elder Chairman at least one week before any congregational meeting.
7. The following voting requirements of the church membership at the congregational meetings will be used for the passing of motions not specifically covered elsewhere:
 - a. Three-fourths majority for the sale or purchase of property, building new buildings, or new projects in excess of 10% of the budget.
 - b. Simple majority for all other motions.

Section 13: Amendments

1. Amendments to the By-Laws may be proposed to the church membership in the following manner:
2. By recommendation from at least 75% of the Elders, or
3. By proposed amendment signed by at least 10% of the church membership in good standing. The sponsors of the amendment will submit the proposed amendment in writing to the Elders with at least two weeks to review and follow the submission guidelines below.
4. A proposed amendment to the By-Laws must be submitted in writing to the VCB membership at least four weeks before the congregational meeting that will present the amendment. Announcement of the amendment to the By-Laws will be made from the pulpit each week for two weeks before the congregational meeting.
5. Any properly called congregational meeting with a quorum may consider the proposed amendment to the By-Laws.
6. A three-fourths majority of votes cast by the VCB Membership is required to approve any amendment to the By-Laws.
7. Amendments to the By-Laws shall be effective immediately unless otherwise specified therein.