

BYLAWS OF THE CONGREGATION

The First Presbyterian Church Valparaiso, Indiana

ARTICLE I Preliminary Principles

- Section 1.** These bylaws are established to provide for the form and manner of government for the First Presbyterian Church of Valparaiso, Indiana.
- Section 2.** These bylaws shall be in effect upon approval by the Congregation in the same manner in which they may be amended.
- Section 3.** The First Presbyterian Church of Valparaiso is and shall continue to be incorporated as a non-profit organization under the laws of the State of Indiana and any applicable items in the Articles of Incorporation shall be considered part of these bylaws. G-4.01
- Section 4.** The First Presbyterian Church of Valparaiso is a member church of the Presbytery of Wabash Valley in the Synod of Lincoln Trails of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Any laws or rules that govern the local church in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) are a part of these bylaws. G-1.0103

The term “local church,” as used in these bylaws means The First Presbyterian Church of Valparaiso, Indiana, its congregation and/or Corporation.

ARTICLE II The Session

- Section 1.** The Governing Body of the local church is the Session. This body consists of the moderator, any other installed minister and no more than twelve and fewer than nine elders.
- Section 2.** The elders are elected in the manner specified in the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA) by persons listed on the active membership roll of the local church. G-2.03
- Section 3.** The term of office for an elder elected to the Session shall be three years and after a full three-year term, he/she shall be ineligible for reelection for a period of one year. A person elected for a partial term shall be immediately eligible for a three-year term. G-2.0404 The terms of elders shall expire when their successors have been ordained and installed.
- Section 4.** When a vacancy occurs on the Session, in the last quarter of the year, the Session, at its own discretion, may arrange to fill the vacancy by notice to the Congregation’s Nominating Committee and calling a special Congregational Meeting for that

purpose.

- Section 5.** The Session has both the responsibility and authority stated in the Book of Order and is governed by the limitations stated therein. G-3.02 & G-1.0505
- Section 6.** The Session may organize itself for its work as it deems fit, selecting non-Session members to its Ministry Units and/or committees if it chooses.
- Section 7.** The Session may have a Nominating Committee whose responsibilities shall be to nominate members for the various committees (standing or special) of the Session and, when requested by the Session, persons for any other offices that the Session may establish. The Nominating Committee of the Session may have the same membership as the Congregation's Nominating Committee if the Session so decides. When acting as the Congregation's Nominating Committee, it is responsible to and reports to the Congregation. When acting as the Session's Nominating Committee, it is responsible to and reports to the Session.
- Section 8.** The local church's records (minutes of meetings and membership rolls) shall be recorded by the Clerk of Session. He/she shall be elected annually by the Session. He/she need not be a Session member but must be an elder. Reelection is unlimited. G-3.0104 & G-3.0204

ARTICLE III

Trustees

- Section 1.** Eligible elders, currently serving on Session, shall, by reason of their office, be the Trustees of the local church corporation. They shall serve in three, three-year classes which coincide with their election as an Elder on Session. (see Articles of Incorporation) G-4.0102
- Section 2.** The Trustees shall have power over the items authorized by the appropriate governing body listed in section G-4.0101 of the Book of Order.
- Section 3.** The Trustees shall elect annually from among their members, a president of the trustees who also shall be by virtue of that office, the president of the corporation, and a secretary.

ARTICLE IV

Deacons

- Section 1.** The Board of Deacons shall consist of up to twenty-four (24) members and may provide for up to three (3) youth deacons elected, ordained and installed according to the Book of Order G-2.0201-G-2.0202; G-2.0401-G-2.0407, which could bring the number of deacons up to twenty-seven (27).
- Section 2.** Deacons on the Board shall be divided into three classes. The term of office for a deacon shall be three years and one year for each youth deacon. After a full three-year term, he/she shall be ineligible for reelection for a period of one year. A person elected for a partial term shall be immediately eligible for a three-year term.

The terms of deacons shall expire when their successors have been ordained and installed.

ARTICLE V

Ecclesiastical Meetings

Section 1. Meetings of the Congregation and/or Corporation may be called as provided in the Book of Order, but the call must be announced at each service of worship on two successive Sundays preceding the meeting. G-1.0501-G-1.0502

Section 2. Meetings of the Congregation shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of Roberts' Rules of Order except in those cases where the Book of Order provides otherwise. G-3.0105

Section 3. The necessary moderator and secretary of the meeting shall be in accordance with the Book of Order. G-3.0405, G-3.0406. The quorum shall be one-tenth of the active membership of the local church determined at the time of the first notice. G-1.0501

Section 4. There shall be an Annual Stated Meeting of the Congregation. G-1.0501 It shall be scheduled to meet during the first quarter of the year and shall be named the Annual Congregational Meeting. The place, the hour and the day within this period shall be determined annually by the Session in time for the required announcements. Its order of business shall be:

- a. Constituting prayer, opening worship and verification of quorum;
- b. Approval of all minutes of the previous year's Congregational Meetings;
- c. Presentation of the Pastors' Reports;
- d. Approval of annual reports of all Church organizations;
- e. Presentation of the annual Church budget, annual financial report, and review of pastoral compensation and action if necessary;
- f. Old Business;
- g. New Business: New business may include any matter, which may properly be brought before a Stated Meeting of the Congregation;
- h. The annual meeting of the Corporation;
- i. Adjournment, closing prayer and benediction.

Section 5. There shall be a Meeting of the Congregation scheduled during the fourth quarter. The hour, day and place within this period to be determined by the Session with the required announcements.

The order of business shall be:

- a. Constituting prayer, opening, worship, and verifications of quorum;
- b. Report of the Nominating Committee, and other nominations for next year's Session and Deacons' class, if not previously elected, or any other Session or Deacon vacancies, and next year's Congregation Nominating Committee. Names of those persons being slated as nominees must be

available to the congregation one (1) week prior to the meeting of the election;

- c. Balloting and telling the vote;
- d. New Business: New business may include any matter, which may properly be brought before a Stated Meeting of the Congregation;
- e. Adjournment, closing prayer and benediction.

Section 6. Special meetings of the Congregation shall be called in accordance with the Book of Order. G-1.0502 The call for special meetings shall clearly state the purpose of that meeting, and no other business shall be transacted save that specified in the call and matters related directly to it. Minutes of called meetings shall be read for correction and approval at the Annual Stated Congregational Meeting.

Section 7. All active members of the local church, of whatever age, have the right to vote in all elections and to participate in the transaction of all business at any congregational meeting.

Section 8. The election of elders and deacons shall be by secret ballot **if** the total number of persons nominated exceeds the number of positions to be filled. If the number of nominees and the number of positions are equal, a voice vote may be taken instructing the Secretary to cast a unanimous ballot. No voting shall be done by proxy.

ARTICLE VI Annual Reports

Written annual reports of all Session committees, church organizations and the church's annual financial report shall be submitted to the Session no later than four weeks prior to the Annual Congregational Meeting. Session shall review and approve the reports for presentation to the congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting and shall make them available to the congregation one (1) week prior to the meeting. Such reports shall be filed by the Session as part of the permanent Church records.

ARTICLE VII Committees of the Congregation

Section 1. The Congregation shall have a nominating committee in accordance with the Book of Order G-2.0401 to be called The Congregational Nominating Committee.

- a. It shall consist of two elders chosen by the Session, one of whom shall be currently on the Session and who shall be the Moderator of the Committee; one Deacon named by the Board of Deacons and four members from the congregation who are not currently serving as an Elder or Deacon.
- b. The term of office of the four congregational members shall be one year and they may not succeed themselves.
- c. The Congregational Nominating Committee shall provide nominations for the replacement of the four Congregational Committee members.

- d. The Congregational Nominating Committee shall nominate persons as elders and deacons for congregational election according to the Book of Order G-2.02-G-2.04 and **Article II, Section 2 and 3** of these bylaws. The Congregational Nominating Committee may request Session schedule a Called Congregational Meeting for the purpose of electing elders and deacons anytime during the third and fourth quarter.
- e. It shall be the responsibility of the Session to determine that the persons to be nominated as elders for membership on the Session have a general understanding and acceptance of the office to which they may be elected by reviewing. G-2.0402
- f. The same shall hold for nominees to the Board of Deacons. The Session shall make a like determination. G-2.0402

Section 2. When the occasion arrives for the Congregation to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) the responsible persons shall proceed in accordance with the Book of Order G-2.0802, and the procedures and guidelines adopted by the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry (COM): G-3.0307

- a. The Session shall call a Congregational meeting for the purpose of electing the PNC. The call shall contain the following:
 - 1. The time, date and place of the meeting at least ten (10) days prior to the date of the meeting, including two (2) successive Sundays.
 - 2. A reminder that The Congregation will elect a Committee of not over nine (9) members
 - 3. Session, or the Congregational Nominating Committee, shall present a slate of names for election. The names submitted shall be representative of the various groups within the life of the congregation, made up of persons who have been, and continue to be active participants, with their names on the active member roll, and have previously indicated their intention to accept the position if elected. The slate shall include at least one elder in active service on the Session.

The slate of nominees shall be drawn up keeping in mind the need for broad representation from the church's life, age groups, gender representation, and program areas.

- 4. Nominations may be made from the floor and the election shall be by secret ballot **if** the total number of persons nominated exceeds the number of positions to be filled. If the number of nominees and the number of positions are equal, a voice vote may be taken instructing the Secretary to cast a unanimous ballot.

- b. When the time of meeting has arrived, the Moderator of Session or another minister of the Presbytery, shall call the meeting to order and proceed as follows:
 1. Open with prayer.
 2. Identify or elect a Secretary. G-1.0505
 3. Determine from the Secretary that a quorum is present.
 4. Instruct the Secretary to read the call for the meeting.
 5. Explain to those present that at each step in the process, the advice and suggestions of the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry are to be sought, heard, and seriously considered. G-3.0307
 6. Ask for a motion to grant the privilege of the floor to the representative of the Committee on Ministry and invite him/her to speak.
 7. By motion, or by consent, determine that the Congregation is ready to proceed to the election.
 8. Explain the election process, which is **Article VII; section 2c** (see below).
 9. Hold the election.
 10. As Moderator Pro Tem, call for a meeting of the Pastor Nominating Committee immediately following the meeting of the congregation, for the purpose of electing a chairperson who shall immediately take the chair and complete the organization. At this and every meeting of the Pastor Nominating Committee, the Moderator of the Session and the representative of the Presbytery Committee on Ministry shall be welcome with the power to speak but not to participate in the vote.
 11. Adjournment, closing prayer and benediction.

- c. The election of the Pastor Nominating Committee shall proceed as follows:
 1. The Moderator shall ask for the slate of nominees being presented by the Session or the Congregational Nominating Committee.
 2. The Moderator shall ask for nominations from the floor. Such nominations shall be made by individual active members nominating individual active members who are present, and verbally give their consent to serve if elected (keeping in mind the need for broad representation from the church's life, age groups, gender representation, and program areas).
 3. When nominations are complete and closed, the vote shall be by secret ballot unless the number nominated does not exceed the number set for the Pastor Nominating Committee, in which case a motion for a unanimous ballot by the Secretary is in order.
 4. If there is a tie vote, which prevents the organization of the Committee, a second secret ballot on those only involved in the tie shall be held.

Section 3. The Congregation may, when it is the proper business of the meeting, establish other committees to assist it in performing the responsibilities assigned to it in the Book of Order. G-3.0109

The motion to establish such a committee shall include:

- a. The name of the committee
- b. The duty of the committee
- c. The membership of the committee
- d. The method of naming the members
- e. The method and time of the committee report

ARTICLE VIII

Amendments

Section 1. Amendments to these bylaws may be initiated in the form of a petition to the Session signed by ten persons listed on the Roll of Active members. Communication between the Session and the petitioners shall be with the first signed petitioner. The Session shall examine the amendments on the basis of their constitutionality and suitability. If the response of the Session is positive, it shall provide for the presentation of the amendment(s) to the Congregation at the earliest reasonable time.

If the response of the Session is negative on either point, it shall return the petition to the petitioners with reasons clearly stated. If the petitioners wish to pursue the matter further, they may return the petition to the Session with the signatures of ten additional active church members. The Session shall then provide for the proposed amendment to be presented to the Congregation at the earliest reasonable time.

It shall be the responsibility of the Session to note and report the effect of the amendment on any other article of the bylaws.

Section 2. These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the active members present at a Congregational Meeting called according to the Book of Order and the procedures specified in these bylaws, provided that the amendment (or amendments) has/have been published in writing and presented at the same time that the announcement of the meeting is made.