

Northbridge Church Constitution

Article I - Name

The name of this church is Northbridge Church.

Article II – Mission, Vision, Values

Mission

The mission of Christ's Church universal consists of preaching and teaching, announcing and testifying, making disciples and bearing witness. At Northbridge our sole purpose is to glorify God. Our mission is to fulfill the Church's mandate to glorify God by making and equipping disciples of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20).

Vision

The unique vision for Northbridge Church is to reconnect people to the church, in order to accomplish the ultimate goal of connecting people with Jesus. Our aim includes reaching the unbeliever, the disconnected Christian and the passive Christian to bring them into the loving embrace of Christian community in order to bring them into a saving and redemptive relationship with Jesus, our Savior and Lord.

Values

In order to carry out this mission and vision and to make Christ known in all places and for His glory, we will commit to, in everything we do, pursue five values. We strive to display each of these values, believing that they position us to faithfully fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40).

Humility

A life of humility demonstrates our understanding of our sinfulness compared to God's holiness. By striving for humility, we display our desire to imitate Jesus in our daily lives, and that we value others above ourselves.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 1 Peter 5:6

Prayerfulness

A life of prayer humbly displays our dependence on God in every area of life. By turning to God in prayer with our needs, concerns, and joys, we recognize His power over all things. We believe that when we pray, we will hear from God.

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
Philippians 4:6*

Spirit-led

A life that is Spirit-led allows the believer to joyfully participate in the plans of God, in the community in which they have been placed. By walking in the Spirit, we evaluate our actions and adjust them to follow God's will. We believe that when we humbly and prayerfully seek God the Spirit will lead us to know His will.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Romans 8:14

Transparency

A life of transparency lives before God and others with nothing to hide. By seeking transparency, we are approachable and mindful of our inability to see our own shortcomings.

*Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.
Ephesians 4:25*

Sacrificial

A life of sacrifice will joyfully give of oneself to focus on loving others. We display love for one another and communicate the gospel to others by selflessly sacrificing our agenda to reach others.

*No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends.
John 15:4*

Article III - Statement of Beliefs

The Holy Bible is the basis of our faith. The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the "Baptist Faith and Message" as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000 as the guide for church membership.

Article IV - Church Governance

Jesus Christ is the sole Head of the Church and has absolute power and authority over all that it is and does. As the Creator of all things and as the One to whom all authority was given in heaven and on earth, Christ alone has the power to give authority to the leaders of His body, the Church.

Section 1 - Elders

Jesus Christ, as the Head of the Church, has authorized the office of Elder (shepherd) to govern the local church. Northbridge Church is led by a plurality of Elders. Elders are to be biblically qualified men who are members of Northbridge Church able to lead God's people with an attitude of love, humility and service. Northbridge Church Elders are comprised of Pastor Elders and Lay Elders.

The responsibilities of all Elders shall be to Lead, to Teach and to Shepherd:

Lead

- Ensure that the church is properly governed
- Ensure the property, business, and affairs of the church are properly carried out.
- Ensure that the ordinances of communion and baptism are administered
- Administer church discipline
- Be a servant leader and a Christian to be emulated

Teach

- Preaching and teaching sound doctrine from God's Word
- Judge doctrinal issues, and protect the church from doctrinal error
- Provide spiritual guidance and direction to individuals and small groups

Shepherd

- Provide spiritual watch care and counsel
- Provide spiritual discipleship and mentoring for believers
- Pray for and minister to members of the congregation
- Minister to members of the congregation

Pastor Elders

A Pastor-Elder is an Elder who is an Elder by virtue of being a Pastor chosen by the congregation with a defined job description (see the procedure found under Article VII). A Pastor is typically a compensated contractor. A Pastor Elder will be a full member of the Elder board and is not subject to the three-year term limit. A Pastor Elder can step back from being an Elder voluntarily or through a vote by the Elders for a time or permanently.

Lay Elders

A lay-Elder is an Elder who is elected from members within the congregation without compensation. A lay Elder is elected for a three-year term and can be re-elected for a second term. After the second term, He can be re-elected again after a one year sabbatical.

Lay Elder Selection

According to I Timothy 3:1, an individual may aspire to the office of Elder. If an individual is recognized by the Elders as potentially being biblically qualified to be an Elder, at a time determined by the Elders, an Elders selection Committee shall thoroughly examine the individual to determine if he meets the scriptural qualifications for the office of Elder. If the individual is deemed qualified to shepherd, oversee and lead the Congregation, he shall be recommended to the membership.

Members shall be given three weeks to carefully consider and pray about the appointment and to raise objections. Objections must be written and presented to the Elders who shall investigate them before deciding on the merits of the objection. If the objection is found to be without merit, the candidate for Elder shall be recommended to the membership for affirmation by written ballot at the next regularly scheduled congregational meeting. If the objection is legitimate, the proposed appointment will be withdrawn, and the congregation advised of the decision.

Lay Elder Removal

If an individual has a serious complaint against an Elder or a Pastor, he/she must first, if appropriate, confront the Elder/Pastor (see Article V Dissolving the Call for more information). If the complaint cannot be resolved, then the individual shall submit a signed letter detailing the complaint/ allegation to the Elders. The Elders shall investigate the complaint/ allegation in keeping with I Timothy 5:19. If the complaint/ allegation is found to have merit, the Elders shall require the Elder to

step down. A general statement explaining the basis for the decision shall be provided to the congregation.

Section 2 - Church Officers

Executive Pastor or Church Secretary

It shall be the duty of the Executive Pastor/Church Secretary to record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the Elders or the church. This person shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution shall be available for all church members.

The Church Secretary shall be selected by the Elders and will serve at the direction of the Elders. The Executive Pastor or Church Secretary may be the same person as Church Treasurer at the will of the Elders.

Church Treasurer and Finance Team

The treasurer shall be nominated by the Elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year. He/she will be the Head of the Financial Team which can include Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Bookkeeper and additional persons as is necessary and approved by the Elders.

The treasurer and by delegation the Finance Team, shall be responsible for the following areas:

- Establish proper accounting procedures to ensure that all financial activities (receipts, disbursements, transfers, etc.) are done according to good and accurate accounting practices.
- Ensure that funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate.
- Ensure Elders, Ministry Leaders and other persons assigned control of budget line items receive sufficiently detailed and timely status updates to effectively oversee the areas of to which they have been assigned.
- Present reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at members' meetings.
- Ensure adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church.

- Advise elders on financial matters.

Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall be a member of Northbridge Church and be selected by the Elders. The term of office for this position is three years (unless he/she is filling a partial term). The person holding the position may be re-elected for a second three-year term. He/she shall be responsible for:

- Establishing and implementing procedures for counting or overseeing the counting of contributions.
- Ensuring that counting takes place in a timely manner.
- Making or ensuring that bank deposits are made.
- Keeping a careful record of all receipts and issuing receipts to donors.
- Create and distribute end of year giving statements.

Bookkeeper

The bookkeeper shall be a member of Northbridge Church and be selected by the Elders. The term of office for this position is at the discretion of the Elders. He/she shall be responsible for:

- Preparing checks for signature by the Treasurer.
- Paying vendors for services rendered.
- Maintaining accurate records and documentation.
- Assist Treasurer in producing Financial reports for the Elders and congregation.

Deacons and Committees

The Elders shall at their discretion appoint leaders and establish committees as is necessary for the execution of ministries and proper management of the church. The bible used the title of deacon as one who serves within the church in this capacity. The Elders will make these appointments after considering the candidate against the qualifications for this role in 1 Timothy 3:8-12. . The appointed leaders can be men or women at the discretion of the Elders.

These committees shall have assigned responsibilities, meet regularly, and report recommendations, plans, and actions to the Elders. These committees may be standing committees or may be established then dissolved after they have executed their assigned purpose at the discretion of the Elders.

Examples of standing committees include:

- ◇ Nursery Team
- ◇ Welcome Team
- ◇ Youth Ministry Team
- ◇ Local and Global Evangelism Team
- ◇ Facilities and Properties Team
- ◇ Men's Ministry
- ◇ Women's Ministry

Article V – Meetings

Meetings of the church can occur in three ways:

1. There shall be quarterly congregational meetings. The Elders shall see that these meetings of the church are held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.
2. The Elders may call a special congregational meeting to address more time sensitive circumstances.
3. A special members' meeting is to be held when a written request by five percent of the voting membership is submitted to the Elders. This special member's meeting shall be scheduled and announced within two weeks of receiving of the written request. The Elders shall make known in writing to all members the date, time, and purpose of the special meeting at least two Sundays in advance and shall announce the special meeting at all public services of the church for two successive Sundays.

A minimum of two weeks notification shall be given for all congregational business meetings. A quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present.

It is our desire that every meeting be conducted in such a way that we demonstrate mutual love, respect, and acceptance. It must be our goal to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:1-3). An Elder designated by the Elders shall preside as Moderator. The Moderator of the meeting will be responsible for maintaining order and encouraging the

participation of all members. On procedural questions, the Moderator's ruling will be final.

All congregational business meetings shall be open to member and non-members except when sensitive topics are to be discussed (such as personnel issues or church discipline) in which case the Elders, at their discretion will prescribe that the meeting to be a Members Only meeting. All votes cast for nominations, elections and motions will be restricted to members only.

Many churches conduct meetings following Robert's Rules of Order. Even though Robert's Rules has many valid procedures, the overall process is highly detailed and difficult to practice. Therefore, Northbridge Church will conduct meetings according to the following procedures based on guidelines outlined by the Society of Corporate Secretaries & Governance Professionals:

- The congregational meeting, either regular or specially called, shall have a written agenda. Whenever possible the agenda shall be circulated in advance.
- Only members and special guests recognized by the moderator shall have the privilege to speak.
- Before a specific item can be discussed, the topic shall be introduced by the Moderator or a designated speaker.
- If the item is a matter to be voted on it must be first introduced by a motion and a second. A second is not necessary if the motion is from a recognized committee.
- Motions must be clear and concise. Presenters should be prepared to explain how the proposal in question follows biblical principles or how it supports the cause of Christ and His mission at Northbridge Church.
- Once a motion is presented it can be:
 - ◇ Voted to approve or reject
 - ◇ Amended and the amendment will require a second. If the amendment passes, the entire motion will be approved
 - ◇ Tabled and the congregation will be asked to pray about God's will regarding the motion in question. The Elders will bring the motion up at a subsequent meeting for action.

A budget shall be approved by the membership at a congregational meeting not more than three months after the start of the fiscal year. Prior to this approval and subject to the Elders' discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year's level.

At any quarterly or special congregational meeting any church business can be transacted (elections, approval votes, etc.) so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

Congregational Authority

The congregation shall have final authority by a 2/3 majority of those voting members attending a congregational meeting for approval of:

- ◇ The annual budget
- ◇ Any capital budgets
- ◇ Any non-budgeted expenditure of funds that will result in the annual budget being exceeded by more than 10%
- ◇ The purchase or sale of property recommended by the Elders
- ◇ Borrowing money.
- ◇ The addition of missionaries & their support
- ◇ Amendments to the church constitution
- ◇ The calling of a Pastor Elder
- ◇ The election of the Church Treasurer
- ◇ Affirming Elder Candidates as Elders.

Article VII - Church Staff

Section 1 - Pastor Elders

Any Pastor can serve as an Elder (Pastor Elder as defined in Article 4). A Pastor Elder is not subject to a term limit.

Pastor Elder Selection and Call

Before the search for a new Pastor Elder, the Elders will align on a job title, description, list of duties and reporting structure for the position. A Pastoral Search Committee can be appointed by the elders to identify and consider candidates for the position. Once a suitable candidate has been identified by the

search committee, screened and recommended by the Elders, he shall be invited to candidate with the church. Pastor Elders shall be chosen by written ballot at a church business meeting.

Dissolving the Call

A Pastor Elder shall remain in office until resignation, death or dismissal by the Elders.

Should he decide to resign, a letter of resignation giving thirty (30) days notice is requested. The thirty days or any part thereof may be waived by the Elders if in the best interests of the church.

Grounds for dismissal include preaching or teaching contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in doctrinal statements or conduct that is unfitting of the position such as acute moral or personal problems that undermine the effectiveness of his ministry and testimony. Two-thirds of the Elders must approve the dismissal. The Pastor Elder in question shall not participate in the Elders decision to determine whether the relationship should be dissolved. The Elders shall inform the congregation of their dismissal decision.

Section 2 - Associate Pastors and Ministry Leaders

Associate Pastors must be members of Northbridge Church. Associate Pastors and Ministry Leaders serve at the direction of the Elders. The Elders will name a direct supervisor and establish a job title, description and list of duties upon the hiring. This job definition will be maintained for each position by the Elders.

Associate Pastor and Ministry Director Selection/Call

The Elders shall be responsible for ensuring that individuals are identified to fill Associate Pastor openings. He may use a delegate or Search Committee to assist in this process. He will submit his recommendation to the Elders, who have final authority for authorizing employment of the candidate.

Resignation/Dismissal of Associate Pastors or Ministry Directors

Should an individual in one of these positions decide to resign, a letter of resignation giving thirty (30) days notice is requested. The thirty days or any part thereof may be waived by the Elders should it seem in the best interests of the church.

When circumstances dictate, the Elders, in cooperation with the person's direct supervisor, may dismiss an Associate Pastor or Ministry Director.

Section 3 - Support Staff

Support staff includes clerical, secretarial and administrative staff, custodial staff, interns, assistants and temporary help. The Elders shall authorize the creation of these positions, arrange for funding of the position and name a direct supervisor. The supervisor shall be responsible for ensuring that duties for positions are defined and assigned; suitable candidates are identified, interviewed and hired; and performance is evaluated. Members of the support staff shall not be required to be members of Northbridge Church but must sign a statement of agreement to the doctrinal positions of Northbridge Church. The supervisor shall accept resignations and execute terminations and inform the Elders of such actions.

Article IX - Church Covenant

I confess to having placed my hope and trust in Christ alone as my Savior from God's wrath and as the Master of my life. I have been baptized as a believer. I solemnly and humbly commit myself as a member of Northbridge Church and in the power of the Holy Spirit to the following covenant relationship.

I will commit to:

- ◇ Living a life that exalts the Lord Jesus Christ in all that I do. I commit myself to the regular practice of prayer and Bible study and to regularly attend the weekly worship services of Northbridge Church so that I might know God more intimately. (Colossians 3:17; 4:2-4; 2 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 10:25)
- ◇ Being equipped for life and ministry, I commit to participating in spiritual growth opportunities offered by the church that will better enable me to carry out my calling as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. I will serve Him in my relationships, my work, and through the exercise of my spiritual gifts. (1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Ephesians 4:11-12)
- ◇ Carrying out the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. Specifically, I will strive to love the Lord with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself at all times. I will also strive to make the gospel of God's grace known to the ends of the earth, whether it is through my personal witness or in partnerships with my fellow believers.
- ◇ Participating in the work of this local church by (Matthew 22:37-40; 28:18-20)
- ◇ Affirming the authority of the church's leadership including their disciplinary decisions if such decisions should arise. (Hebrews 13:7,17)
- ◇ Supporting the overall ministry of Northbridge Church through regular, sacrificial giving and prayer. (2 Corinthians 8, 9; 1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- ◇ Joining with other believers in contexts where we can find mutual accountability, encouragement in times of distress, and support to navigate the various stages of life. (Ephesians 4:29-32; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)
- ◇ Refraining from a pattern of gossiping, backbiting and sinful anger. I will strive to make peace with everyone by using words of grace that bring healing to relationships. (Ephesians 4:29-32)

- ◇ Agreeing to support and abide by the provisions of the Constitution of Northbridge Church.

Article X - Membership

Membership in a local church, though not explicitly mentioned in Scripture, is implied and assumed in the Biblical text, and is in keeping with the purposes of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Admission of Members

To become a voting member of Northbridge Church, the elders will affirm that the individual has met the following requirements:

1. Complete a course of instruction for new members as specified by the Elders
2. Testify to personally trusting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and agree with the doctrine and beliefs of the Church
3. Be baptized as a believer.
4. Has received a copy of the Church Covenant
5. Be eighteen (18) years of age or older
6. Be willing to relinquish membership at any other Church
7. Be recommended for membership by the Elders
8. Be presented for verbal affirmation by the congregation.

Dismissal

Members will be suspended or removed from membership for any of the following reasons:

1. Because of death
2. By written request
3. By joining another church. Membership automatically ceases even though written notification may not be received
4. By his or her choice, if an individual is absent from scheduled services for six months or more, and after adequate contacts have been made, does not demonstrate by effort or interest, a desire to return to active, productive fellowship with the church. If a positive response is not received within thirty (30) days of the final contact, the Elders shall dismiss the individual from membership

5. By Elder action to address specific conduct and/or subscribing to doctrine that is so opposed to the church's doctrine and witness as to destroy the possibility of fellowship. If counseling by a Pastor and/or Elders to help the individual to come to repentance and restoration is ignored or rejected, the individual's membership shall be revoked.

Membership shall be restored upon the discretion of the Elders after suitable evaluation.

Discipline and Restoration

It is the duty of every member to live a righteous and holy life. By joining this fellowship, an individual gives to the church's leadership the right to confront and admonish the member concerning behavioral actions and doctrinal views that are inconsistent with fundamental biblical teaching or violate the membership covenant. Examples include engaging in gross immorality, being disorderly in conduct, exhibiting flagrant or repeated deviation from the Christian walk, or using one's influence to undermine the leadership of or unity within the Church. The purpose of such action by the elders is for repentance and restoration.

Article XI Financial Management

The Elders have oversight responsibility for ensuring that Northbridge Church is above reproach in managing financial transactions. The Finance Team (Treasurer, Financial Secretary, bookkeeper, etc.) shall be responsible for:

1. Preparing Budgets (capital, operating)
2. Managing financial resources of the church,
3. Developing policies, procedures and controls to ensure that contributions are properly accounted for, expenditures are properly authorized, spending is consistent with approved operations.
4. Insuring that all transactions are recorded and reported accurately.
5. Assisting in audits.
6. Advising the Elders on financial matters.

The Elders shall ensure that the operating and capital budgets are presented to church membership for approval at the annual congregational business meeting.

As approved by a vote of the Elders, the Treasurer and Elder Board designated Elders are authorized to sign checks for expenditures against Church accounts.

Northbridge Church shall buy, own, lease, and sell real and personal property needed to carry out its purpose and ministry objectives. All titles to land and property shall be held in the name of Northbridge Church.

The Elders shall refer any purchase or sale of real estate to the church membership for approval. No lands or other real estate owned by the church shall be sold, mortgaged, or leased unless approved by a two-thirds majority vote of members present at a congregational business meeting. All monies, revenues, offerings, gifts, proceeds from the sale of property shall be held, deposited in the name of this organization, or disbursed by the Elders to implement the Church's purpose and/or support the doctrinal position and constitution of Northbridge Church.

Article XII Autonomy

Northbridge Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control. Northbridge Church voluntarily affiliates with the Southern Baptist Convention in its national, state, and local expressions for the furtherance of Christ's kingdom and the Gospel worldwide.

At any time, Northbridge Church reserves the right to dissolve its affiliation with the SBC. This action must be done in a properly called regular or special congregational business meeting with written notification of the proposed dissolution distributed to the congregation at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. A two-thirds majority vote of the members present is required for the adoption of the proposed action.

Article XIII Dissolution

In the event of a division of this church, from which may God in His mercy save us, the property of this church shall belong to that group of such division as represents the largest portion of the church membership, provided such group is loyal to this constitution. Otherwise it shall belong to the group remaining loyal to this constitution though it may not be the largest group in such division. Should any controversy arise as to whether such loyalty exists, the question shall be submitted to the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention and their decision shall be final.

Should a condition arise at any time in the future when for any reason, the church work cannot continue, the church property shall be transferred to the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention or its successor.

Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of the same denomination be advisable, the Elders shall be authorized by the church to negotiate the terms of such consolidation in so far as the property of this church is concerned.

Article XIII Conflict Resolution

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g., Matthew 18: 15–20, I Corinthians 6: 1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities.

Article XIV - Amendments

This constitution may be amended at a properly called regular or special congregational business meeting only if the amendment is printed and distributed to the congregation at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. A two-thirds majority vote of the members present is required for the adoption of a proposed amendment.

Article XV– Indemnification

Mandatory Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the Elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

Permissive Indemnification

At the discretion of the Elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

Indemnification Procedure

If a quorum of the Elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of Elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.