



SAMPLE CHURCH CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - Name

The name of this Church is _____. It is a corporation duly created by the Secretary of the State of _____ on (Date) as a Non-profit Religious Corporation located in _____.

ARTICLE II - Purpose

This Church is organized to glorify God by conducting religious services and teaching and training people in the truth of God's Word, the Bible, calling people to repentance from sin and to faith in Christ, making disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, and edifying the Body of Christ.

ARTICLE III - Statement of Faith

Insert N.I.C.E. Statement of Faith here.

ARTICLE IV - Membership

Section 1. Qualifications for Membership

Membership in (Name of Church) shall be open to all persons who:

- a. give a clear profession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior
- b. have obeyed the Lord in believer's baptism or be willing to be baptized
- c. provide a letter of commendation from a previous church [if applicable].

Section 2. Applications for Membership

Anyone wishing to join (Name of Church) shall make request for membership to a Pastor or an Elder. The individual shall be given a membership application, a copy of the Statement of Faith, and a copy of the constitution. The Elders shall meet with the applicant following completion of the application.

Section 3. Receiving of New Members

Applicants admitted to membership by the Elders shall affirm their membership commitment and be publicly acknowledged as members by the elders at a Sunday Morning worship service.

Section 4. Responsibilities of Members

Each member shall pursue the unity of the faith in cooperation with the other members of this church, and shall purpose to serve in consideration of the other members. Each member who is at least eighteen years old and not under any disciplinary action is entitled to vote at meetings of the church membership.

Section 5. Removal from Membership

Removal of members from this church shall be at the discretion of the Elders. The following are reasons for removal from membership:

- a. lack of regular attendance in a worship service for a period of six months or longer;
- b. request of transfer of membership to another church;
- c. exercise of the fourth stage of church discipline with no demonstration of repentance.

Section 6. Discipline of Members

(a) The church must properly and lovingly exercise discipline upon those members who, in the judgment of the Elders, have persisted in sinful behavior without demonstration of godly repentance [II Corinthians 7:9-10]. The purposes of church discipline are:

- 1) To seek the spiritual well-being of the sinning believers by calling them to Biblical conduct in their way of living (Galatians 6:1).
- 2) To maintain purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6),
- 3) To deter sin in other members (1 Timothy 5:20).

- (b) The procedure shall be according to Matthew 18:15-17, allowing reasonable time for repentance after every effort has been made to call, exhort, and admonish the person.
- (c) Members of this church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the Elders, shall be subject to church discipline.

Section 7. Annual Membership Meeting

The annual meeting of the church members shall be held in January of each year. This meeting will include reports of the affairs of the church, and transact such other business as the Elders determine to be brought before the members, including but not limited to affirmation of the appointments made by the Elders of those who shall serve as Elders and Deacons for the ensuing year.

Section 8. Special Membership Meetings

Special meetings of the members may be called at any time by the Pastor, the Chairman of the Elders, or by a majority of the members of the Elders.

Section 9. Notice of Meetings

Notice of all regular or special meetings shall be published in the regular church bulletin and announced from the pulpit for two successive Sundays prior to the meeting.

Section 10. Quorum

The members present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at all regular or special meetings of the members.

ARTICLE V - Elders

Section 1. Responsibility of Elders

Subject to the limitations of this Constitution, all the activities and affairs of the Church shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Elders, who shall have the following responsibilities in addition to the other powers enumerated by this Constitution:

- (a) To work as a team with the Pastor(s) to shepherd and oversee the flock, including the administration of the ordinances of Baptism and Communion.
- (b) To select and remove all pastors and employees of the Church; prescribe such duties for them consistent with the Scriptures, with law, with the Articles of Incorporation, or with this constitution; and fix the terms of their offices and their compensation.
- (c) To establish policies and practices for the church consistent with its purpose.
- (d) To make such disbursements from the funds and properties of the Church as are required to fulfill the purposes of this Church and generally to conduct, manage, and control the activities and affairs of the Church.

Section 2. Number of Elders

A plurality of leadership will be present with at least three appointed elders. If there are not three qualified men to be appointed as elders, then a leadership committee of four men will be appointed by Northwest Independent Church Extension until such a time when plurality of leadership can be maintained.

Section 3. Nomination, Selection, and Tenure of Office

Recommendations to fill the office of Elder shall be requested once a year from all church members. A nominating committee consisting of two elders and one deacon shall be appointed by the Elders, who will also designate a chairman of the committee. This committee shall review all nominations and determine each nominee's qualifications. A recommendation of nominees prepared by the nominating committee shall then be submitted to the Elders who shall approve, disapprove, or add to the list of nominees. The list of nominees shall be publicly posted in alphabetical order at the location of the worship services, and also printed in the church bulletin at least two weeks prior to the annual meeting of the church members. At the annual meeting, the nominees shall be presented to the members for affirmation. Nominees affirmed by the church members, shall

assume office immediately. Elders so affirmed shall serve for a period of four years and may serve continuously if reaffirmed after each four year term.

Section 4. Qualifications

Each of the Elders must be an active member of this church and possess the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. He shall be:

- (a) Blameless as a steward of God; above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6-7)
- (b) Husband of one wife; a one-woman man (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6)
- (c) Temperate, sober, vigilant (1 Timothy 3:2)
- (d) Sober-minded, prudent (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- (e) Of good behavior; orderly, respectable (1 Timothy 3:2)
- (f) Given to hospitality (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- (g) Apt to teach; able to teach - exhort believers and refute false teaching (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9)
- (h) Not given to wine (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- (i) Not violent; not pugnacious (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)
- (j) Patient, moderate, forbearing, gentle (1 Timothy 3:3)
- (k) Not a brawler; uncontentious; not soon angry or quick-tempered (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- (l) Not covetous; not a lover of money; not greedy of base gain (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)
- (m) Rules his house well; his children are faithful, not accused of rebellion (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:7)
- (n) Not a novice; not a new convert (1 Timothy 3:6)
- (o) Has a good report or reputation with outsiders (1 Timothy 3:7)
- (p) Not self-willed (Titus 1:7)
- (q) A lover of good men and things (Titus 1:8)
- (r) Just, fair (Titus 1:8)
- (s) Holy, devout (Titus 1:8)
- (t) Self-controlled (Titus 1:8)

Section 5. Removal of Elders

An Elder may be removed from office at any meeting of the Elders if, after thorough investigation by the Elders (or a duly appointed committee, per Article VI, Section 1 of this Constitution), in accordance with the procedures prescribed by Scripture, including Matthew 18:15-18 and 1 Timothy 5:19, he is found to be spiritually unqualified (according to pertinent Scriptures, including 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9), or physically or mentally unable to perform the responsibilities of an elder. If an Elder is removed because of sin that disqualifies him, and if he refuses to repent from that sin, the removal shall be accompanied, as prescribed in 1 Timothy 5:20, by a public rebuke before the church at a regularly scheduled worship service.

Section 6. Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Elders shall be held without call or notice each month at a day and time established by the Elders.

ARTICLE VI - Administration

Section I. Committees

To promote efficient function, the Elders may appoint committees from within their membership, and from the church at large. These committees shall perform tasks solely in accordance with the duties and with powers specifically delegated by the Elders. The general functions of committees are:

- (a) To bring considered recommendations to concerning ministries to the Elders.
- (b) To provide a wider base of counsel to the Elders who have the oversight of specific ministries.

Section 2. Deacons

The Elders may appoint Deacons, consisting of members possessing the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, to be in charge of specific ministries and functions of the church. These appointments shall be affirmed by the members at the annual meeting. Deacons shall serve for a term of two years, and shall be accountable to the elders for the discharge of their responsibilities.

ARTICLE V - Ordination, Licensing, and Commissioning

Section 1. Ordination

Ordination refers to the recognition by the Elders of a man's call to the ministry, preparation as a shepherd, and qualification to serve. Ordination shall be conferred for life, so long as the man continues to manifest the qualifications of the office.

Section 2. Licensing

The license is issued by the Elders and is given in recognition of a man's call to that ministry. Its purpose is to allow a man to perform ecclesiastical duties and functions of the church. Licenses will be evaluated and issued on a yearly basis.

Section 3. Commissioning

When local-church certification is required for ministry where ordination would be unnecessary or inappropriate, a person may be commissioned to ministry by the Elders. This authorization continues as long as the opportunity to minister remains and the person maintains the qualifications for ministry.

ARTICLE V - Pastor(s)

Section 1. Call and Tenure

The Pastor(s) shall be selected by the Elders and confirmed by the members of the church at a regular or special business meeting. He shall remain in office an indefinite period of time subject to the following reservations: The Elders reserve the right to dismiss the Pastor(s) upon giving him one month's written notice of their intention to dismiss. The Pastor(s) must give one month's notice if he intends to resign. The time limit of a Pastor's resignation or dismissal may be shorter if both the Pastor and the church agree.

Section 2. Duties

The Pastor, while serving as the leader of the Elders, shall be the chief shepherd and teacher of the church, and shall be accountable to the Elders for the fulfillment of his ministry. He shall be an ex officio member of all committees, and shall, as representing the Elders, oversee the ministry and function of the committees. The Pastor shall arrange for and conduct all public and regular services of the church. In the absence of the Pastor, the Elders, shall be responsible to arrange for the public services of the church.

ARTICLE VI - Dissolution

Upon dissolution of this Corporation, its assets shall be distributed to Northwest Independent Church Extension.

ARTICLE VII - Amendments

This constitution may be amended by the Elders. Such amendments shall become effective upon affirmation by the congregation.