

**BYLAWS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE
BLUE RIDGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
(See also Bylaws of the Corporation)

ARTICLE I

These bylaws shall be subject to the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA)* and the laws of the State of Missouri and the constitution of the United States.

ARTICLE II

The Name

The name of this congregation shall be the same as the corporate name, “The Blue Ridge Presbyterian Church of Jackson County, Missouri.”

ARTICLE III

Statement of Purpose and Mission

The Blue Ridge Presbyterian Church (BRPC) of Jackson County, Missouri has been called by God to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and to promote the Kingdom of God on Earth through the power of the Holy Spirit. Our motto in our everyday life as a congregation is to “**Building Relationships with People in Christ.**”

The mission of BRPC is to:

- Proclaim and celebrate the good news of Jesus Christ;
- Worship God with dignity, warmth, and beauty;
- Nourish personal faith and commitment through study, prayer, fellowship, stewardship and mission;
- Work for love, justice and peace;
- Be a caring community witnessing to God’s love day by day;
- Partner locally and beyond with our denomination and the larger Christian church; and
- Be a telling presence in the community.

ARTICLE IV

Relation to Presbyterian Church (USA)

BRPC is a member church of Heartland Presbytery in the Synod of Mid-America of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

ARTICLE V

Governance of the Church

BRPC shall be governed in accordance with the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* which is comprised of the *Book of Order* and *Book of Confessions*. Consistent with that constitution, these bylaws shall provide specific guidance for this church. The most recent edition of *Roberts Rules of Order (Newly Revised)* shall be used for parliamentary guidance. The church shall adopt a Manual of Operations approved by the session.

ARTICLE VI
Membership in the Church

The membership shall consist of all those who have been received into membership of the church by the session and who continue to be listed on the active roll. BRPC welcomes into membership all baptized persons who wish to follow Jesus Christ without regard to their race, sexual orientation, economic status, or any other personal characteristic.

ARTICLE VII
Congregational Meetings

Section 1 – Fourth (4th) Quarter Congregational Meeting. There shall be a congregational meeting in the fourth quarter (preferably before Advent) at which at least the following Nominating Committee business shall be presented:

- (a) identification of those nominated by the committee to serve as church officers,
- (b) the nomination of additional candidates from the floor (as proscribed in Section 3 below) to serve as church officers, and
- (c) the election of those officers by the congregation by written ballot.

Section 2 - Annual Meeting. There shall be an annual meeting of the congregation in January, at which at least the following business shall be presented:

- (a) Annual report from the pastor, session and deacons (information only)
- (b) Financial report for the preceding year and budget for the current year (information only)
- (c) The terms of call for the pastor(s) which are to be voted on by written ballot
- (d) Nominating Committee report (only if necessary) which includes
 - (i) identification of those nominated by the committee to serve as church officers,
 - (ii) the nomination of additional candidates from the floor (as proscribed in Section 2 below) to serve as church officers, and
 - (iii) the election of those officers by the congregation by written ballot
- (e) Dismissal of the Nominating Committee which has completed its work will be done at the annual January Congregational meeting
- (f) Election of members to serve on the new Nominating Committee which will hold office from the date of their election until their dismissal in January
- (g) A Congregational meeting will be held in October or November specifically to elect the officers for the classes beginning the following January

Section 3 - Nominations. Those nominated by the Nominating Committee and those nominated from the floor at the congregational meeting must meet the following conditions:

- (a) They must be an active church member.
- (b) They must have agreed to serve.
- (c) They may not serve simultaneously as an elder and a deacon.
- (d) They may not be nominated for a term which would result in their serving more than six consecutive years as an elder or deacon.

Section 4 - Special Meetings. Special congregational meetings may be called by the session, by the session moderator, by one fourth (1/4) of the active members on the roll of the congregation or by the presbytery. Such calls shall state clearly the purpose of such special meetings, and business shall be restricted to that which is specified in the call.

Section 5 - Notice of Meetings. There shall be a minimum of two Sunday public notices both verbally from the pulpit or lectern and in writing in the bulletin prior to the day of each congregational meeting.

Section 6 - Moderator. The installed pastor shall ordinarily moderate congregational meetings. If there or co-pastors, they shall alternately preside at meetings. If it is impractical for the pastor to preside, he or she shall invite another teaching elder who is a member of the presbytery or a person authorized by the presbytery to serve as moderator. If there is no installed pastor, or the installed pastor is unable to moderate and/or name another moderator, the presbytery shall make provisions for a moderator (G-1.0504). The moderator has voice but no vote in congregational meetings.

Section 7 - Secretary. The clerk of session shall serve as secretary of the congregational meeting. If the clerk is not present or is unable to serve, the moderator shall appoint a secretary who is a member of the congregation for the meeting.

Section 8 - Minutes of the Meeting. The minutes of the meeting recorded by the secretary shall be approved by the session, attested by the moderator and the secretary, and recorded in the minute book of the session.

Section 9 - Quorum for Meetings and Participation. The quorum of a meeting of the congregation shall be the moderator, the secretary, and one-tenth (1/10) of the active members of the congregation. All active members of the congregation present at either annual or special meetings are entitled to voice and vote. Non-members do not have voice unless granted by a vote of the congregation. Voting by proxy is not allowed. If a quorum is not present at any regular or special meeting, those present shall be sufficient to adjourn the meeting.

Section 10 - Conduct of the Meeting. All congregational meetings shall be governed in accordance with the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*. The most recent version of *Roberts Rules of Order (Newly Revised)* shall be used for parliamentary guidance.

ARTICLE VIII The Corporation

Section 1 - Incorporation. In accordance with the laws of the state of Missouri, the congregation has formed a corporation.

Section 2 – Meetings. A meeting of the corporation will be held on the same day as the annual congregational meeting. (See Bylaws of the Corporation.)

ARTICLE IX Nominating Committee

The congregation shall form a Nominating Committee comprising nine active members and two alternates, plus the pastor in the following manner:

- (a) Five members at large shall be elected along with two alternates at the annual congregational meeting from active members who will not serve as an active elder or deacon in the current year.
- (b) Two of the members shall be ruling elders elected by the session, one of whom will serve as moderator.
- (c) Two of the members shall be active deacons elected by the board of deacons.
- (d) The pastor shall be a member ex officio and without vote.
- (e) A majority of all active members present and voting at the annual congregational meeting shall be required to elect.
- (f) Nominating Committee members shall serve a one year term and no more than three consecutive terms. A member who has served on the nominating committee three consecutive years shall be ineligible to serve on the committee for at least one year.

ARTICLE X The Session

Section 1 - Purpose of Session. The session is the council for the congregation and shall function as Trustees of the Corporation. It is responsible for governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world so the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. Specific duties are recorded in *The Book of Order*.

Section 2 - Membership of the Session.

- (a) **Elders.** The congregation shall elect 12 elders divided into three equal classes, one class of whom shall be elected each year at the annual congregational meeting for a three-year term. No elder shall serve more than six consecutive years. An elder having served a total of six consecutive years shall be ineligible for reelection to the session for a period of at least one year. The session, at its first meeting following the annual congregational meeting, shall elect an elder to serve as clerk and shall form such committees as necessary to carry out its work. At that same meeting of the session, the session shall elect a treasurer. All session members must comply with the conflict of interest policy in the Manual of Operations.
- (b) **Moderator.** The session shall be composed of those persons elected by the congregation to active service as ruling elders, together with all installed pastors and associate pastors. All members of the session are entitled to vote (G-3.0201). The pastor shall be the moderator of the session and the session shall not meet without the pastor or designated

moderator. If there are co-pastors, they shall alternately preside at meetings. If it is impractical for the pastor to moderate, he or she shall invite another teach elder who is a member of the presbytery to serve as moderator. If the installed pastor is unable to invite another moderator, the presbytery shall make provision for a moderator. An important aspect of the moderator's function is to facilitate objectively all discussion so as to help articulate the range of different views among session members as part of the decision making process.

- (c) **Clerk.** The clerk of session is elected annually by the session. The clerk, if not a serving elder, does not have a vote in session meetings but does have voice. The clerk is responsible for keeping the minutes of all meetings and recording them in the church's minute book. The clerk is also responsible for keeping all membership and other official records.
- (d) **Treasurer.** The treasurer is elected annually by the session. The treasurer, if not a serving elder, does not have a vote in session meetings but does have voice.
- (e) **Meetings.** The session will ordinarily meet monthly and at least quarterly. In addition to the regularly scheduled session meetings, the pastor or any two ruling elders can request a called meeting. Session meetings are open to members of the congregation unless closed by a vote of the session. A quorum for the session shall be the moderator and six elders.

ARTICLE XI

Deacons

Section 1 - Purpose of Deacons. The ministry of the deacons is one of compassion, witness and service, sharing the redeeming love of Jesus Christ. They care for members of the congregation who are in particular need, especially those unable to attend church. Deacons also provide support for worship services and undertake other tasks as prescribed by the session.

Section 2 - Membership of Deacons: The congregation shall elect 15 to 21 deacons divided into three classes. One class shall be elected each year at the annual meeting for a three-year term. No deacon shall serve more than six consecutive years. A deacon having served a total of six consecutive years shall be ineligible for re-election to the board of deacons for a period of at least one year. The board of deacons, at its first meeting following the annual meeting, shall elect a moderator, vice moderator and a secretary from among its members and shall form such committees as necessary to carry out its work. The pastor shall be an advisory member of the board of deacons. A quorum for the board of deacons shall be one third of the members, including the moderator. A permanent record of the minutes of their meeting shall be kept.

ARTICLE XII

Vacancies

Vacancies on the session or the board of deacons may be filled at a special meeting of the congregation or at the annual meeting, as the session may determine.

ARTICLE XIII

Amendments

These bylaws may be amended subject to the Articles of Incorporation, the laws of the state of Missouri and the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* by a two-thirds vote by written ballot of the active members present at a congregational meeting, provided that the proposed changes in printed form have been distributed at the same time as the call of the meeting at which the changes are voted upon.