



**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

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**Massachusetts 01915**

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# CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

of the

## North Shore Community Baptist Church

Beverly Farms, Massachusetts

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## PREAMBLE

### NSCBC Governance Model Introduction

This Preamble provides an overview of NSCBC’s governance model. It is not technically part of the Constitution but introduces a “congregation-affirmed, pastor-led, elder-governed, deacon-served, policy-based” framework. This model delegates the management of day-to-day ministries to the Senior Pastor who is accountable to the Elder Board. The Elder Board is accountable to the Church. The Elders are responsible for overseeing such things as the spiritual life of the church: its commitment to Christ, unity, doctrine, as well as general church policy, budget, and legal responsibilities. The Elder Board relies on the Deacon Board for many activities, such as engaging in practical ministries of compassion and administration, thus enabling the Elders to concentrate on their responsibilities. Together with the Senior Pastor, the Elder Board forms a plurality of leaders sharing as overseers of the Church.

- *Congregation-affirmed:* The Senior Pastor and Elders are affirmed in their gifting and calling and appointed to their position by way of a Church vote. They are accountable to serve the Congregation according to biblical standards and in keeping with the principles of this Constitution.
- *Pastor-led:* In this model, the Senior Pastor is the spiritual leader of the Church and is responsible to see that the Staff and Congregation promote the Church’s purposes and vision. All Staff, paid and volunteer, are accountable to the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor is accountable to the Elder Board.
- *Elder-governed:* The Elder Board governs the Church according to policies (see below regarding “policy-based”). The Elder Board oversees the entire Church and its ministries. The Elder Board delegates ministry leadership to the Senior Pastor and his Staff and relies upon the Deacon Board for other important functions.
- *Deacon-served:* The Deacon Board assists the Elders in achieving the mission of the Church through practical ministries of caring for the people of the Congregation and handling the management of our facilities, personnel policies, and financial matters.
- *Policy-based:* The Senior Pastor, Elder Board, and Deacon Board function in accordance with the Church’s Constitution and policies. These policies govern the ministries and operations of the Church, including how we will seek to carry out our purposes and vision, the responsibilities and expectations of the Senior Pastor and Elder Board, and the Elder Board-Senior Pastor relationship.

## ARTICLE I

### NAME

The name of this Church shall be the *North Shore Community Baptist Church* of Massachusetts.

## ARTICLE II

### PURPOSE

The purpose of North Shore Community Baptist Church is to glorify God by establishing people in community (fellowship), encouraging Christ-like maturity (discipleship), equipping people for ministry (service), extending God's kingdom (outreach), and exalting Him in worship.

## ARTICLE III

### CHURCH COVENANT

Having received Jesus Christ as our Savior and confessed Him as Lord in baptism, we do now joyfully covenant together to unite with the family of Christ here at North Shore Community Baptist Church. We do, therefore, in His strength agree:

1. That by God's grace we will seek to protect the unity of our Church by acting in love toward one another, engaging in edifying conversation, and following our leaders;
2. That we will share in the responsibility of our Church by praying for its growth, welcoming those who visit, and pursuing Christ-like character;
3. That we will seek to serve in the ministry of our Church by discovering our gifts, being equipped to serve, and developing a servant's heart;
4. That we will seek to support the testimony of our Church by attending faithfully, living a godly life, and giving regularly;
5. That we will seek to participate in the outreach of our Church by sharing the gospel, caring for others, and supporting the advance of God's kingdom here and abroad.

## ARTICLE IV AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We affirm the following statements of faith from Converge Worldwide (formerly the Baptist General Conference):

1. **THE WORD OF GOD** – We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct [e.g., 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21].
2. **THE TRINITY** – We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons, that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption [e.g., Matthew 28:19; John 1:14; 16:5-13].
3. **GOD THE FATHER** – We believe in God, the Father, an infinite personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men [humanity], that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ [e.g., John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 1:1-3].
4. **JESUS CHRIST** – We believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth [e.g., John 17:5; Ephesians 1:2-3; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-19; Hebrews 7:22-25].
5. **THE HOLY SPIRIT** – We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide [e.g. John 14:26; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2:22].
6. **REGENERATION** – We believe that all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit [e.g., John 1:12-13; 3:3; Acts 2:38; Titus 3:5].
7. **THE CHURCH** – We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work and fellowship.<sup>1</sup> We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world [e.g., Matthew 16:16-18; Ephesians 2:19-22].
8. **CHRISTIAN CONDUCT** – We believe that Christians should live for the glory of God and the well-being of others; that their conduct should be blameless before the world; that they should be faithful stewards of their possessions; and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others the full stature of maturity in Christ [e.g., Ephesians 2:10; 2 Peter 1:3-7].

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<sup>1</sup> We recognize as local churches other bodies who otherwise fit this definition, but whose belief and practice of baptism is different.

9. **THE ORDINANCES** – We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism and the Lord’s Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer into the name of the triune God.<sup>2</sup> We believe that the Lord’s Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ [e.g., Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 22:14-20].
10. **RELIGIOUS LIBERTY** – We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other [e.g., 1 Peter 2:13-15; James 4:12; Romans 14:4].
11. **THE LAST THINGS** – We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His Kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity [blessedness] of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked [e.g., Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 1:6-11; Revelation 20:11-15].

We affirm the following Statement on Marriage:

We believe that marriage has been created by God to join one man and one woman in a lifelong, exclusive relationship of mutual care, support, and intimacy and is the only legitimate context for sexual activity [e.g., Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:5-6; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 13:4].

We also affirm the following Statement on the Role of Women in Leadership:

In our church the spiritual gifts of women and men are to be recognized, developed, and used in numerous serving and teaching ministries, including, but not limited to small group leaders, counselors, worship service leaders, ministry team leaders, ushers, greeters, communion servers, and preaching.

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<sup>2</sup> Immersion is normative. There may be exceptions, such as those described in Article V, Section 1.

## ARTICLE V

### MEMBERSHIP

#### Section 1 – Qualifications

Persons confessing faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord of their lives, giving evidence of regeneration, being baptized following conversion, accepting the statement of faith, ministry direction, vision and covenant of the Church, having completed a membership class, shall be accepted into membership upon approval of the Board of Elders and later welcomed into the Church at any regular service.

In keeping with our Statement of Faith, it is the practice of this Church to baptize by immersion. Occasional exceptions may be made with the approval of the Board of Elders. An example of this might be in the case of a person with serious health problems.

We will also accept candidates into membership who come to us from a different tradition in which they have been baptized as believers using a form other than immersion if they are otherwise qualified.

#### Section 2 – Responsibilities

The responsibility for ministry belongs to the entire membership. Members prayerfully carry out the purposes and vision of the Church by using their spiritual gifts, contributing financially to the work of the Church and participating in its business and ministries.

The active members approve broad decisions for the Church and entrust leadership to the Senior Pastor, working with the Elders and Staff. Members honor and pray for the Staff and leaders of the Church, and serve with them in carrying out the ministries of the Church, while endeavoring to preserve its unity. Members vote on the following matters:

1. Election of the Elders and Deacons-at-large
2. The call of a Senior Pastor
3. Adoption of an annual budget
4. Election of Nominating, Audit, and Senior Pastor Search Committee members
5. The encumbrance of debt of real property
6. Amendments to the Constitution
7. Anything else that the Elders desire to bring to the Church

#### Section 3 – Removal

Members may be removed from the membership list by the Elders under any of the following circumstances:

1. A member may request in writing a letter of transfer of membership for the purpose of uniting with some other Church of like faith and practice; such letters shall be granted to members in good standing by the Elders.

2. Individuals may be removed from membership when our Church receives a letter, certificate, or other information indicating that they have become members of and/or begun regularly attending another Church.
3. It shall be the duty of the Elders to exercise positive action in the case of members who disregard their Covenant obligation, or who no longer agree with the Affirmation of Faith. Such action always has as its aim the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the Church, and the restoration and spiritual growth of the offender. It should be exercised under the guidance and in the spirit of such passages of Scripture as Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 18:15-17, and 2 Corinthians 2:5-11. When in any case the Elders are convinced that the member's status cannot be restored, they shall vote that the delinquent member be removed from membership.
4. When a member requests that his or her name be removed from membership and no charges have been brought against them, the Elders shall investigate and if they are satisfied that the person's membership cannot be restored, they shall vote to remove the individual's name from membership.
5. If upon inquiry by the Elders it is determined that a member has not participated in public worship for a period of six months or more without a valid reason, that member shall be considered inactive, without privilege of voting. Inactive members may be reinstated upon approval of the Elders. If upon further inquiry it is determined by the Elders that such people no longer choose to be affiliated with this Church, they will be removed from membership.

#### Section 4 – Affiliate Membership

Any person who is a student in a local seminary, college, trade school, high school, or in some other capacity which necessitates temporarily living away from a local Church, may become an Affiliate of this Church while retaining membership in another local body, upon vote of the Elders.

The Qualifications and Responsibilities for Affiliate Members are the same as those of regular members except for the following:

1. Affiliate Members cannot vote for encumbrance of debt of real property
2. Affiliate Members cannot serve as an Elder, Deacon or Pastor

An Affiliate shall be removed from membership under any the following circumstances (whichever occurs first):

1. Completion of the circumstance which necessitated living away from a local Church; or
2. Any of the Removal reasons listed for regular members.

The Affiliate Member may request to become a full member at any time.

## ARTICLE VI THE BOARD OF ELDERS

### Section 1 – Qualifications and Makeup

The government of this Church shall reside in the membership, but shall be implemented by the Board of Elders (Elders). The Elders will be Church members and men who fulfill the qualifications for office stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The Elders will consist of a minimum of seven (7) members, unless there are not seven qualified persons able or willing to serve, in which case the number of Elders will reflect those qualified to serve. The seven members will include the Elder Chair, Senior Pastor, and additional Elders at-large.

The Elder Chair will serve as the moderator of all of the business meetings of the Church. In the case of his absence, the Vice Chair of the Elder board will serve as the moderator. In the case of both the Elder Chair and the Vice Chair of the Elder board's absence, the Clerk will serve as the moderator.

Normally, there will be at least five (5) Elders-at-large. One of these will be chosen by the Elders to serve as secretary in order to take accurate minutes of meetings. The secretary of the Elders will also serve as Clerk of the Church. The Clerk will keep the minutes of all business meetings of the Church, oversee all official/legal Church correspondence, and keep them in good order.

The Senior Pastor will represent the Church Staff as a voting member of the Elders and the only member of the Church Staff on the Board of Elders.

### Section 2 – Selection and Structure

All Elders, except the Senior Pastor, are elected by the congregation for three-year terms. The Elder Chair is elected by the Church to serve as both the Chair of the Elders and Moderator of the Church.

The Nominating Committee may nominate an individual for a shorter term to balance the number of terms expiring each year. An Elder's term begins on the date he is elected by the congregation and ends after three years at the appropriate Annual Meeting. Elders may serve a maximum of six consecutive years on the Elder Board, after which they must be out of office for at least one full year before they are eligible to serve again.

The Elders shall elect one of its members to be Vice Chair of the Elders each year to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the Elder Chair in the absence of the Elder Chair.

### Section 3 – Responsibilities

The purpose of the Elders on behalf of the congregation is to see to it that the Church carries out its purposes and observes biblical standards. The specific task of the Elders is to ensure the implementation of its primary and occasional responsibilities, which include the following:

#### Primary Responsibilities:

1. *Praying*: The Elders will pray for the congregation, the Church Staff, and themselves. In keeping with the teaching of James 5:14, they will also offer a ministry of prayer for members who are sick.
2. *Shepherding*: As shepherds, Elders will seek to joyfully care for the flock by practicing hospitality, engaging in a teaching ministry, biblical counseling, and visitation. (1 Peter 5:1-4; Heb.13:17).

3. *Overseeing*: Elders are charged with overseeing the spiritual life of the Church, including its unity and peace, essential biblical doctrine, ministry direction, the Senior Pastor's leadership, the ministry of the Deacons and the Church's financial condition.
4. *Deciding*: The Elders will produce, authorize and make available overall written Church policies. These policies will be consistent with and never contradict the Church Constitution. The Elders shall be responsible for producing policies, including but not limited to the following areas in order to guide its decision-making:
  - a. The policies regarding the Church's purposes and vision: what they are and how they will be carried out.
  - b. The policies governing the Elders themselves: how they will execute their responsibilities.
  - c. The policies governing the Senior Pastor's job and his expectations and limits.
  - d. The policies governing the Elders' relationship to the Senior Pastor.In addition, the Elders shall make certain that the Deacons and Ministry Areas are developing and updating their own policies, which the Elders may address, if only to grant their approval.
5. *Advising*: The Elders will provide the Senior Pastor with input and practical advice.

Occasional Responsibilities:

6. *Arbitrating Disputes*: The Elders will serve as arbitrators in disputes as necessary, including disputes with the Senior Pastor, and will address unwarranted criticism.
7. *Membership*: The Elders are responsible for overseeing the process by which individuals become Church members, including interviewing and accepting candidates into membership.
8. *Disciplining*: The Elders are responsible for seeing that discipline occurs in keeping with Matthew 18:15-17.
9. *Ordaining/Licensing*: The Elders are responsible for approving the licensing and ordination of individuals to the gospel ministry.
10. *Overseeing the Annual Budget*: The Elders are responsible for establishing and overseeing the process of formulating the Annual Budget.
11. *Communication*: The Elders will meet regularly with the Deacons for the purpose of receiving suggestions and of encouraging them in their ministries.
12. *Selection*: The Elders will give orientation to the Nominating Committee regarding the selection of Elders, Deacons-at-large, Audit and Nominating Committee members and, when necessary, a Senior Pastor Search Committee.
13. *Financial Matters*: The Elders will have the right to authorize expenditures not included in the budget of the Church in cumulative amounts not exceeding three percent (3%) of the Church's approved annual budget. They will make recommendations to the Church on any unbudgeted expenditure requests in amounts exceeding three percent (3%) of the Church's approved annual budget.

14. *Legal Functions:* The Elders and Treasurer will perform all of the statutory functions of the Board of Trustees of a religious association incorporated under Massachusetts law. The Elder Chair will serve as President of the Church for legal purposes and the Vice Chair as Vice President. The President, Vice President, and Treasurer shall have authority to sign legal documents on behalf of the Church, except that only the Treasurer and such other individuals as shall be appointed from time to time by the Finance Committee with approval of the Deacons (cf. Article IX, Section 2, Point 1, Part c), shall have authority to sign checks on behalf of the Church.

#### Section 4 – Termination

Resignations of Elders, including the Senior Pastor, shall be submitted in writing to the Elder Chair or, in the case of the Elder Chair, to the Vice Chair, and be effective on the date specified in the resignation. In the case of a resignation by the Elder Chair, the Vice Chair shall become the acting chair until such time as the Church elects another Chair.

Should the relation between the congregation and an Elder, including the Senior Pastor, become detrimental to the welfare of the Church, and efforts at restoration under the guidance of such Scripture as Matthew 18:15-17 have failed, the remaining Elders shall have authority to consider this matter and to make a recommendation to the membership at a duly called Business Meeting. The service of this Elder or Senior Pastor shall normally conclude immediately following a vote for dismissal by an affirmative vote of three-fourths (75%) of the active members both present and voting.

## ARTICLE VII

### THE BOARD OF DEACONS

#### Section 1 – Qualifications and Makeup

The members of the Board of Deacons (Deacons) will be Church members (men or women) who fulfill the qualifications for office stated in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. They will provide leadership under the Elders. They will serve the Church and the Elders by engaging in practical ministries of compassion and administration, thus enabling the Elders to concentrate on their responsibilities.

#### Section 2 – Selection and Structure

The Deacons will consist of a minimum of eight (8) members, unless there are not eight qualified persons able or willing to serve, in which case the number of Deacons will reflect those qualified to serve. The voting members of the Board of Deacons will include the Deacon Chair, the chairs of three (3) standing committees (the Finance Chair, Personnel Chair and Facilities Chair), and the Deacons-at-large. The Chair of the Deacons will lead and direct the Deacons to accomplish their responsibilities.

The Congregation shall normally elect a minimum of four (4) members to serve as Deacons-at-large for three-year terms. The Elders shall appoint four (4) members to serve on the Deacon Board for three-year terms: the Deacon Chair and those Deacons who serve as the Chairs of the Finance, Personnel and Facilities Committees.

The Elders and Nominating Committee may nominate an individual for a shorter term to balance the number of terms expiring each year. A Deacon's term begins on the date of the Annual Meeting at which he/she is elected by the Congregation or appointed by the Elders and ends after three years at the appropriate Annual Meeting. Deacons may serve a maximum of six consecutive years on the Deacon Board, after which they must be out of office for at least one full year before they are eligible to serve again.

The Deacons shall elect one of their members as the Vice Chair of the Deacon Board each year to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the Deacon Chair in the absence of the Deacon Chair.

### Section 3 – Responsibilities

The purpose of the Deacons is to assist the Elders in achieving the mission of the Church. The specific task of the Deacons is to ensure the implementation of its primary responsibilities, which include the following:

1. *Praying*: The Deacons will pray for the Elders, congregation, and themselves.
2. *Serving*: The Deacons will assist the Elders in caring compassionately for the flock by practicing hospitality; visitation; caring for widows, the homebound and those with ongoing needs; overseeing community care ministries, including kitchen related functions, the Benevolent Fund and meals ministry; overseeing policies regarding finances, personnel, and facilities; and engaging in other practical ministries thought to be of service to the Elders and the Church (Acts 6:1-7).
3. *Monitoring*: The Deacons will also assist the Elders by monitoring the practical and physical needs of the Church body, the Church's financial condition, facility needs, and personnel needs.
4. *Deciding*: The Deacons will assist the Elders by producing written Church policy in the following areas in order to guide decision-making:
  - a. Finances: Policies ensuring that appropriate systems and financial controls are in place, including the use of memorial contributions and the Benevolent Fund. The Deacons may assign the task of writing and updating these policies to the Finance Committee.
  - b. Personnel: Policies pertaining to employment, wages and benefits, holidays, vacations, etc. The Deacons may assign the task of writing and updating these policies to the Personnel Committee.
  - c. Facilities: Policies addressing such areas as building usage, weddings, funerals, medical emergencies, cancellation of services due to weather issues, etc. The Deacons may assign the task of writing and updating these policies to the Facilities Committee.
5. *Advising*: The Deacons will advise the Elders on a variety of matters, including annual ministry goals and a proposed annual budget. The Deacons will report to the Elders on their areas of involvement in order to receive the Elder's encouragement, support and direction.

### Section 4 – Termination

Resignations of Deacons appointed by the Elders, including the Deacon Chair, shall be submitted in writing to the Elder Chair and be effective on the date specified in the resignation.

Resignations of Deacons elected by the Church shall be submitted in writing to the Deacon Chair and be effective on the date specified in the resignation.

Should the relation between a Deacon and the Congregation become detrimental to the welfare of the Church, and efforts at restoration under the guidance of such Scripture as Matthew 18:15-17 have failed, the remaining Deacons shall have authority to consider this matter and make a recommendation to the Elders that the Deacon be removed from office. In the case of an elected Deacon, the remaining Deacons shall have authority to make a recommendation to the membership at a duly called Business Meeting that the Deacon be removed from office. The service of any Deacon shall normally conclude immediately following a vote for dismissal by a majority of Elders (in the case of an appointed Deacon)

or by an affirmative vote of three-fourths (75%) of the active members both present and voting (in the case of an elected Deacon).

## ARTICLE VIII THE TREASURER

### Section 1 – Qualifications and Selection

The Treasurer will be a Church member (man or woman) who fulfills the qualifications for office stated in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The role of Treasurer may be filled by the Finance Chair or by another qualified individual. In the event that the Treasurer role is not filled by the Finance Chair, this individual shall be appointed by the Board of Elders. The Treasurer's term begins on the date when he/she is appointed by the Elders and may be up to three years. It is helpful, but not required to try to appoint the Treasurer on or around the appropriate Annual Meeting when other officers are regularly voted on or appointed. A Treasurer may serve a maximum of six consecutive years, after which they must be out of office for at least one full year before they are eligible to serve again.

### Section 2 – Responsibilities

It is expected that the Treasurer will work closely with the Finance Chair, other committee members and any finance related staff employed by the church. The Treasurer is responsible for:

1. Serving as an officer of the Church as a religious association incorporated under Massachusetts law (cf. Article VI, Section 3, Point 14),
2. Serving as the primary check signer on behalf of the Church.
3. Overseeing financial recordkeeping functions as determined jointly by the Finance Chair and Treasurer.

### Section 3 – Termination

Resignation of the Treasurer shall be submitted in writing to the Elder Chair and be effective on the date specified in the resignation.

In the case that the Treasurer is a different person than the Chair of the Finance Committee, if the relation between the Treasurer and the Chair of the Finance Committee, the Elders or the Congregation become detrimental to the welfare of the Church, and efforts at restoration under the guidance of such Scripture as Matthew 18:15-17 have failed, the Pastor and the Chair of the Elder Board together with the Chair of the Finance Committee shall have authority to consider this matter and make a recommendation to the Elders that the Treasurer be removed from office. The service of the Treasurer shall normally conclude immediately following a vote for dismissal by a majority of Elders.

## ARTICLE IX

### COMMITTEES

#### Section 1 – Qualifications and Makeup

There shall be a minimum of five (5) standing committees: Finance, Personnel, Facilities, Nominating, and Audit. When necessary, a Senior Pastor Search Committee shall be created as an ad hoc committee. Additional committees shall be formed as the Deacons, with the approval of the Elders, deem necessary. Chairs of standing committees shall be Church members. All other committee members may include Church members and active nonmembers whose beliefs and practices are consistent with those of the Church.

1. With the exception of Nominating and Audit Committees, Chairs shall be selected by the Elders and reaffirmed in that position by the Elder Board every three (3) years.
2. With the exception of the Nominating and Audit Committees, members of standing committees shall be recommended by Committee Chairs and approved by the Deacons to serve two (2)-year terms.

#### Section 2 – Committees that Report to the Deacons

1. Finance Committee: The Finance Committee will consist of at least three people including: the Finance Chair and the Treasurer (if the role is not being filled by the Finance Chair). Additional committee members shall be approved by the Deacons from the congregation. The tenure of committee members selected by the Deacons will be the same as any standing committee. The Finance Committee will assist the Elders and Deacons in fulfilling the following responsibilities:
  - a. Reviewing monthly financial transactions to ensure the funds of the Church are being handled in accordance with the wishes of the congregation as expressed by the annual Church budget.
  - b. Assisting the Elders as requested in creating an annual Church budget for the congregation's approval at the annual business meeting.
  - c. Designating, with approval by the Deacons, the individuals who may be authorized to sign checks in addition to the Treasurer. These individuals shall be members of the church in good standing.
  - d. Rendering to the Treasurer and Elders financial reports as requested and shall present an annual financial report to the Elders and the Church.
  - e. Ensuring that auditors selected by the Church shall audit the Finance Committee's reports and records at least annually.
  - f. Establishing and implementing financial policies.

2. Personnel Committee: The Personnel Committee will consist of the Chair and at least two (2) additional committee members approved by the Deacons from the congregation. The qualifications and tenure of committee members shall be the same as any standing committee. The Personnel Committee will assist the Elders and Deacons in fulfilling the following responsibilities:
  - a. Assisting the Senior Pastor in forming personnel policies affecting the Staff and creating and managing the Personnel Policy Manual.
  - b. Reviewing the compensation of all Church Staff annually, and recommending changes in compensation for the following year.
  - c. Assisting the Senior Pastor in the hiring process for other Church Staff, including the details of their compensation.
  - d. Assisting the Senior Pastor in creating and revising job descriptions of Church Staff.
  - e. Assisting the Senior Pastor and Elders in modifying staff terms of employment or job descriptions when cash flow is problematic or ministry goals and objectives change.
  
3. Facilities Committee: The Facilities Committee will consist of the Chair and at least two (2) additional committee members approved by Deacons from the congregation. The qualifications and tenure of committee members shall be the same as any standing committee. The Facilities Committee will assist the Deacons in fulfilling the following responsibilities:
  - a. Overseeing the maintenance of the building, including insurance, electrical, heating, landscaping, and snow removal.
  - b. Establishing and implementing policies that address such areas as building usage, weddings, funerals, and medical emergencies.

### Section 3 – Committees that Report to the Congregation

Nominating Committee: The Nominating Committee will be made up of seven (7) members: five (5) members chosen from the congregation, one Elder appointed by the Elders, and the Senior Pastor as a non-voting member. The qualifications of members shall be the same as the qualifications for Deacons. Members shall serve a two (2)-year term. Unlike other standing committee members, those serving on the Nominating Committee are not eligible to serve two consecutive terms. Terms shall be staggered so that not all committee members are ending their terms at the same time.

The Nominating Committee will prepare a ballot for Church elections, including a ballot due to vacancies in elected positions between Church elections. It shall elect its own Chair.

Audit Committee: The Audit Committee shall consist of at least three individuals elected by the congregation for a two (2)-year term. The Audit Committee will conduct audits of the Church's financial records, report results of all audits to the Elder Board and membership, monitor the Church's financial processes, and make suitable recommendations to the Elder Board, the Deacon Board and the Finance Committee concerning financial procedures it considers advisable.

Search Committee: Whenever the position of Senior Pastor becomes vacant, a Senior Pastor Search Committee shall be formed. The Search Committee of seven (7) shall be comprised of three (3) members of the Elder Board and four (4) non-staff members of the Church selected by the Elders. All seven of the selected members must be approved by the Congregation at a called business meeting. The Search Committee shall meet and select its own Chair.

The Search Committee shall recommend one candidate at a time to the Elders for approval, and then to the Church. The voting on the candidate by the Church shall take place at a meeting of the Congregation for that purpose, in which case at least two-week's prior notice shall be given. The election of the Senior Pastor shall be by secret ballot and an affirmative vote of at least eighty-five percent (85%) of active members present and voting shall be necessary to extend the call.

#### Section 4 – Termination

1. Resignations of Standing Committee Chairs appointed by the Elders shall be submitted in writing to the Elder Chair and be effective on the date specified in the resignation.
2. Resignations of Standing Committee members selected by the Deacons shall be submitted in writing to the Deacon Chair and be effective on the date specified in the resignation.
3. Should the relation between a standing committee member and the congregation become detrimental to the welfare of the Church, and efforts at restoration under the guidance of such Scripture as Matthew 18:15-17 fail, the appropriate board (Elders or Deacons) shall have authority to consider this matter and to remove the person from office: the Elder Board in the case of a standing committee chair; the Deacon Board in the case of a standing committee member selected by the Deacons. The service of this standing committee member shall normally conclude immediately following an affirmative vote for dismissal by the Elders (in the case of an appointed standing committee Chair) or by an affirmative vote of the Deacons (in the case of a selected standing committee member).

## ARTICLE X

### THE CHURCH STAFF

#### Section 1 – Makeup

The term Church Staff, as used in this Constitution, includes both employees and volunteers appointed to roles designated by the Elders as staff roles. The Church Staff shall consist of the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastoral Staff, Ministerial Staff, and Support Staff.

1. The Senior Pastor oversees the Church Staff, which consists of qualified men and women who help carry out the Church's vision, purposes and annual ministry objectives.
2. Associate Pastoral Staff members are called to assist the Senior Pastor in giving leadership to the broader ministries of the Church.
3. Ministerial Staff members assist the Senior Pastor in giving leadership to specific ministries of the Church.
4. Support Staff members assist the Senior Pastor in fulfilling specific responsibilities that support the ministries of the Church.

## Section 2 – Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor shall fulfill all of the qualifications for Elders as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 and serve as a voting member of the Board of Elders.

1. General Responsibilities: The Senior Pastor will:
  - a. Be the principal spiritual leader of the Church.
  - b. Provide for the administration of the ordinances of the Church.
  - c. Provide for biblical teaching, congregational prayer, and worship.
  - d. Participate in the visitation ministry of the Church.
  - e. Faithfully and diligently work toward the establishment and the accomplishment of the objectives of the Church.
  - f. Model a personal pursuit of Christ-likeness to the congregation.
  - g. Provide leadership to the Church as it seeks to minister in its community and to reach out into the broader world with the message of Jesus Christ.
  - h. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in consultation with the Elders, serve as the primary preacher for the Church.
  - i. Provide for the training and development of leaders, including potential Elders.
  - j. Represent the Staff of the Church on the Board of Elders.
  
2. Church Staff Leadership: The Senior Pastor will:
  - a. Oversee all Church Staff and, with input from the Elders, determine the Staff's organizational structure with lines of leadership and responsibility.
  - b. Provide counsel, encouragement, and discipline for the Church Staff, so as to assist in the accomplishment of the objectives established for each Staff member.
  - c. Conduct regular Staff meetings.
  - d. Be assisted by the Deacons and Personnel Committee in the establishment of personnel policies for all Church Staff.
  - e. Ensure that the performance of all Church Staff is evaluated annually.
  - f. Be responsible for the oversight of the Church Staff and have the authority to hire or terminate any Staff member with the approval of the Elders and in accordance with established policies.
  
3. Evaluation

The Elders, as part of their responsibility in providing guidance to the Senior Pastor in the spiritual oversight and administration (conduct) of the Church, shall annually appraise his ministry by performing a written performance evaluation.

### Section 3 – Other Church Staff

#### 1. Qualifications and Calling

All Church Staff shall be individuals who demonstrate both the appropriate spiritual maturity and competence to serve in their area of responsibility, as described in their job descriptions.

Church Staff position may be created, modified, or abolished by vote of the Elders upon the recommendation of the Senior Pastor. When a Staff position is created, or becomes vacant, the Senior Pastor shall inform the Elders of the search process that will be followed and receive the approval of the Elders. It is the responsibility of the Senior Pastor to ensure the position is filled in a timely manner.

#### 2. Responsibilities and Authority

The Elders shall approve a written job description for each Church Staff position, specifying responsibilities and supervision.

#### 3. Evaluation

The Senior Pastor or supervisor will conduct an annual written review of all Church Staff and report back to the Elders.

#### 4. Termination

The termination of a Church Staff member, either voluntarily or for cause, shall follow the procedures outlined in the Church's Personnel Manual.

## ARTICLE XI

### MINISTRY AREAS AND TEAMS

#### Section 1 – Ministry Areas

1. The Ministry Areas will be determined by the Senior Pastor and Elders to carry out specific aspects of the Church's Purpose Statement.
2. Under the direction of the Senior Pastor, Church Staff members will lead Ministry Areas.

#### Section 2 – Ministry Teams

1. With the support of the Senior Pastor, a Ministry Area leader may establish a Ministry Team(s) to assist the leader in carrying out the Ministry Area purpose and goals.
2. Ministry Teams may include Church members and active nonmembers whose beliefs and practices are consistent with those of the Church.

## ARTICLE XII

### MEETINGS

#### Section 1 – Meetings for Worship and Teaching

1. The Church shall meet for worship and the preaching of the Gospel on Sundays and at other times as the Elders may decide.
2. The Church shall also meet each Sunday for the study and teaching of the Bible and at other times as the Elders may decide.
3. The Church shall meet for the observance of the Lord's Supper upon the first Sunday of the month, or at such other times as the Elders may decide.

#### Section 2 –Business Meetings

1. Special Business Meetings may be called by the Elders or by the members of the Church through a petition signed by at least twenty (20) members.
2. The time, place, and purpose of Special Business Meetings will be announced to the Church in a suitable manner and as far in advance as is feasible by using its official methods of communication.
3. Agenda items requiring a vote of the Congregation shall normally be communicated to the Congregation on two (2) consecutive Sunday mornings prior to the meeting. In emergency situations, communication will occur as far in advance as possible.
4. Agenda items must be communicated clearly enough to allow members to understand the nature of the issues being decided.
5. Business requiring immediate attention may be brought before the Church at any Business Meeting of the Church. If a member makes a motion on any topic not listed on the published agenda, the motion may be seconded, but must be tabled for at least thirty (30) days to allow time for consideration by the Elders and Staff.
6. The tabled motion will be included on the agenda for a Congregational Meeting that must take place no later than ninety (90) days after the motion is made.
7. The Annual Business Meeting of the Church will be held during the third full week of January, with the date to be determined by the Elder Board.
8. The minimum agenda for this meeting will include the election of leaders, the vote for adoption of the annual budget, a review of the Church's previous year through the presentation of reports by the Senior Pastor and the Elders, and other business as is proper to come before said meeting.

#### Section 3 – Quorum

Fifteen percent (15%) of the current membership who are active members and in good standing and qualified voters shall constitute a quorum. The quorum requirement shall be twenty-five percent (25%) in the specific instances of calling or termination of a Senior Pastor, the Annual Meeting, and any meeting whose actions will commit the Church to expenditures in excess of \$50,000 or 3% of the annual budget (whichever is less). A majority of such members present and voting shall be sufficient to decide any question presented unless explicitly stated by these By-Laws.

#### Section 4 – Qualification of Voters

All matters pertaining to the purchase, sale, or mortgaging of property shall be voted on only by active members who are in good standing and at least 18 years of age. On all other matters, members who are in good standing and at least 15 years of age are entitled to vote.

#### Section 5 – Elections

The Elders will give orientation to the Nominating Committee each year regarding the selection of the Church's elected leaders.

##### Election of Elders and Deacons-at-Large

1. The Nominating Committee will solicit names of candidates from current Elders and Deacons, the Staff and members of the congregation to serve the Church as newly elected Elders and Deacons-at-large. The Nominating Committee will seek to determine who has the respect of the congregation, as well as the character, competency, and chemistry to serve the Church.
2. After this informal screening, the Nominating Committee will ask individuals to enter the process of becoming an Elder or Deacon-at-large.
3. If no concerns surface, the Nominating Committee will publish the candidates' names and biographies to the congregation and solicit feedback for no less than two (2) weeks.
4. Then, the Nominating Committee will prepare a ballot for members to vote on candidates at the Church's Annual Business Meeting.
5. The Nominating Committee will post the ballot according to the official methods of communication not less than four (4) weeks prior to the election. This communication of the ballot is for informational purposes and no changes will be made to the ballot during this period.
6. The ballot will identify nominees, including incumbents, and clearly indicate the term of office for Elder or Deacon-at-large.
7. An affirmative vote of three-fourths (75%) of the active members present and voting shall be necessary to elect Elders, the Elder Chair, and Deacons-at-large. The vote shall be by written ballot.
8. At a subsequent service of the Church, newly elected Elders and all Deacons will be commissioned for their responsibilities. Those Elders already in office will lay hands on the new leaders and, by means of prayer, commission them to their tasks.

##### Election of Nominating and Audit Committee

1. The Nominating Committee will invite the members of the Church, Elders and Deacons, and Staff to recommend possible nominees for service on the Nominating and Audit Committees. The Nominating Committee will give serious consideration to each individual recommended in this manner, but will not be obligated to place such individuals on the ballot.
2. All candidates must agree to place their names on the ballot in order to be eligible for election.
3. The Nominating Committee will prepare a ballot for members to vote on candidates at the Church's Annual Business Meeting and at other meetings when there is an election.

4. The Nominating Committee will post the ballot according to the official methods of communication not less than four weeks prior to the election.
5. An affirmative vote of three-fourths (75%) of the active members present and voting shall be necessary to elect committee members. The vote shall be by written ballot.

## ARTICLE XIII

### CHURCH YEAR AND AFFILIATION

#### Section 1 – Church Year

The fiscal year of the Church shall begin the first day of January and close on the last day of December.

#### Section 2 - Affiliation

The Church will be a member of Converge Northeast and Converge Worldwide/Baptist General Conference.

## ARTICLE XIV

### AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended at any duly called Business Meeting of the Church by a three-fourths (75%) vote of those active members present and voting.

## ARTICLE XV

### DIVISION AND DISSOLUTION

**Division:** In the event of a division of the Church, the property of this Church shall belong to the group representing the largest portion of the Church membership, which is loyal to the Constitution. Should any controversy arise as to whether such loyalty exists, the question shall be submitted to the Board of Trustees of Converge Northeast, and its decision shall be final.

**Dissolution:** Should conditions arise when, for any reason, the Church work cannot continue, seventy-five percent (75%) of members present and voting may decide to dissolve and transfer assets, subject to debt repayment, to another ministry which is supportive of the Church's Statement of Faith. If a seventy-five percent (75%) vote to transfer assets to a particular ministry is not possible, assets will be handed over to Converge Northeast.

## ARTICLE XVI

### RULES OF ORDER

The rules contained in Roberts Rules of Order shall govern the business proceedings of this Church in all cases where they are not inconsistent with this Constitution.

**APPENDIX  
REVISION HISTORY**

DATE	PURPOSE
June 2014	Adoption of new constitution
January 2017	Revision to separate out Treasurer duties from Finance Chair duties so that the Treasurer and Finance Chair roles can be filled by either one or two people. Revision to state explicitly that the Elder Chair must be elected by at 75% vote of the church. Revision to provide for a business meeting moderator in the absence of the Elder Chair. General formatting and consistency updates.