

KOSSUTH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH INCORPORATED

2901 KOSSUTH STREET

LAFAYETTE, INDIANA

CONSTITUTION

This is the Constitution of the Kossuth Street Baptist Church Incorporated, Lafayette, Indiana.

ARTICLES

Article I – Church Name

The name of this church shall be “Kossuth Street Baptist Church Incorporated” and for the purposes of this document may be referred to as “Kossuth Street Baptist Church” or “KSBC”.

Article II – Purpose Statement

Kossuth Street Baptist Church exists to glorify God as a family of believers by leading people in a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

A growing relationship with Jesus Christ...

- Begins as people are lovingly confronted with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and receive Him by faith.
- Continues as people are publicly identified with Christ and His Church.
- Is expressed as people grow in their obedience to His teaching, are equipped to serve in His church and world and empowered to love one another.

Article III - Statement of Faith

I. **The Scriptures** - We believe the Holy Scriptures to be the very Word of God, the product of the breath of God and thus verbally inspired in all parts. Therefore, the Holy Scriptures are without error as originally given by God. They are altogether sufficient in themselves as our only infallible rule of faith and practice. In addition, they are the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried.

II Timothy 3:16-17, II Peter 1:19-21

II. **God** - We believe in the one Triune God who is personal, spirit, sovereign, perfect, infinite and eternal in His Being. He is also wisdom, power, love and holiness. God is separate from and above the world as its Creator and still present everywhere as sustainer of the world. He is self-existing and self-revealing in three distinct

persons- the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, each of whom is to be honored and worshipped equally as true God.

Mark 12:29, Psalms 104, John 5:23-26, I Corinthians 8:6, Revelation 4:11

- III. The Son** - We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the Triune God. Without any essential change in His divine person, He became man by the miracle of the virgin birth, thus to continue forever as both true God and true man. He was tested as we are, yet without sin. As the perfect Lamb of God He gave Himself in death upon the cross, bearing there the sin of the world, suffering its full penalty of divine wrath in our stead. He rose from the dead and was glorified in the same body in which He suffered and died. As our High Priest He ascended into heaven, there to appear before the face of God as our Advocate and Intercessor.

John 1:1, Matthew 1:23, Colossians 2:9, Hebrews 4:15, Galatians 3:13, John 20:25-28, I John 2:1

- IV. The Holy Spirit** – We believe in the Holy Spirit who is the third person of the Triune God. The Holy Spirit is the divine agent in creation, revelation and redemption. He convicts the world of sin, restrains evil and regenerates those who believe. He indwells, baptizes, seals, empowers, guides, teaches and sanctifies all who become the children of God through Christ.

Acts 5:3,4, I Corinthians 2:10, John 16:8-11, I Corinthians 6:11-19

- V. Man** – We believe in the creation and fall of man, that he was directly created by God and was not in any sense the product of animal ancestry. Man was made in the divine image. He sinned through his personal disobedience to the revealed will of God and brought physical and spiritual death to the entire race. Man is universally sinful in both nature and practice, alienated from the life and family of God and has no possible means of recovery or salvation within himself.

Genesis 1:26-28, Genesis 3:1-24, Romans 5:12, Ephesians 4, Romans 1:18

- VI. Salvation** – We believe in salvation by grace through faith. Salvation is the free gift of God, neither merited nor secured in part or in whole by any virtue or work of man, but received only by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ all believers presently and personally possess a host of blessings: the gift of eternal life, a perfect righteousness, sonship in the family of God as well as deliverance and security from all condemnation. Further, in Christ, the believer possesses every spiritual resource needed for life and godliness and the divine guarantee that they shall never perish.

Romans 3:24, Titus 3:5, John 3:16, I John 5:13, II Peter 1:3

- VII. Satan** – We believe in the existence of Satan. We further believe that he was originally created a perfect and holy being but through pride and unlawful ambition he rebelled against God, thus becoming completely corrupt in character. Satan is the adversary of God and His people and the leader of all evil angels and spirits, the deceiver and god of this present world. His powers are supernaturally great but limited by the purposes of God who overrules all of his wicked devices for good.

Finally, we believe that Satan was defeated at the cross, thereby making certain his final doom.

Ezekiel 28:13-17, John 8:44, Revelation 12:9-11, Matthew 12:24-26, John 16:11, Ephesians 6:12-18.

- VIII. The Church** – We believe in the One True Church, the body and bride of the Lord Jesus Christ. He began to build the Church on the day of Pentecost and will complete it at His Second Coming. The Holy Spirit baptizes all true believers of the present age into the church. Members of this spiritual body should assemble themselves together in local churches, consisting of baptized believers associated by a covenant of faith. The believers should meet for purposes of worship, prayer, fellowship, evangelism, giving, teaching, united testimony and the observance of the two New Testament ordinances. Those ordinances are baptism by single immersion, as a public testimony of faith, and the Lord's Supper, a commemoration of the death of Christ. According to Scripture, there are two officers in the church: Pastor, also called elder or bishop, and deacons. *Ephesians 4:4, Acts 2:41-47, I Corinthians 12:12-13, Hebrews 10:25, Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 8:26-39, I Corinthians 11:23-28, I Timothy 3.*
- IX. Eschatology** – We believe in the Second Coming of Christ. His return will be personal, visible and glorious; a blessed hope. The time of His return has not been revealed but is always imminent. When He comes, those who have died in Christ will rise from their graves. Living believers will be transformed into an immortal state and all believers shall be forever with Christ. He will then pour out God's righteous judgments on the unbelieving world. Afterward, He will descend from heaven with His church and establish His glorious kingdom over all nations for a thousand years. At the end of those years, He will raise the unrighteous dead for their final judgment and usher in the eternal state. *Titus 2:11-13, I Thessalonians 4:16-18, Revelation 20:11-15*
- X. Life After Death and Eternal Judgments** – We believe in future life, bodily resurrection and eternal judgment. The Spirit of believers, upon their death, goes to be with Christ in heaven where they abide in joyful fellowship with Him until their bodies are raised from the grave. Their bodies will be changed into the likeness of His glorious body and their works shall be brought before the judgment seat of Christ for the determination of their reward. The spirits of the unrighteous, upon their death, go into Hades, where they are kept under punishment until the final day of judgment. At that time their bodies shall be resurrected and they shall be judged, condemned and cast into the place of final and everlasting punishment, the lake of fire. *Philippians 1:21-23, I Corinthians 15:35-58, II Peter 2:9, Luke 16:19-31, Revelation 20:11-15*
- XI. Personal Godliness** – We believe in righteous living and good works. We do not believe that we can obtain our salvation through these things, but that they are proper evidence or fruit of our salvation. As Christians, we should keep the Word of God, seek the things which are above, walk as our Lord walked, be careful to

maintain good works and especially accept as our solemn responsibility and privilege, the taking of the Gospel to a lost world.

Ephesians 2:8-10, John 14:23, Colossians 3:1, I John 2:6, Acts 1:8

XII. Separation – We believe in separation from the world. Since we are citizens of Heaven and children of God, we should walk in separation from this present world, having no fellowship with its evil ways. Abstaining from worldly amusements and unclean habits which defile body and mind, we are also to remain separated from professing Christians who walk in outright disobedience to the word of God so that they may be ashamed. This separation also extends to churches, councils and other entities that deny the great and essential doctrines of the Word of God.

II Corinthians 6:14-18, I Thessalonians 5:22, Ephesians 5:3-11, Colossians 3:11, Romans 16:17, II Thessalonians 3:6, 14

XIII. Spiritual Gifts – We believe that God gives spiritual gifts, allowing us to serve others and worship Him. We also believe that God gave special gifts of tongues, healing, miracle working and others during the initial stages of establishing the Church of Jesus Christ. These special gifts were given as evidence of the Church's supernatural character until the Word of God was given in its complete form. After the Word was complete, the special signs were no longer needed. We do, however, believe that God still performs miracles and that healing is still very much a part of His program.

I Corinthians 12, 13:3-10, James 5:13-16

XIV. Roles of Men and Women – We believe that Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of His created order. All of Scripture displays the equally high value and dignity that God attaches to the roles of both men and women. Scripture also affirms the principle of male headship in the family and in the church. In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership. As Christians, men and women share equally in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men.

1 Corinthians 14:34-36; Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:1-7; Titus 2:5; Genesis 1-3, 1 Timothy 2:11,12

These Articles of Faith do not exhaust the content of our creed, which is the whole Word of God. They are not intended as a limit to the Word of God. We do believe that, insofar as these articles extend, they are a true presentation of sound doctrine as taught in the Scriptures and therefore binding upon us as Christian believers.

The Articles of Faith shall be as now recorded in the Courthouse of Lafayette, Indiana.

Article IV - Bylaws of Kossuth Street Baptist Church

I. Congregation

A. Definitions - For the purposes of these bylaws, the *congregation* is that body of believers who are members of the church. A *voting member* is any member eighteen years or older.

B. Initial Membership Requirements - Any born-again believer in the Lord Jesus, who has been baptized by the scriptural mode of immersion and recommended by the elders, may become a member by an affirmative vote of the congregation at any regular church meeting.

C. Voting - The congregation has the responsibility of voting upon specific items of church business as brought before it by the elders. A vote by the congregation is a means for the congregation to express its affirmation of or disagreement with the elders' recommendation. The result of the vote is binding, but does not preclude the elders from bringing the issue to a subsequent vote by the congregation.

The congregation shall vote on the following matters:

- Acceptance and removal of members
- Appointment and removal of elders
- Employing of elders by the church
- Sending of members into missionary service
- Partnering with mission organizations or with missionaries not sent from our church
- Annual church budget
- Unbudgeted expenditures exceeding 0.5% of the annual budget in any one month or 2% of the annual budget in any fiscal year
- Sale, lease, or disposal of church property when the cumulative value of such property exceeds \$5,000 in any fiscal year
- Agreement to mortgage or encumber the church with debt
- Amendments to the bylaws

At their discretion, the elders may also request that the congregation vote on other matters beyond those listed here.

In all church business meetings, 25% of the voting members shall constitute a quorum for the purposes of acting with the authority of the whole congregation. A quorum must be present before a congregational vote may be taken. The passage of any matter requires that at least two-thirds of the votes cast by voting members be affirmative.

D. Watchcare Membership - Unmarried students living in the area for a limited period of time, who meet membership qualifications but do not wish to remove their

membership from a church of like faith, may become watchcare members. Upon recommendation by the elders, they shall become watchcare members by a vote of the congregation at any regular church meeting. Watchcare members shall not hold elected office or vote on matters of church business, but shall be able to teach, usher, work with youth, and serve in other similar ministries. Watchcare members must seek full membership within one year of completion of their studies or be automatically removed from membership.

E. Voluntary Removal – Should a member wish to be removed from church membership, the elders will seek to meet with him or her to understand the reason for his or her request. When a member seeks to join another church, a letter of standing to date will be sent upon request. This will also be seen as a request to have his or her name removed from KSBC membership. In either case, if the member is involved in a church discipline process, the request will be put on hold until that process is completed. The elders may bring requests for voluntary removal from church membership to the congregation at a regularly scheduled business meeting. Upon affirmative vote of the congregation, the member shall be removed from membership.

F. Attendance - As expressed in our church covenant, each member of Kossuth Street Baptist Church is committed to be present at the services of the church. A member's consistent lack of attendance is reason for concern about the individual's spiritual welfare. If a member continues a pattern of not attending the services of the church with insufficient reason, the elders may, after exhorting the member, recommend at a regularly scheduled business meeting that he or she be removed from church membership due to inactivity. Upon affirmative vote of the congregation, the member shall be removed from membership and notified in writing of this action.

G. Discipline - If any member should persist in conduct that is not becoming to a member of the body of Christ, the elders shall meet with the member according to Galatians 6:1, Matthew 18:15-18, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, and 2 Corinthians 2:5-11. If the member continues a pattern of ungodly conduct, the elders may recommend, at a regularly scheduled business meeting, that he or she be removed from church membership under discipline. Upon affirmative vote of the congregation, the member shall be removed from membership and notified in writing of this disciplinary action.

II. Offices

There are two offices in the church: *elder* and *deacon*. The elders serve in a role similar to that of shepherds tending a flock of sheep, leading the body of believers placed into their trust, feeding them through the teaching of God's Word, and protecting them by standing for truth. Deacons assist the elders, serving the church in areas of ministry delegated to them by the elders.

III. Elders

A. Definitions - Although *elder* and *overseer* are the most common terms for this office in the New Testament, *pastor* (meaning "shepherd") represents well the office's function and all of these terms may be used interchangeably. Elders may be vocational or non-vocational. A *vocational elder* is one serving in that capacity as an employee of the church. A non-vocational elder is one who is not employed by the church to serve in that capacity.

B. Qualifications - Elders must be men who are above reproach in the eyes of the church and the community, and fully meet the scriptural qualifications given for elders in passages such as 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-3. They must also be in agreement with the church Statement of Faith and be willing to abide by the church bylaws. Although some elders may not be able to serve full-time, all are expected to be willing and able to devote significant amounts of time and energy in the fulfillment of their responsibilities.

C. Organization - The biblical model for church leadership calls for a plurality of godly, qualified men to jointly share the responsibility of leading the church. The actual number of elders will vary according to the needs of the church.

All elders are equal in authority, but the elders will choose one from among them who will serve as leader for the elders. Decisions made by the elders shall be understood to be by the elders as a collective body, acting either unanimously or in majority.

D. Authority and Responsibilities - In obedience to and under the authority of Christ, the elders are responsible for the spiritual oversight of the church entrusted to their care. The elders are to pray, teach the Word of God, provide spiritual and organizational leadership, oversee the ministries of the church, and participate in the counseling and disciplining of members as needed. The elders will assign among themselves specific responsibilities such as preaching, counseling, and moderating church business meetings depending upon their giftedness and availability, as they determine.

The elders shall act as the corporate officers of the church according to its articles of incorporation in the state of Indiana.

The hiring and dismissing of church staff other than elders shall be the responsibility of the elders. The elders shall define the roles, responsibilities, and reporting structure of church staff. Partnerships with mission organizations or with missionaries sent from other churches shall be brought to the congregation for approval at the recommendation of the elders. The elders shall examine any member who desires to represent the church in missionary service. Should the elders determine that the member is qualified and that other appropriate criteria are

satisfied, they will request the congregation to approve the sending of this member as a missionary of the church.

The elders shall prepare the annual church budget to be approved by the congregation. The elders shall not spend or obligate the church for expenses exceeding the limits defined in these bylaws, except for budgeted expenses and emergency repairs, without the approval of the congregation. They shall not have authority to sell, lease, give away, or dispose of church property, nor to mortgage or encumber the same with debt exceeding the limits defined in these bylaws, without the approval of the congregation.

The elders shall annually appoint members of the congregation to the positions of clerk, financial secretary, and church treasurer. At the close of each fiscal year, the elders shall appoint an auditor to audit the church financial records.

E. Appointment - When the elders determine that an additional elder is needed, they will prayerfully and thoughtfully seek a qualified man to be considered for the office. This prospective elder must first be examined and unanimously approved by the current elders. Once approved, the name of the candidate shall be announced to the congregation for four Sundays before the congregation is asked to vote on the candidate. Should a member raise a concern regarding the qualification of the candidate during that time, the elders shall investigate the matter, delaying the vote if necessary, and if substantiated, the candidate shall be removed from further consideration. The elders shall provide appropriate opportunities for interaction between the candidate and the congregation before the vote takes place.

While the elders are to hold each other accountable continually, each elder shall be affirmed by the other elders on an annual basis for continued service. Among other things, this should be a time to examine the elder's continued qualification and ability to serve the Lord as an elder in the church.

In recognition that the responsibility of eldership is significant, it is expected and encouraged that, from time to time, an elder will take a leave from his duties for rest, renewal, and growth. This sabbatical leave of absence will be planned and defined by the elders (including duration, compensation if appropriate, and the coverage of responsibilities), and does not remove an elder from the office. At the end of the leave, the elder may return to his responsibilities without having to be brought before the congregation again for approval.

Elders may serve in this office until they resign or are removed. When resigning, elders should give a minimum notice of 30 days before terminating their assigned duties. Once an elder has resigned, he may only become an elder again through the same process required of new elders.

F. Removal – If a member has a concern over the continued qualification of an elder, it is his or her responsibility to bring it to the attention of the other elders. If, in the spirit of 1 Timothy 5:19-20, the elders determine that one of their number no longer meets the qualifications of an elder, that elder shall be removed from office by congregational vote. Such a vote will take place after having been announced to the congregation for two Sundays prior to the vote.

IV. Deacons

A. Definitions – The title of *deacon* means servant, and deacons are to serve Christ and the church by assisting the elders.

B. Qualifications - Deacons must be men who are members of the church and who meet the qualifications outlined in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:8-12). They must possess a servant's attitude and be willing, able, and available to assist the elders.

C. Organization - The number of deacons will vary depending upon the current needs of the elders and the church. Although the deacons may occasionally meet together as a group for sharing information and vision, they will normally meet in smaller ministry teams and interact directly with the elders as needed.

D. Authority and Responsibilities - Deacons are assigned areas of service by the elders and are delegated the authority necessary to perform these responsibilities. Typical ministries assigned to deacons would include, but are not limited to, membership care, finances, missions, benevolence, and facility maintenance.

E. Appointment - When the elders determine that there is a need for additional deacons, they shall ask the congregation for nominations. The elders shall review the list of nominees and interview them to ensure that they meet the qualifications of the office and are willing to serve in that capacity. If there are more qualified nominees than are needed, the elders shall reduce the list to the actual number needed. This final list of deacon nominees shall be communicated to the congregation for four consecutive Sundays. Should a member raise a concern regarding the qualification of a nominee during that time, the elders shall investigate the matter, and if substantiated, that nominee shall be removed from further consideration. After the four-week period, the remaining deacon candidates will be placed into office.

Deacons shall serve a term of three years. Deacons may be re-nominated to serve successive terms as long as they meet the qualifications and there is a continued need for their service, although deacons who have served for an extended period of time are encouraged to take a break from service.

F. Leaving Office - Deacons may resign from their office by giving a minimum notice of 30 days before terminating their assigned duties.

G. Removal - If the elders determine that a deacon is failing to live in a manner consistent with the biblical qualifications for deacons, he shall be removed from office by the elders.

V. **Appointed Positions**

A. Clerk – Duties of the clerk are to collect and archive records of all business meetings of the church and elder meetings. The clerk shall also maintain current and accurate membership records.

B. Financial Secretary – Duties of the financial secretary are to accurately record all contributions received along with the division of those contributions as designated by the donors. The financial secretary shall provide a record of contributions received and their designations to the treasurer, and prepare an annual report of giving for each contributor.

C. Church Treasurer – Duties of the church treasurer are to take responsibility for all contributions of the church and to disburse them as directed by the elders and congregation. The treasurer shall keep an accurate account of all receipts and expenditures and present a report at the annual business meeting. The treasurer shall submit all records to be audited as requested by the elders. Monthly reports are to be presented to the elders.

VI. **Finances**

A. Non-Profit Status - Kossuth Street Baptist Church is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

B. Acquisition of Monies – This church shall be supported by the scriptural method of free-will offering. Any other appeals for funds shall be subject to the approval of the elders.

C. Payment of Obligations – All current expenses of the church are to be paid by the treasurer when due.

D. Dissolution - Upon the dissolution of the organization, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the organization is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such

organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

VII. Meetings and Order

A. Regular Meetings

1. The church body shall meet each Sunday morning for corporate worship and at other designated times as determined by the elders.
2. At a worship service on the first Sunday of each month, the Lord's Supper will be observed unless temporarily changed by the elders.
3. An annual business meeting shall be held each fiscal year. It shall be the duty of the elders, deacons or staff with responsibility over major ministries of the church, and other selected heads of departments to present their reports.

B. Special Business Meetings of the church may be called by the elders or by the presentation of written petition to the elders. The meeting must be announced two consecutive Sundays preceding the meeting. A petition must contain the signatures of at least 10% of the voting members of the church and be read with the meeting announcement.

C. The Fiscal Year of the church shall begin on the first day of January.

D. Robert's Rules of Order shall be used as a standard in all business sessions, although the moderator may simplify their application where appropriate.

VIII. Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by congregational vote, providing the meeting has been announced and the proposed amendment has been made available to the congregation on two consecutive Sundays preceding the meeting.

Article V – Membership Covenant of Kossuth Street Baptist Church

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the public confession of our faith having been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We purpose, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge and holiness; to promote its spiritual and numerical growth; to attend its services regularly; to sustain its worship, ordinances and doctrines; to submit to its discipline and the authority of its officers; to give it sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; to give faithfully of time and talent in its activities; to contribute cheerfully and regularly as God has prospered us, to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, to the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel throughout all nations.

We also purpose to maintain family and private devotions; to train our children according to the Word of God; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk carefully in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct; to abstain from all activities, habits, and lifestyles that dishonor our Lord Jesus Christ, cause stumbling to a fellow believer, or hinder the gospel witness; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the cause of Christ, our Savior, and to give Him preeminence in all things.

We further purpose to encourage one another in the blessed hope of our Lord's return; to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feelings and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation.

We moreover purpose that when we move from this community, we will as soon as possible unite with another church of like faith and order, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.