



CONSTITUTION

Table of Contents

ARTICLE 1 – PURPOSE, NAME, MISSION – 1

SECTION 1 – PURPOSE OF THIS CONSTITUTION – 1

SECTION 2 – NAME – 1

SECTION 3 – MISSION – 1

ARTICLE 2 – CORE CREED, DISTINCTIVE BELIEFS – 1

SECTION 1 – CORE CREED – 1

A. Revelation – 1

B. Scripture – 2

C. God – 2

1. God the Father – 2

2. God the Son – 2

3. God the Holy Spirit – 3

D. Satan – 3

E. Sin – 3

F. Creation and Man – 3

G. Salvation – 3

1. Grace – 3

2. New Birth – 3

3. Repentance and Faith – 3

4. Justification – 3

5. Sanctification – 4

6. Eternal Destiny – 4

H. Marriage – 4

SECTION 2 – DISTINCTIVE BELIEFS – 4

A. The Church – 4

B. The Ordinances – 4

1. Baptism – 4

2. The Lord's Table – 5

C. Civil Government – 5

D. Election – 5

E. Perseverance – 5

F. Last Things – 5

G. Supernatural Gifts – 5

H. Role of Women – 6

ARTICLE 3 – ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS – 6

SECTION 1 – MEMBERS – 6

A. Qualifications – 6

B. Process – 7

C. Removal – 7

D. Restoration – 8

SECTION 2 – OVERSIGHT TEAM – 8

A. Composition – 8

B. Qualifications – 8	
C. Selection – 8	
D. Duties – 9	
E. Tenure and Dismissal – 11	
SECTION 3 – CHURCH STAFF – 11	
A. PASTORS – 11	
1. Qualifications – 11	
2. Selection – 11	
3. Tenure and Dismissal – 12	
4. Duties – 12	
B. LEAD PASTOR – 13	
1. Selection – 13	
2. Duties – 13	
3. Accountability – 13	
4. Absence of Lead Pastor – 14	
C. OTHER STAFF – 14	
1. Selection – 14	
2. Duties – 14	
SECTION 4 – STEWARDSHIP TEAM – 14	
A. Composition of the Team – 14	
B. Qualifications – 14	
C. Accountability – 14	
D. Duties – 14	
SECTION 5 – SERVANT LEADERS– 16	
A. Qualifications – 16	
B. Selection – 16	
C. Duties – 16	
ARTICLE 4 – MEMBER MEETINGS – 17	
SECTION 1 – STRUCTURE – 17	
A. Annual Meeting – 17	
B. Special Business Meetings – 17	
C. Moderator – 17	
D. Clerk – 17	
SECTION 2 – VOTING – 17	
A. Process – 17	
B. Eligibility – 17	
C. Decisions – 18	
ARTICLE 5 – AMENDMENTS – 18	
ARTICLE 6 – DISSOLUTION – 18	
ARTICLE 7 – INDEMNIFICATION – 18	
REFERENCE NOTES – 20	

ARTICLE 1 – PURPOSE, NAME, MISSION

ARTICLE 1, SECTION 1 – PURPOSE OF THIS CONSTITUTION

This constitution contains the principles and guidelines that govern the affairs of Northridge Church. It sets forth the requirements for membership, establishes leadership standards, and outlines the structure and procedures by which Northridge Church is governed. It also declares our understanding of the Bible regarding Northridge Church's Core Creed, Distinctive Beliefs, mission, leadership, and finances. It intends to promote unity of heart, mind, and action within our church as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

We understand that since it is written by fallible people, it is not of higher authority than the Word of God, nor Christ, the Head of the Church (Ephesians 1:22 and 4:12-16). We recognize that it may contain imperfections, which may require that this document be amended in the future according to the provisions of Article 5.

In areas where differences develop over implementation of this constitution, final interpretation rests with the Oversight Team (Article 3, Section 2).

ARTICLE 1, SECTION 2 - NAME

This organization is incorporated under the laws of the State of New York as a nonprofit religious organization, under the name of Northridge Church. Northridge Church (formerly North Baptist Church) is independent of any denomination yet is Baptist in its doctrine and history. The church is to be separate from civil government yet bound by its laws as long as they are not in opposition to Scripture.

ARTICLE 1, SECTION 3 – MISSION

Our mission is to glorify God by making more and better disciples, fulfilling the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20: "*Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*" Our aim is to pursue this mission both locally and globally.

While never compromising on the truths of Scripture, we will seek to implement this mission and communicate Christ in a culturally-perceptive manner that will likely change from generation to generation.

ARTICLE 2 – CORE CREED, DISTINCTIVE BELIEFS

ARTICLE 2, SECTION 1 – CORE CREED

The following statements constitute the Core Creed of Northridge Church. They are central to our understanding of Scripture regarding the Christian faith and must be agreed upon by all members of Northridge Church.

A. Revelation

We believe that it is possible for man to know God (1) but only to the extent God reveals Himself to man, for apart from the divine self-revelation, finite man cannot know the infinite God (2).

We believe that God reveals Himself to all people through creation and conscience. This gives them a general sense of God's existence (3); a general awareness of His power (4), wisdom (5), majesty (6), and goodness (7); and a sense of man's ultimate accountability to God (8).

We believe that God has further revealed Himself through the incarnation of His Son (9), and through the Holy Scripture (10).

B. Scripture

We believe that the Bible is the final, complete, and infallible authority for our lives; that the Bible consists of sixty-six Old Testament and New Testament books; that as originally written it is in its entirety verbally inspired by God; and that it is indeed the Word of God (11).

C. God

We believe that there exists one living and true God (12); that in His being He is infinite (13), eternal (14), self-existent (15), unchanging (16), and ever-present (17); that in His nature He is spirit (18); that He is personal (19); that He is perfect and absolute in all of His attributes (20), including those of His holiness (21), His power (22), and His knowledge (23); that He is therefore sovereign in His position, just in all His decrees, and righteous in all His actions; that He is the cause of all existence beside Himself (24); and that the full comprehension of His person is beyond the capacity of finite man (25).

We further believe that in His divine and infinite being there is a trinity of personal distinctions, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (26), sharing equally in every divine perfection while executing distinct but harmonious offices in every divine work (27).

1. God the Father

We believe that the Father is truly God, and that in the Godhead He occupies a functional but not a positional superiority (28). These functions include, but are not limited to, creation (29), planning redemption (30), sending the Son (31), sending the Holy Spirit (32), raising the Son from the dead (33), and giving authority to the Son to judge the world (34). It is to the glory of the Father that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (35).

2. God the Son

We believe that Jesus Christ is truly God (36); that He is eternal (37), was active in the creation (38), and entered the realm of humanity by means of birth from a virgin, human mother, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit (39); and that although in His humanity He possessed a human nature and human limitations (40), yet without sin (41), He nevertheless did not cease to be God.

We believe that the purpose of the incarnation was to provide redemption for men (42) by means of a predetermined (43), substitutionary (44), propitiatory (45) death on the cross; that Christ bodily rose from the dead (46) and ascended into heaven (47); and that He will one day return to earth (48).

Furthermore, we believe that Jesus is presently the Advocate (49) and Great High Priest (50) of His people, the exalted Head of His Church (51), and the only Mediator between God and man (52).

3. God the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is truly God (53); that Scripture was given by Him (54); that He convicts of sin; that He bears witness to the truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony (55); that He is the regenerating agent in the new birth (56); that He seals (57), indwells (58), guides (59), gifts (60), teaches (61), confirms (62), sanctifies (63), and comforts (64) believers.

D. Satan

We believe in the spirit being of Satan, the unholy and temporary god of this world and ruler of all powers of darkness and sin (65).

E. Sin

We believe in the reality of sin, that sin is departure from the purpose and will of God, and that the active originator of sin in the universe was Satan (66).

F. Creation and Man

We believe that God created all things (67) and that man was created and is made in the image of God (68). Man was originally created sinless (69) but by choice fell from his sinless state (70). All of mankind are now sinners by nature and by choice (71), naturally inclined to evil (72), utterly devoid of the righteousness required by the law of God (73), and therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse (74).

G. Salvation

1. Grace

We believe that it is by grace, God's unmerited favor, we are saved through faith, and this is not from ourselves but it is a gift of God. It is not on the basis of works (75).

2. New Birth

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again (76); though formerly dead in sin, we are made alive in Christ (77).

3. Repentance and Faith

We believe that repentance, a change of mind and purpose from sin and toward God, is an integral part of saving faith (78), and that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation (79). We believe that saving faith is trusting in Christ alone for salvation.

4. Justification

We believe that justification, occurring at the time of new birth, is that judicial act of God whereby He imputes the righteousness of Christ to the believer and therefore declares the believer righteous; that it includes the forgiveness of sin and the promise of eternal life, not in consideration of any works of righteousness we have done, but solely by grace through faith in Christ (80).

5. Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is the work of God in all believers by which He changes our hearts and minds, and He continues making our character more and more like Jesus Christ (81).

6. Eternal Destiny

We believe that death seals the eternal destiny of each person. At the final judgment, each unbeliever will be separated from God and condemned to the lake of fire. Each believer will be received into God's loving presence and rewarded for their faithfulness to Him in this life. Believers will spend eternity with God in the new Heaven and the new Earth (82).

H. Marriage

We believe that the Bible teaches that marriage is to be exclusively the union of a man and a woman. We furthermore accept the Biblical prohibition of sexual union outside of marriage (83), and the Biblical directives concerning husband, wife, and family as fully applicable to believers in our time (84).

ARTICLE 2, SECTION 2 – DISTINCTIVE BELIEFS

The following Distinctive Beliefs demonstrate our particular interpretation of the Bible in several areas. These Distinctive Beliefs are not universally held by all followers of Christ. Members of Northridge Church may differ in their interpretation of Scripture regarding our Distinctive Beliefs yet for the sake of unity may not cause division or recruit others to their position.

A. The Church

We believe that born-again believers everywhere compose the Church in the universal sense, but the church is always expressed locally. The local church consists of a group of born-again, baptized believers who are organized according to Scripture; independent; self-governing; meeting together for the worship of God, fellowship, growth in Christ, serving each other, and reaching the lost (85).

B. The Ordinances

We believe that the following acts of obedience are symbolic in nature and provide a vivid picture of the love and grace of God.

1. Baptism

Baptism is an outward sign of a person's internal faith in Jesus Christ. This physical demonstration symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, but more importantly, communicates a believer's loyalty and allegiance to Jesus Christ in a public way. Baptism is commanded in Scripture as an initial act of obedience by Christ-followers. We believe in baptism by immersion in water (86).

2. The Lord's Table

The Lord's Table (or Communion) is a physical act in which believers remember the death of Jesus. Jesus created this expression during an intimate moment with his

closest followers, and we are instructed to continue observing this act of worship (87).

C. Civil Government

We believe that human government is ordained by God for the good of mankind and that believers are to obey civil law unless such law contradicts the commands of the Word of God (88). In the event of such conflict, we believe that we must obey God rather than man, and that we must not renounce our profession or Christian practice, even in the face of trials, afflictions, persecutions, or imprisonments (89). We furthermore believe that the affairs of the church must be kept distinct from the civil government.

D. Election

We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God according to which He graciously chooses to regenerate and save sinners. It is a glorious display of God's sovereign goodness. We also believe this election is done in a manner above our comprehension, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel. Election is evidenced by repentance, faith, and newness of life (90).

E. Perseverance

We believe that all who are truly born again are eternally secure in God's salvation and that they will persevere by the power of God, through faith (91).

F. Last Things

We believe in the personal, premillennial return of Christ (92), the resurrection of the righteous dead (93), the change of the living in Christ (94), His millennial reign on earth (95), the resurrection of the unrighteous (96), and their judgment at the Great White Throne (97).

G. Supernatural Gifts

We believe that the Holy Spirit empowers and gifts believers for their ministry (98). Some of these gifts can be categorized as "supernatural" gifts because their expression overrides natural laws and ordinary human abilities. These gifts have included speaking in unlearned foreign languages, the ability to miraculously heal, and speaking prophetically of future events (99). Although we believe that God is no less capable of working through His people in these same ways today, there is evidence from Scripture that these gifts were linked specifically to the birth of the early church as a way of confirming the message (100), and so for the sake of unity within this church family we do not practice or teach these supernatural gifts. We do encourage believers to focus on loving one another and to pursue the gifts that are certain to edify the church (101).

H. Role of Women

We believe the Bible clearly says that there is equality between men and women before God (102), yet there are distinctions in roles for men and women in the home and in the church (103). Every leadership opportunity is open to women except those that are excluded by Scripture. Therefore, women are not permitted to serve as elders on the Oversight Team (104). Additionally, because Paul reasons from Creation as opposed to a specific cultural context, we believe women are not permitted to serve as corporate instructors of truth to men within the context of the local church (105). Qualified women may serve in any leadership position that is not directly forbidden in the Scriptures.

ARTICLE 3 – ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

An imperfect system filled with men and women of integrity will function better than a perfect system filled with men and women who lack integrity. *The people we choose are more important than the system we use.*

The Head of Northridge Church is Jesus Christ. As a spiritual body, we seek to submit to His priorities in all we do and in how we do it.

ARTICLE 3, SECTION 1 - MEMBERS

The future of Northridge Church will be shaped by the prayers, involvement, and spiritual discernment of its members. All members are encouraged to participate in decisions as outlined in this constitution.

Becoming a member of Northridge Church is a choice to take an important step in your journey with other Christ-followers. It communicates your desire to be spiritually formed in the context of a spiritual community and allows your abilities to be fully utilized as we seek to glorify God by making more and better disciples of Jesus Christ.

A. Qualifications

The qualifications for membership include all of the following:

1. Relationship with Jesus Christ

Any person who professes faith in Jesus Christ, gives evidence of having been born again, and meets the other qualifications herein, may be received into membership.

2. Baptism

Each member must have been baptized according to Scripture as a believer.

3. Agreement with Core Creed and Support of Distinctive Beliefs

Each member must agree with the Core Creed of Northridge Church and be willing to submit to our Distinctive Beliefs (Article 2, Section 2, first paragraph).

4. Support of Ministry

Each member must sign the following statement: *"I have read and consent to the commitments and understand the implications of my membership as outlined in the constitution of Northridge Church. As a member of Northridge Church, I agree to devote myself to worship God corporately, to be part of a small community of believers functioning biblically, to grow in my faith, to serve Christ with this body, to seek to win those who are far from God, to give financially, and to be accountable to the church leadership and fellow believers in matters concerning my relationship with God and others."*

5. Approval

Each member must be approved by the Pastors.

B. Process

The Pastors will approve the membership process, as well as all new members (Article 3, Sec. 3, A, 4, b).

C. Removal

Persons may be removed from membership by the Pastors for the following reasons:

1. Death

2. Personal Request

A member in good standing may ask, in writing, to be removed.

3. Affiliation with Another Church

A member in good standing, who formally affiliates with another church without resigning as a member of this church, will be removed from membership.

4. Failure to Participate in or Support the Ministry

A member who has failed to participate in or support the ministry of this church for a period of six consecutive months may be removed. Before removal, due notification will be attempted.

5. Violation of Biblical Commands and Prohibitions

When a member's continued conduct is in clear violation of biblical commands and prohibitions, or when a member's conduct indicates intent to hinder the mission or unity of the church as a whole, the member will be removed. This will take place only after reconciliation is attempted, as directed in Matthew 18:15-17, and found unattainable. If a member requests removal during the discipline process, the principles of Matthew 18:15-17 will continue to be followed. This process will be noted in the minutes of the Oversight Team and may be handled publicly. An example of this can be seen in 1 Corinthians 5.

The goal of this discipline is always restoration, as described in Galatians 6:1-5.

D. Restoration

Former members removed by personal request, affiliation with another church, or for failure to participate in or support the ministry, may be restored to membership as approved by the Pastors (Article 3, Section 3, A, 4, b).

Members dismissed for violation of biblical commands and prohibitions may be restored by the Pastors according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8 when they determine there is evidence of genuine repentance.

ARTICLE 3, SECTION 2 – OVERSIGHT TEAM

Note: The biblical terms "Elder," "Overseer," and "Pastor" refer to complementary aspects of the same leadership role in the church (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-2). For purposes of clarity in this constitution, we will distinguish between those paid and nonpaid by using the

terms "Pastor" for those who serve in a vocational capacity and the term "Elder" for those who serve in a non-vocational capacity.

A. Composition

The Oversight Team will be comprised of the Lead Pastor (Article 3, Section 3, B, 2, a), a minimum of two additional Pastors, and a minimum of three Elders. The Oversight Team will be comprised of no more than thirteen members.

B. Qualifications

1. Character

These must be men whose lives are marked by the character qualities described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

2. Competence

As part of their recognized gifts, abilities, and experience, Pastors and Elders must have proven themselves to be men who possess discernment and strategic-thinking capabilities.

3. Commitment

As members they must be in full agreement with the Core Creed and Distinctive Beliefs of Northridge Church.

C. Selection

1. Selection of Pastors to the Oversight Team

The Pastor who serves as Lead Pastor (Article 3, Section 3, B) will be a permanent member of the Oversight Team. He and the Elders will choose at least two other Pastors to serve on the Oversight Team. These Pastors will serve one-year, renewable terms (Article 4, Section 1, A).

2. Selection of Elders to the Oversight Team

Scripture gives evidence that the first leaders were appointed by the founders of the church. This implies that the existing spiritual leadership of a church should be intimately involved in the process of selecting new leaders to ensure that selection is based on spiritual rather than superficial qualifications. Beyond this, there are no specific guidelines given regarding the selection process. It would therefore appear that the individual church has the liberty to develop a process that will best serve its own special needs and situation (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).

The process for selecting Elders at Northridge Church is as follows:

a. Identification

At any time members of the congregation may nominate any man from the church membership as a candidate for an Elder.

b. Evaluation

The current Oversight Team will prayerfully review the nominees. If they believe a man to be qualified and there is a need, a member of the Oversight Team will be appointed to approach him to explain the specific nature of the need and to determine his willingness to serve in this capacity (1 Timothy 5:22).

c. Examination

The current Oversight Team will examine the nominee through personal assessment, interviews, and discussion.

d. Affirmation

Those candidates who are unanimously recommended by the Oversight Team will be presented to the church. A period of time determined by the Oversight Team will be set aside for any concerns or affirmation regarding a nominee. Concerns should first be shared with the nominee (Matthew 18). If concerns are not resolved privately, they must be shared in the presence of at least two other members of the Oversight Team (Matthew 18). If concerns are deemed legitimate, the Oversight Team must seriously reconsider the nominee.

If there are no concerns, potential Elders will be presented for an individual vote of affirmation at the annual members' meeting (Article 4, Section 1, A).

Should a vacancy occur during the year, the Oversight Team may unanimously appoint an individual to serve as a replacement until the next annual meeting.

D. Duties

1. Health of the Church

The Oversight Team is responsible to see that the church remains biblically faithful, that its members are appropriately shepherded, that the body is being fed through accurate biblical teaching, and that the mission of the church is being pursued.

2. Protection of the Church

The Oversight Team functions as the conscience and guardian of the church. It will protect the church against harmful influences, so that the truth of Christ will remain credible and authentic to both the congregation and the surrounding community (1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28-31; Titus 1:9; James 5:14; 2 Timothy 1:14; Colossians 2:8).

3. Evaluation

The Oversight Team is responsible for the overall direction of Northridge Church. It does not implement programming, as this falls to the Church Staff (Article 3, Section 3, A, 4, a) and Servant Leaders (Article 3, Section 5). However, it is responsible for evaluating programming based on its appropriateness and effectiveness in furthering the overall health and mission of the church.

4. Recommendations to Congregation

When the position is vacant, the Oversight Team will recommend a Lead Pastor to the church (Article 3, Section 3, B, 1). It also will recommend members of the Oversight and Stewardship Teams to the church at the annual members' meeting (Article 4, Section 1, A).

5. Hiring and Dismissal of Staff

The Oversight Team has the authority, in accordance with the budget provided by the Stewardship Team, to hire and dismiss staff members as it deems necessary to accomplish the mission of the church (Article 3, Section 3, A, 2 and 3; Article 3, Section 3, C, 1).

6. Meetings

The Oversight Team will meet a minimum of eight times each year and at least once in every quarter. At any meeting of the Oversight Team, three-quarters of the team members, including two of the Pastors who serve on the Oversight Team, will constitute a quorum. In the interest of the unity of the body, consensus will be sought in all decisions of the Oversight Team. In the event of unresolved differences, a three-quarters vote of those present will have final authority.

7. Delegation

The Oversight Team is permitted to delegate its authority and responsibilities as it chooses, but no such delegation will absolve it of its accountability in any matter. The Oversight Team may revoke any delegation it has made.

8. Representatives of Members

The Oversight Team will act on behalf of the membership in all matters not specifically reserved in this constitution to the membership. A list of these matters is found in Article 4, Section 2, D.

E. Tenure and Dismissal

1. Term of Service

With the exception of Pastors (whose tenure on the Oversight Team is addressed in Article 3, Section 2, C, 1), members of the Oversight Team will serve three-year terms. Two terms may be served in succession with a year off before an individual can serve again as an Elder.

2. Process for Removal

If it becomes apparent that a certain individual should no longer serve on the Oversight Team, he may resign or be dismissed by a three-quarters vote of the other team members. Note: It is important to understand the unique biblical step given for reconciling conflict with an Elder. For an accusation against one of these leaders to be considered, there must be two or more witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19).

ARTICLE 3, SECTION 3 – CHURCH STAFF

As ministry needs dictate and finances allow, Northridge Church will employ staff to assist in fulfilling the mission of the church. Staff members should possess the spiritual character, abilities, and experiences that qualify them for their positions.

A. Pastors

Note: The biblical terms “Elder,” “Overseer,” and “Pastor” refer to complementary aspects of the same leadership role in the church (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-2). For purposes of clarity in this constitution, we will distinguish between those paid and nonpaid by using the terms “Pastor” for those who serve in a vocational capacity and the term “Elder” for those who serve in a non-vocational capacity.

1. Qualifications

a. Character

Pastors will be men whose lives are marked by the character qualities described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

b. Competence

As part of their recognized gifts, abilities, and experience, Pastors must have shown themselves to be effective leaders in the area of ministry for which they are being considered.

c. Doctrine and Beliefs

A Pastor must be in full agreement with the Core Creed and Distinctive Beliefs of Northridge Church.

2. Selection

The appropriate number of Pastors for the leadership of the church will be determined by the Oversight Team in accordance with the budget as approved by the Stewardship Team. The Oversight Team will initiate a selection process, involving itself and any other members it deems necessary to the process. Except for the Lead Pastor, in whose case a more detailed process is required (Article 3, Section 3, B, 1), the Oversight Team selects and hires all Pastors.

3. Tenure and Dismissal

Pastors are appointed to an indefinite tenure consistent with their continued desire and ability to serve in this capacity. However, evaluation and recognition of qualifications and competency must remain a priority within the Oversight Team. The removal of Pastors will be effected by personal resignation or by dismissal in accordance with the following:

a. Voluntary Resignation

A Pastor may resign at any time he chooses. The resignation must be submitted to the Oversight Team in writing for its review.

b. Involuntary Dismissal

If it becomes apparent that any Pastor is no longer qualified to serve in his role, he may be dismissed by a three-quarters vote of the rest of the Oversight Team or a three-quarters vote of a quorum of the voting members of the church. In addition to Matthew 18:15-18, it is important to understand the unique biblical step given for reconciling conflict with a Pastor (1 Timothy 5:19).

4. Duties

a. Set Spiritual Direction

The Pastors are collectively responsible for the leading, teaching, equipping, and shepherding of the church. The Church Staff implements programming, gives vision to the various ministries of the church, and is empowered to make the necessary decisions to oversee the day-to-day functions of the church.

b. Approve Church Membership

The Pastors will approve the membership process as well as all new members.

c. Select Servant Leaders

The Pastors will select Servant Leaders who organize teams to accomplish various facets of the mission.

d. Manage Financial Resources

The Pastors are responsible for the day-to-day management of the financial resources of the church within the boundaries of the budget established by the Stewardship Team and affirmed by the members, excluding any decisions regarding compensation for the Church Staff, which will be determined by the Stewardship Team (Article 3, Section 4, D, 1). The Pastors are accountable to the Stewardship Team in all fiscal matters.

B. Lead Pastor

One of the Pastors will serve as the Lead Pastor. He should be characterized by his spiritual leadership and by his ability to attract and empower a creative and godly team of leaders who cast the vision and accomplish the mission of Northridge Church. The qualifications, tenure and dismissal, and duties of the Pastors previously listed all apply to the Lead Pastor with the following additions:

1. Selection

The Oversight Team is responsible to serve as the search committee when there is a vacancy in the position of Lead Pastor. When the focus has been narrowed to one candidate, the Oversight Team will provide opportunities for the members to interact with the candidate. After this interaction, a members' meeting will be called (according to the requirements of Article 4, Section 1) to see if there is agreement on the recommended candidate. The vote will be conducted as outlined in Article 4, Section 2.

If at least three-quarters of the voting members of the church agree with the Oversight Team's recommendation, the team will offer the position to the candidate.

2. Duties

a. Guidance and Leadership

The Lead Pastor will provide overall guidance and leadership to the Oversight Team, Stewardship Team, and Church Staff.

b. Evaluation and Accountability

As a first among equals, the Lead Pastor will ensure mutual accountability (Acts 20:28) and proper evaluation for the fulfillment of the responsibilities given to each member of the Oversight Team and Church Staff.

3. Accountability

There are four official levels of personal accountability for the Lead Pastor:

- a.** The Lead Pastor will be held accountable by individuals in the church (Matthew 18:15-18), just as each member in the Body of Christ is to be held mutually accountable. Each step of church discipline should be followed with every member of the church. Special attention should also be given to 1 Timothy 5:19.
- b.** The Lead Pastor will be held fiscally accountable by the Stewardship Team in the area of church finances. The Stewardship Team may involve the Oversight Team if necessary.
- c.** The Lead Pastor will be held accountable by the rest of the Oversight Team (Acts 20:28). The Oversight Team is able to call for the resignation of the Lead Pastor by three-quarters majority of the rest of the Oversight Team.
- d.** The Lead Pastor will be held accountable by the collective members of Northridge Church (Matthew 18:15-18). The congregation can call for the resignation of the Lead Pastor by three-quarters majority.

4. Absence of a Lead Pastor

In the absence of a Lead Pastor the Oversight Team will begin the process of filling the Lead Pastor role with one of the current Pastors or a new candidate. The Oversight Team will recommend to the members a candidate for affirmation (Article 4, Section 2, D, 1).

C. Other Staff (non-pastors)

1. Selection

The Oversight Team has the authority, in accordance with the budget provided by the Stewardship Team, to hire and dismiss staff members as it deems necessary to accomplish the mission of the church (Article 3, Section 2, D, 5).

2. Duties

Each staff member will complete any tasks deemed necessary by their immediate supervisor to accomplish the mission of the church.

ARTICLE 3, SECTION 4 – STEWARDSHIP TEAM

A. Composition of the Team

The Stewardship Team will be composed of six, nine, or twelve members in accordance with New York State law. The Stewardship Team will be selected by the Oversight Team annually and affirmed by the members at the annual meeting. At any meeting of the Stewardship Team, half of the team members will constitute a quorum.

Should a vacancy occur during the year, the Oversight Team may appoint an individual to serve as a replacement for the remainder of the term.

B. Qualifications

These individuals should be characterized by wisdom, spiritual maturity, and fiscal responsibility. As members, they must fully agree with the Core Creed of Northridge Church and agree to fully submit to the Distinctive Beliefs.

C. Accountability

The Stewardship Team is ultimately accountable to the Oversight Team. The Oversight Team has the authority to override any decision made by the Stewardship Team. However, if such an occasion should arise, it will be necessary for the Oversight Team to meet with the Stewardship Team and discuss the matter fully.

D. Duties

The Stewardship Team will oversee all financial matters of the church. This includes the following:

1. Compensation and Policies for Paid Staff

The Stewardship Team will approve compensation and employment policies for the paid staff.

2. Annual Budget

The Stewardship Team will develop the annual budget. In addition, the Stewardship Team will review the financial statements regularly throughout the budget year.

3. Financial Accounting

The Stewardship Team may appoint individuals to receive, care for, and disburse all monies in accordance with church policy. Detailed accounting of all receipts and disbursements, and financial statements will be provided as needed.

4. Allocation of Designated Funds

The Stewardship Team has the authority to make expenditures from funds contributed and designated for a specific purpose. They may also accept or reject designated funds given.

5. Debt

The Stewardship Team has the authority to approve the borrowing of funds for unforeseen ministry needs. Debt that is approved by this team without the affirmation of the members will never exceed 20 percent of the church's current annual budget for any one project. The borrowing of funds in excess of this limit requires the affirmation of the members.

6. Spending Limitations

The Stewardship Team has the authority to approve and spend an amount not greater than 5 percent of the total annual budget for any project that was not included in the annual budget. The members must be informed of any expenditure from 2 percent to 5 percent of the annual church budget. Any expenditure beyond 5 percent of the annual church budget must be approved by the members.

7. Financial Accountability

The Stewardship Team will have the financial records of Northridge Church reviewed by an outside agency at least once per year.

8. Legal Roles

To accommodate legal relationships outside the church, the following people will serve Northridge Church, a nonprofit, religious corporation, in these legal roles:

a. Board of Directors

The Stewardship Team will serve as the Board of Directors of the organization. Officers of the Board are as follows:

i. President

The Lead Pastor will serve as the President.

ii. Secretary

The Stewardship Team will annually appoint one individual from among its members to serve secretary.

iii. Treasurer

The Treasurer will be chosen by the Stewardship Team and is the leader of the Stewardship Team. This person is invited to attend meetings of the Oversight Team as a nonvoting participant.

b. Trustees

The Stewardship Team for all legal purposes shall constitute the "trustees" as stated in the Articles of Incorporation and will have the authority to direct the execution and delivery of any document required by law. Execution of a document as directed by the Oversight Team is also sufficient to bind the church.

ARTICLE 3, SECTION 5 – SERVANT LEADERS

In the Jerusalem Church, seven men were chosen to manage a pressing need in the believing community, freeing the leaders to give their “attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word” (Acts 6:1-4).

A. Qualifications

The word “deacon” is from the Greek word “diakonos” which means, “one who serves.” At Northridge Church, the Servant Leaders (the Biblical “deacons” and “deaconesses”) are men and women who provide servant-leadership to the ministries of the church. Servant Leaders must also exhibit the qualifications of Scripture set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-12 and, as members, must fully agree with the Core Creed of Northridge Church and agree to fully submit to the Distinctive Beliefs.

B. Selection

Servant Leaders will be chosen by the Pastoral Staff and will serve as long as they are qualified and willing and as long as a need for their ministry exists. The number of Servant Leaders will be determined by the needs of the church community.

C. Duties

Servant Leaders oversee specific ministries under their care and help mobilize the Church Body for service. They allow the Pastors and Elders to focus fully on their spiritual leadership responsibilities. As needed, they may meet with the Pastors and Oversight Team to evaluate ministries, be informed of direction, offer advice, and pray.

ARTICLE 4 – MEMBER MEETINGS

ARTICLE 4, SECTION 1 - STRUCTURE

A. Annual Meeting

The church year, for fiscal purposes, will be January 1 through December 31. In preparation for the fiscal year, there will be an annual members’ meeting that will take place within two months of the coming fiscal year. At that meeting, members will affirm candidates for the Oversight and Stewardship Teams.

B. Special Business Meetings

Other member meetings may be scheduled at any time by the Oversight Team or by 20 percent of the voting members of the congregation who have signed a petition and presented it to the Oversight Team. At least fourteen days prior to the meeting, the date and tentative agenda for the meeting will be sent to the members by postal or electronic mail, or will be publicly announced at a regularly scheduled worship service.

C. Moderator

The Oversight Team will designate a person to preside at member meetings. The moderator will determine the rules of procedure according to his sense of fairness and common sense. The Oversight Team is the final authority on matters of procedure.

D. Clerk

A person designated by the Oversight Team will keep minutes of each member meeting.

ARTICLE 4, SECTION 2 - VOTING

A. Process

All proposals will come from the Oversight Team except for proposals generated by petition of the voting members (Article 4, Section 1, B). A two-thirds vote is needed to affirm all decisions, except for the selection of Elders and the Lead Pastor, which needs a three-quarters vote of affirmation (Article 3, Section 3, B, 1). If a two-thirds affirmation is not achieved, the Oversight Team will reevaluate the proposal. There will be no proxy or absentee voting. Voting will normally be by written ballot. This may vary, however, at the discretion of the Oversight Team. Ten percent of the members constitute a quorum.

B. Eligibility

Any member who is present at the meeting and is at least sixteen years of age may participate in a vote.

C. Decisions

Affirmation of the voting members is required for the Oversight Team to act on the following decisions.

1. Hiring the Lead Pastor (Article 3, Section 3, B, 1)
2. Affirming Elders (Article 3, Section 2, C, 2)
3. Affirming the Stewardship Team (Article 3, Section 4, A)
4. Amending the church constitution (Article 5)
5. Incurring indebtedness beyond the limits of the Stewardship Team's authority (Article 3, Section 4, D, 5)
6. Dissolution of the church ministry (Article 6)
7. Any item proposed for a vote at a business meeting

The members entrust the Oversight Team to act on their behalf in all matters not specifically listed above. The Oversight Team may, however, choose to bring other matters to the members for affirmation.

ARTICLE 5 – AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended or replaced using the voting process in Article 4, Section 2. The Oversight Team will review this constitution at least every three years to determine where changes may need to be made to ensure its effectiveness.

ARTICLE 6 – DISSOLUTION

In the event that the ministry of Northridge Church cannot continue, the membership may vote to dissolve the church using the voting process in Article 4, Section 2. All assets of the church will be distributed by the Oversight Team to one or more nonprofit organizations that qualify under the guidelines of Section 501c(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or corresponding section of any future federal code, and whose mission is consistent with that of Northridge Church.

ARTICLE 7 – INDEMNIFICATION

PLAIN ENGLISH SUMMARY OF WHAT FOLLOWS

Northridge Church may choose to protect from damage, loss, or injury any individual who has acted on behalf of the church as a paid employee or as an individual chosen to serve on behalf of the leadership. If the Oversight Team or voting members determine this individual acted in good faith and not in opposition to the best interest of the church, they may choose to “indemnify” that individual to protect them from liability for any lawsuit or other action taken against them.

LIMITATIONS OF LIABILITY AND INDEMNIFICATION

The corporation shall indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit, or proceeding. This includes any civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative proceeding, whether formal or informal (other than an action by or in the right of the corporation).

Such indemnification shall apply only to a person who was or is a director or officer of the corporation, or who was or is serving at the request of the corporation as director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or agent of another foreign or domestic corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, whether for profit or not for profit.

The person shall be indemnified and held harmless against expenses (including attorney fees), judgments, penalties, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with such action, suit, or proceeding, if the person acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interest of the corporation or its members. With respect to any criminal action or proceeding, the person must have had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or on a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent shall not by itself create a presumption that (a) the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that the person reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interest of the corporation or its members or (b) with respect to any criminal action or proceeding; the person had reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

Any indemnification under this article (unless ordered by a court) shall be made by the corporation only as authorized in the specific case. The corporation must determine that indemnification of the person is proper in the circumstances because the person has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in the Article. Such determination shall be made in any of the following ways:

(a) By a majority vote of a quorum of the board consisting of directors who were not parties to such action, suit, or proceeding.

(b) If the quorum described in clause (a) above is not obtainable, then by a committee of directors who are not parties to the action. The committee shall consist of not less than two disinterested directors.

(c) By independent legal counsel in a written opinion.

(d) By the Members.

REFERENCE NOTES

1. John 17:3; 1 John 5:20
2. Psalm 145:3; Romans 1:19, 11:33-34; 1 Corinthians 2:9-10
3. Acts 17:24-28; Romans 1:19-20
4. Isaiah 40:26; Romans 1:20
5. Psalm 19:2
6. Psalm 19:1
7. Acts 14:17
8. Romans 1:20
9. John 1:1-5, 14; Hebrews 1:1-3
10. John 5:39
11. Psalm 33:11, 119:89; Matthew 24:35; John 10:35, 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-20
12. Isaiah 45:21-22; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; I Timothy 2:5
13. 1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 147:5
14. Genesis 21:33; Deuteronomy 33:27; Isaiah 57:15; I Timothy 1:17
15. Exodus 3:14; John 5:26
16. Malachi 3:6; James 1:17
17. Psalm 139:7-10
18. John 4:24
19. Exodus 3:14; 1 Corinthians 2:11; Hebrews 1:3
20. Matthew 5:48
21. Isaiah 6:3, 57:15; Psalm 47:8; Habakkuk 1:13; 1 Peter 1:15-16
22. Job 42:2; Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 19:26
23. Psalm 147:5
24. Genesis 1:1; John 1:3; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16-17
25. Romans 11:33-34
26. Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14
27. John 14:26; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:6-9
28. John 3:35; 5:19; 14:10
29. Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 32:6; Isaiah 40:28; Matthew 19:4
30. John 3:15; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:7-10
31. John 5:36-38; 1 John 4:14
32. John 14:26
33. 1 Corinthians 6:14; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:20
34. John 5:22, 27
35. John 5:37, 14:16-17; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:10-11
36. Isaiah 9:16; Matthew 1:23; John 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:15-16
37. John 1:1-5, 8:58
38. John: 1:3; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2
39. Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:20-23; Luke 1:27-31
40. Matthew 8:24; John 4:6, 19:28
41. 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15, 9:14; 1 Peter 1:19; 1 John 3:3
42. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Revelation 5:9-10
43. Acts 2:23; Revelation 13:8
44. 1 Peter 2:24
45. 1 John 4:10
46. Matthew 28:5-7; 1 Corinthians 15:4; 2 Timothy 2:8
47. Acts 1:9
48. John 14:3; Acts 1:11
49. 1 John 2:11
50. Hebrews 4:14
51. Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:15-16, 5:23
52. 1 Timothy 2:5
53. Acts 5:3-4

54. 2 Peter 1:21
55. Acts 5:32
56. John 3:3-6
57. 2 Corinthians 5:5; Ephesians 4:30
58. Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16
59. Acts 16:6-7; Romans 8:14
60. 1 Corinthians 12:4
61. John 14:26, 16:13-14
62. Romans 8:16
63. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Galatians 5:22-23
64. John 16:7; Acts 9:31
65. 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; 2 Timothy 2:26; Hebrews 2:14; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:9-10
66. Proverbs 15:19; Isaiah 14:12-15, 59:1-2; John 1:29, 8:44; 1 John 3:4, 8
67. Genesis 1-2; Exodus 20:11; Colossians 1:16
68. Genesis 1:27
69. Ecclesiastes 7:29; Romans 5:12
70. Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 5:12-19
71. Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:9-12, 23, 5:12
72. Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 7:14-17; Galatians 5:19-21
73. Isaiah 64:6-7; Galatians 3:22-24
74. Romans 1:19-21, 2:14-16
75. Ephesians 2:8-9
76. John 3:3, 6-7
77. Ephesians 2:1-3
78. Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 3:19, 17:30
79. John 1:12, 3:16; Acts 16:31
80. Romans 5:15-21; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21
81. Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 6:11; Hebrews 10:10; Jude 1
82. Psalm 9:17; Proverbs 14:32; Malachi 3:18; Matthew 25:34-41; Luke 16:19-31; John 8:21; Romans 6:23
83. Exodus 20:14; Proverbs 6:24-33; Matthew 5:27-28; Acts 15:20; Romans 7:3, 13:9; 1 Corinthians 5:9, 6:15-20, 10:8; Galatians 5:19-21; James 2:10-11
84. Exodus 20:12; Matthew 15:4; Ephesians 5:22-6:4; Colossians 3:17-21; 1 Timothy 5:8; 1 Peter 3:1-8
85. Acts 2:41-42, 20:28; Romans 6:1, 4-5, 16; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 5:12, 11:2, 16:1-3; Philippians 1:1, 4:15; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:14
86. Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:12-13, 36, 38; Romans 6:1-10
87. Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-23; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34
88. Exodus 18:21-22; Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-3; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-17
89. Daniel 3:17-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:17-20, 29
90. Matthew 22:14; John 15:16; Romans 8:33, 9:16, 20-24, 16:13; Colossians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Timothy 2:10; Titus 1:1; 1 Peter 1:2, 2:9
91. Psalm 89:30-34; Matthew 16:18; John 5:24, 6:3-7, 10:28-29, 14:19, 17:2; Romans 8:1, 29-31, 38-39; 1 Corinthians 1:8; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 1:12, 2:13; Hebrews 5:9, 9:12, 13:5
92. John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28; James 5:8
93. 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:5-6
94. 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
95. Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:1-9, 32:1; Luke 1:32; Acts 2:29-30; Revelation 20:6-7
96. John 5:29; Revelation 20:5
97. Revelation 20:11-15
98. Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:11-16
99. 1 Corinthians 12:28
100. Hebrews 2:4; 2 Corinthians 12:12
101. 1 Corinthians 12:31

102. Galatians 3:28
103. Ephesians 5:23-24; 1 Timothy 2:11-12
104. 1 Timothy 3:1-12; Titus 1:6-9
105. 1 Timothy 2:12-14