

**Bylaws of  
Riverside Community  
Church of the Assemblies of  
God  
(DBA Riverside Community Church)**

Constitution and By-Laws of: Adopted this day of September 8, 1991 (Revised March 17, 1996; March 16, 1997; March 22, 1998; March 19, 2000; March 18, 2001; March 10, 2002; March 14, 2004; March 12, 2006; February 24, 2008)

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**Bylaws of  
RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH  
of the Assemblies of God**

**PREAMBLE**

Recognizing that God has called His people to meet, worship, and serve together in ways in which the New Testament refers to as local churches, and that it is God's desire that all things be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians. 14:40), we, the members of Riverside Community Church, have set forth the following bylaws as a basis for that structure and order.

**PURPOSE**

Riverside Community Church is a present-day expression of the New Testament Church. Our desire is to imitate, experience and live out the reality of Christ's presence in our generation. Scripture paints a picture of a church committed to five primary purposes: worship, fellowship, discipleship, evangelism and service (Acts 2:41-47).

It is our mission that "*RCC exists to help people find and follow Jesus.*" These purposes are drawn from the two directives given by Jesus Himself: The Great Commandment (Mark 12:28-34) and The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). RCC's central ministry focus is to...

*Revere God through a life of worship.  
Connect with others in authentic caring community.  
Contribute to helping others both near and far.*

**NAME**

The name of this Church shall be Riverside Community Church of the Assemblies of God, Oakmont, Pennsylvania (hereinafter called Riverside Community Church, RCC, or the Church).

**PREROGATIVES**

RCC shall have the right to govern itself according to the standards of the New Testament Scriptures, making "every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (Eph. 4:3, 13.)

These rights for self-governance shall include such matters as the calling of a Lead Pastor, selection of a Board of Deacons, discipline of members, and the conduct of all its services, ministries, and initiatives.

RCC shall have the right to purchase or acquire by gift, bequest or otherwise, either directly or as a trustee, and to own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of any real estate and/or property as may be necessary for the furtherance of its purposes. RCC shall have all the powers of a non-profit corporation under the Pennsylvania Non-profit Corporation Law of 1988, as amended through the published date of these Bylaws. Reviews of changes will be made and updates will be addressed as applicable when deemed to impact RCC.

## **AFFILIATION**

Riverside Community Church shall have perpetual existence and is a sovereign assembly. As such, RCC maintains the right to govern its own affairs. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other like-minded churches, RCC voluntarily affiliates with the Assemblies of God, both nationally, General Council of the Assemblies of God USA (Springfield MO) and locally, PennDel Ministry Network District Council of the Assemblies of God (Mechanicsburg PA). RCC also reserves the right to network with other organizations as deemed beneficial and compatible with the Mission of RCC.

## **STATEMENT OF FAITH (condensed version)**

We believe in one God who is the Creator of all things. He is all-knowing and all-powerful. He is unconditionally loving, relentlessly merciful, and absolutely just. And He has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe that Jesus Christ was fully human and fully God. He lived a sinless life. He died a substitutionary death on the cross. And He was raised from the dead on the third day.

We believe that humankind is created in the image of God. We believe that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And we believe that unconditional love, unlimited forgiveness, and undying hope are found in Jesus Christ—the one and only mediator between God and man.

We believe that God is beyond human reason and imagination, but He has revealed Himself through His word. The Bible is our source of divine inspiration and timeless wisdom. We believe the Bible is inspired, authoritative, and infallible.

We believe the Spirit of God indwells every believer. The fruits of the Spirit are the by-product of a spirit-filled life and evidence of spiritual maturity. The gifts of the Spirit should be earnestly sought and used to serve others and glorify God.

We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, including equality across racial, gender, and class differences. (John 17:11, 20-21; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 2:14-16)

RCC affirms the Statement of Fundamental Truths approved by the General Council of the Assemblies of God. A complete statement of faith is available at [www.ag.org](http://www.ag.org)

## **OFFICERS**

The officers of RCC shall be the Lead Pastor, the Board of Deacons, the Secretary, and the Treasurer. Other officers may be added as needed. They shall oversee all matters of RCC as provided in the Bylaws.

### **LEAD PASTOR**

**Qualifications:** The Lead Pastor shall meet the requirements of a Licensed Minister with the Assemblies of God and adhere to the standards set forth in these bylaws.

**Duties:** The Lead Pastor shall be the spiritual overseer of RCC and shall supervise all of its activities. The Lead Pastor's duties include, but are not limited to:

1. President of the Corporation and the Chairperson of the Board of Deacons.
2. Oversight of the Pastoral and non-pastoral staff, and all gatherings and/or meetings of RCC, including, but not limited to:
  - a. All employment decisions
  - b. Delegation of responsibilities to all staff
  - c. Day-to-day operations
3. Official spokesperson for RCC.
4. Ex-officio member of all committees, teams, groups, and ministries.

### **Vacancy**

Upon resignation, the Lead Pastor shall give a thirty-day or four-Sunday notice to the Board of Deacons and to the congregation.

In the event the Lead Pastor does not meet the specified qualifications or fulfill defined duties, power is vested in the Board of Deacons to ask for the Lead Pastor's resignation at any of its regular or a specially called meeting. If such resignation is refused, the pastorate shall not be considered vacant until the action of the Board of Deacons is confirmed by a majority vote of the active members of the church in attendance at a special meeting called for that purpose, such meeting to be presided over by a PennDel Ministry Network Official.

When a vacancy in the pastorate shall occur, an interim pastor shall be arranged for by the Board of Deacons until a Lead Pastor shall be chosen in accordance with these bylaws. In the case of the Lead Pastor's removal from office, a report of such action shall be made to the PennDel Ministry Network Office.

In the event that the office of Lead Pastor is vacated, a Search Team, consisting of the Board of Deacons and any other RCC members they deem helpful, shall carry out the following responsibilities:

1. Appoint an interim pastor (if that option is available) and a Temporary Board of Deacons Chairperson, until a new Lead Pastor is selected.
2. Interview, research and recommend any candidates for Lead Pastor.
3. The Search Team shall seek the counsel and guidance of the PennDel Ministry Network Superintendent.
4. Communicate with the congregation regarding the progress and process of the search.

### **Manner of Election**

The candidate for Lead Pastor shall be thoroughly examined, evaluated and nominated by the Search Team.

Election shall be by secret ballot at the Annual Business Meeting of the Active Members, or at a special business meeting called for that purpose. A member of the PennDel Ministry Network or an Official designated by the Network Superintendent shall preside at the

business meeting for election of the Lead Pastor. A two-thirds majority of the ballots cast at such meeting shall be required to constitute an election.

## **BOARD OF DEACONS**

**Qualifications:** The deacons shall be of mature Christian experience and knowledge, full of the Holy Spirit, who shall meet the spiritual qualifications of I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. They shall be at least 21 years of age and shall have been active members of RCC for at least the past 12 months.

### **Duties:**

1. The Board of Deacons shall consist of not less than four (4) members, one of whom shall be the Lead Pastor, who shall be the Chair. Of this Board of Deacons, one shall be the Secretary and one the Treasurer. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected by the Board of Deacons from its own members.
2. Having been elected to serve RCC, the Board of Deacons shall act in an advisory capacity with the Lead Pastor in regards to carrying out its declared Purpose and Prerogatives. They shall be stewards of all contributions, and trustees of all property and holdings. All matters of governance shall be carried on by the Board of Deacons except in matters requiring ratification by the Active Membership. The Board of Deacons shall act in the examination of applications for membership as well as in the administration of discipline within the Church.
3. The Board of Deacons shall meet regularly to transact business for RCC, with the co-located meeting time and place to be announced by the Chair. A minimum of one meeting a month is projected. A majority at any meeting of the Board of Deacons shall constitute a quorum, provided all members have been notified to be present. Any decision required or permitted to be made at a "physically co-located meeting" of the Board of Deacons may also be resolved by use of electronic media such as email or other electronic means. Any electronic input made as part of any meeting of the Board or as a full "electronic meeting" requires the Secretary to incorporate a copy of each electronic response as well as any decision(s) made into minutes of an official meeting of the Board of Deacons. These minutes must then be approved and signed by all members of the Board at the next "physically present meeting" of the Board thus confirming that an official meeting was held, the topic(s) under consideration, the validity of the electronic response and what decision(s) were rendered. The Chair shall have the exclusive prerogative to convene an "electronic meeting," determine the content, or request electronic input to any meeting at the Chair's discretion. The intent of utilizing electronic means to conduct RCC business before the Board is not to replace scheduled meetings but simply to provide a means of resolving urgent issues.
4. The Board of Deacons shall be empowered to provide for a temporary Chair from its membership or from the pastoral staff only in the event of the Lead Pastor's resignation, mental or physical incapacitation, or death. The Lead Pastor and the Board of Deacons may make prior arrangements for a temporary Chair if the Lead

Pastor expects to be absent from a meeting.

### **Secretary**

The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the official meetings of the Board of Deacons and of the annual and any special meetings of RCC. The Secretary shall keep a record of the membership of RCC and perform any other clerical work necessary to the proper discharge of the duties of the office.

### **Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall be entrusted with the finances of RCC. Additional staff employed by RCC to help administer finances are accountable to the Treasurer. The Treasurer shall oversee the deposit of all funds in a reputable financial institution in the name of RCC and shall be responsible for the disbursement of the same, as authorized by the Lead Pastor and the Board of Deacons. All checks shall be signed and countersigned by those appointed by the Board of Deacons. The Treasurer shall keep an itemized list of the receipts and disbursements. The Treasurer shall make an itemized report at each regular meeting of the Board of Deacons and a summarized report to the members at the Annual Business Meeting. The accounts shall be audited under the direction of the Lead Pastor and the Board of Deacons.

### **Manner of Election**

1. Deacons shall be elected at the Annual Business Meeting of RCC. Each deacon shall be elected to serve a term of two (2) years. No deacon shall serve more than two (2) full terms without one (1) year of ineligibility unless there are no other qualified nominees to be elected.
2. The nomination process shall be as follows: Candidates for the Board of Deacons shall be selected by a nominating committee that shall consist of up to fifteen (15) persons. The committee shall include the Lead Pastor, the current Board of Deacons Secretary (or designee) and members whose terms are not expiring (up to 3), up to three (3) shall be selected by the Board from the ministry staff, and the rest (minimum of 5) shall be selected by the Board from a diverse representation (gender, age, site, etc.) of the Active Voting Membership Roll. The nominating committee will be announced to the congregation six weeks prior to the Annual Business Meeting. The congregation may suggest candidates to the committee up to four weeks prior to the business meeting.
3. The Lead Pastor and Board Secretary (or designee) shall have the responsibility of screening and notifying the potential candidates and preparing the ballot to be voted upon by the Active Membership at the Annual Business Meeting.
4. The nominees' names and bios shall be announced during all services and posted two (2) Sundays prior to the date of the Annual Business Meeting. The final list shall have no more than four (4) times the number of names than deacons to be elected. This

final list shall be put on one ballot which shall be given to each voting member at the Annual Business Meeting (or absentee ballot for those qualifying for such). Votes shall be cast by secret ballot by marking no more names than the existing vacancies on the Board of Deacons. The persons receiving a majority of votes will be elected, and balloting will continue until the required number of candidates has received a majority vote.

### **Vacancies**

Any Board of Deacon office may be declared vacant by an act of a majority of the membership of the Board of Deacons. This may occur at any of its regular or special business meetings. Grounds for such action shall be: (1) unscriptural conduct; (2) doctrinal departure from the Statement of Faith; (3) incompetence in office; (4) resignation; (5) death; (6) any other appropriate and sufficient reason. Any such declared vacancy may be filled by an act of a majority of the membership of the Board of Deacons. This action may occur at any of its regular or special meetings up to three months prior to the Annual Business Meeting of the Church. Any incumbent under charges shall have opportunity for a fair and impartial hearing of their case before the Board of Deacons, and/or the RCC Active Membership, and/or an independent arbitrator from the PennDel Ministry Network Officiary if they so desire. In the event that there is a change in the membership of the Board, the membership of the Church will be notified within 45 days.

### **ADDITIONAL PASTORS, STAFF, AND EMPLOYEES:**

The Lead Pastor may appoint additional pastors and ministry leaders as needed. Such pastors and ministry leaders shall be ratified by the Board of Deacons and commissioned to serve the congregation. Such leaders shall be released at the discretion of the Lead Pastor and as affirmed by the Board of Deacons.

All other staff and employees shall be appointed by or released at the discretion of the Lead Pastor and as affirmed by the Board of Deacons.

### **VOLUNTEER LEADERS**

**Volunteer leaders, teams, committees, task forces, and any other ministry positions** shall be approved by or released at the discretion of the Lead Pastor or designee.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of RCC shall consist of all persons who have met the qualifications and whose names appear on the Membership Rolls of the Church.

### **Qualifications**

Membership in RCC shall consist of those who:

1. Profess faith in Jesus Christ and a commitment to be His follower. (John 3:16; 1 Peter 1:8-25)
2. Were baptized in water following their decision to follow Christ. (Matt. 28:19; Acts

10:47; Rom. 6:4)

3. Demonstrate a willingness to be governed by RCC bylaws and its leaders.
4. Indicate a willingness to support the mission of the church by regular tithes, offerings and service (Gen. 14:20; Mal. 3:8-10).
5. Sign the Membership Commitment Form (Appendix A) as set forth herein.

### **Reception of Members**

1. Anyone desiring to become a member of RCC shall make the fact known to the Lead Pastor who shall examine the applicant according to the qualifications of membership.
2. The Lead Pastor shall present the names of those applying for membership with his recommendation to the Board of Deacons who shall act upon said recommendation and render the final decision. All those who have met the membership qualifications and have been passed upon favorably shall be added to the Active or Junior Membership Rolls and notified of such action.

### **Classification of Members**

**Active Membership:** All those who meet the qualifications of membership shall constitute the legal voting membership of RCC, provided they are eighteen years of age or over, regularly attend and take part in the gatherings of the Church for a period of at least six months, and are actively seeking to fulfill the actions stated in the Membership Commitment.

**Junior Membership:** There shall be a non-voting Junior Membership for young people under the age of eighteen years who give evidence of the new birth, having received Christ as personal Savior and who meet the qualifications for membership established by RCC.

**Honorary Membership:** Members who are unable to maintain active membership because they have changed residence or because of prolonged illness, but who prefer to remain as members with RCC, shall be classified as honorary members, which shall be a non-voting membership.

**Inactive Membership:** Enrolled members who have ceased to act in accordance with the Membership Commitment (1) by being absent from the gatherings of the Church for a period of three consecutive months or more, or (2) by ceasing to contribute regularly through tithes and offerings for a period of 6 months, or (3) are currently under discipline as outlined in the bylaws.

Those who had been Active Members shall lose their voting privileges until they are restored to Active Membership, their standing to be settled by the definite action of the Church through the Board of Deacons.

### **Discipline of Members**

- (a) Any member of RCC who shall willfully absent oneself from the regular gatherings for a period of three months, or who may be under charges, shall be temporarily suspended from the Active Membership pending investigation and final decision in his/her case.

(b) Unscriptural conduct or doctrinal departure from the Statement of Faith held by RCC or failure to adhere to the qualifications of membership of RCC shall be considered sufficient grounds upon which any person may be disqualified as a member. (Matt. 18:15-18; I Cor. 5:11; Gal. 1:8, 9, Titus 3:1-15)

### **Transfer/Resignation of Membership**

Members in good standing who may wish to sever their relationship with the Church or who desire to be transferred to another congregation may apply to the Secretary for a letter which shall be granted on the approval of the Lead Pastor and the Board of Deacons, said letter to be signed by the Lead Pastor and the Secretary.

### **Revision of Membership Roll**

1. The Lead Pastor and the Board of Deacons are authorized to revise the Membership Rolls of RCC annually. They shall remove from the Membership Rolls all names of those who (1) have become deceased, (2) have withdrawn from the Church, or (3) who no longer adhere to the membership qualifications. The following rules and instructions shall be observed as occasion may require (Matt. 18:15-17; Rom. 16:17, 18, I Cor. 5:1-5; II Thess. 3:6-15).

2. If a person believes they have been mistakenly removed or inaccurately classified, they may appeal that decision to the Board of Deacons. If appeal is made to the Board of Deacons for reconsideration of their action and reinstatement is not granted, the dismissed member may appeal to the RCC members. The action of the Church, by a majority vote of the active members present at a special meeting called for that purpose, shall be considered final.

### **Waiver**

Membership in RCC shall be granted upon the condition that reclassification, suspension, or removal of a member shall not give the affected member cause for legal action against the Lead Pastor or any member taking part in the proceedings; and the acceptance and continuance of membership in RCC shall be evidence of a waiver by the member of all rights of action, cause of action and all claims and demands against the Church, or any member or officer of the affiliated Assemblies of God entities, by virtue of such proceedings, and withdrawal of membership in the Church under the foregoing provisions.

## **FINANCES**

All funds for the maintenance of the Church shall be provided by the tithes and offerings of the members and voluntary contributions of friends of the Church. Offerings shall be accepted by the Church at such times and in such ways as are agreed upon by the Lead Pastor and the Board of Deacons and shall be administered by the Treasurer under their direction (Mal. 3:10; Lk. 6:38; I Cor. 16:1,2; II Cor. 9:6-8).

## **PROPERTY RIGHTS**

All property of Riverside Community Church shall be deeded to RCC and held in its corporate name. The acquisition and disposal of all property shall be in accordance with PROPERTY RIGHTS, of the By-Laws.

1. All property shall be taken, held, sold, transferred or conveyed in the corporate name of the Church.
2. No property of Riverside Community Church valued above ten percent of the Church's annual income shall be sold, leased, mortgaged, or otherwise alienated without the same being authorized by at least a two-thirds majority vote of the membership present at a meeting.
3. The Lead Pastor and the Secretary of the Church shall certify in such conveyance, lease or mortgage that the same has been duly authorized by a vote of the Active Membership. Such certificates shall be held to be conclusive evidence thereof.
4. In case Riverside Community Church shall be divided by doctrinal views or for other causes, the members holding to the original Tenets of Faith, standards and practices, as set forth in the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri, regardless of majority, shall retain title to the property.
5. In the event Riverside Community Church ceases to function as a church body, none of its funds or assets shall be distributed to any Pastor, Officer, Board Member, or any other individual. The property shall revert to the PennDel Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God. The said PennDel Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God shall forthwith have the authority to use or dispose of the property at their discretion. In the event of the sale of the property by the PennDel Ministry Network, the proceeds, after indebtedness has been satisfied, shall be used by said PennDel Ministry Network in the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ in the Network.

“PROPERTY RIGHTS” is never to be amended without the PennDel Ministry Network of the General Council of the Assemblies of God being represented by its District Superintendent and/or its Secretary-Treasurer and the Sectional Presbyter, at which time a full hearing must be given and the vote be taken before the membership of the Church at a duly announced business meeting.

### **BUSINESS MEETINGS**

1. In order to facilitate the conduct of business of RCC in an orderly and satisfactory manner, business meetings shall be conducted under the guidelines as written in The Modern Rules of Order, copyright 1992 Pennsylvania Bar Institute.
2. The Lead Pastor, with the Board of Deacons, shall meet regularly for the transaction of routine business for the Church, time and place to be announced by the Chair.
3. An annual business meeting of Riverside Community Church shall be held in the first quarter of the year, time and place to be announced by the Lead Pastor or Secretary. Due notice shall be given on the two Sundays immediately prior to the date of said meeting. The regular order of business for the Annual Business Meeting of RCC shall be as follows:
  - a. Devotions
  - b. Roll call
  - c. Call to order
  - d. Reading and approval of minutes from the previous meeting

- e. Board of Deacons elections
- f. Report of the Treasurer
- g. Report of committees
- h. Unfinished business
- i. New business
- j. Adjournment

4. Special business meetings of RCC may be called when necessary, provided the meeting has been agreed upon by a majority of the Board of Deacons. Special business meetings may also be called by petition having been signed by not less than one-third of the Active Membership, the petition to be placed in the hands of the Lead Pastor or the Secretary and announcement made on the two Sundays immediately prior to the date of the meeting.

5. Due notice of the Annual Business Meeting or a special business meeting of RCC shall be posted and announced by the Lead Pastor and/or designee at all services on the two Sundays immediately prior to the date of said meeting.

6. No record of the Annual Business Meeting or a special business meeting shall be made unless 25% or more of the Active Membership shall be present to constitute a quorum.

7. All members whose names appear on the Active Membership Roll are qualified to vote. The names appearing on the Junior, Honorary and Inactive Membership Rolls shall not be entitled to vote. An absentee ballot shall be allowed in the event that work shift, death in family or in-patient/out-patient medical confinement makes it impossible to be in attendance.

#### **AMENDMENTS**

1. These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Active Membership of the Church in attendance at the Annual Business Meeting or a special business meeting called for that purpose.

2. Any Active Member of the Church proposing an amendment(s) for the Annual Business Meeting must submit the proposal(s) in writing to the Lead Pastor or Secretary of RCC no later than 30 days immediately preceding the Annual Business Meeting.

3. Any proposed amendment(s) must be publicly announced by the Lead Pastor or Secretary of the Church at each gathering on the two Sundays prior to the date of said meeting.

## APPENDIX A: MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENT FORM

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized, and in agreement with Riverside Community Church's mission, values, beliefs and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the RCC church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

**1. I will protect the unity of my church**

- ... by acting in love toward others. (Rom. 14:19; 1 Pet. 1:22)
- ... by using my words to carefully build up rather than tear down. (Eph. 4:29)
- ... by resolving conflict constructively and quickly. (Col. 3:13; Rom. 12:17-18)

**2. I will share the responsibility of my church**

- ... by praying for its growth. (Thess. 1:1,2)
- ... by inviting the unchurched to attend. (Lk. 14:23)
- ... by warmly welcoming those who visit. (Rom. 15:7)

**3. I will serve the ministry of my church**

- ... by discovering my gifts and talents. (1 Peter 4:10)
- ... by actively serving on a ministry team. (Eph. 4:11-12)
- ... by developing a servant's heart. (Phil 2:3-4,7)

**4. I will support the testimony of my church**

- ... by faithfully worshipping with the body of Christ. (Heb. 10:25)
- ... by living a Christ-honoring lifestyle. (Phil. 1:27)
- ... by financially supporting the mission with tithes and offerings. (1 Cor. 16:2; Lev. 27:30)

NAME (print): \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_