

North Isanti Baptist Church

CONSTITUTION
Pages 1-12

As Revised 2022



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CONSTITUTION

APPROVED BY DEACONS (23Oct2012) WITH RECOMMENDATION TO THE CONGREGATION
CONGREGATION APPROVED (3Feb2013)
AMENDMENTS APPROVED (24April2022)

NORTH ISANTI BAPTIST CHURCH CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We, members of the church of Christ, desiring to manifest the unity which we have with one another in our common profession of our Lord Jesus, unite in the adoption of the following constitution and do solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions.

ARTICLE I - NAME

This church is called North Isanti Baptist Church.

ARTICLE II – CONGREGATIONAL AUTHORITY

Under the headship of Jesus Christ, the Membership of North Isanti Baptist Church has authority at its annual and special business meetings as the legislative body of this organization in the following areas:

1. The selection, affirmation, and dismissal of Elders as otherwise provided in this document.
2. The selection, affirmation, and dismissal of Pastors as otherwise provided in this document
3. The selection, affirmation and dismissal of Deacon/Deaconess and committees as provided in this document.
4. The approval of Ministry Team chairs, Church Officers and Deacon/Deaconess Chair.
5. The approval of the annual church budget and any amendments to or changes of the budget.
6. The approval of the reception of all new members and the dismissal of current members for disciplinary reasons.
7. The approval of the purchase or sale of all real property.
8. The approval of all amendments to this constitution.

ARTICLE III - AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

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.

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.

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, that He hears and answers prayer and that he saves from sin and death all who come to Him through 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 to heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, personal visible return to earth.

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, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide.

We believe that all men 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.

We believe in the universal church, a living 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. We believe that God has laid upon members of the local church the primary task of giving the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well being of his fellow men; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water into the name of the triune God. 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. 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.

We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise cooperate with inter-denominational fellowship on a voluntary basis.

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 (joy satisfaction) of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked.

ARTICLE IV - DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

For the world-wide propagation of the gospel and the expansion of the kingdom of our Lord, North Isanti Baptist Church shall be a member congregation of Converge Worldwide (Baptist General Conference) and Converge North Central (Minnesota-Iowa Baptist Conference). As determined by the Board of Elders, the church may also be in cooperation and fellowship with other churches and organizations of like mission and similar faith.

ARTICLE V - CHURCH COVENANT

Because we have been led by the Holy Spirit to receive Jesus Christ as our Savior and acknowledge Him as our Lord and because we openly declare our faith and have been baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; we commit to one another and to God that we will strive to live our lives in submission to Christ and pleasing to Him in every way.

We promise, with the Holy Spirit as our enabler, to reject the sinful values and lifestyle of the world; to live holy lives and to live graciously with each other. We will make every effort to be at peace with each other and to be obedient to God's Word. We commit ourselves to passionate worship and sound biblical doctrine. We pledge to live generous lives; freely sharing our time, abilities and finances as God blesses us so that others will see Jesus in us and receive Him as their Savior and Lord.

We promise to personally and corporately study God's Word and teach it to our children. We promise to pray for and to actively seek the salvation of our friends and family. We will be honest in all our dealings and faithfully keep our promises. We will strive to become like Jesus in our character and behavior; treating all people with dignity, avoiding unkind words and selfish anger. We will be passionate in our efforts to further the cause of Christ and we will demonstrate that our entire lives are submitted to His control.

We will be open to graciously give or receive encouragement and correction. We will pray for each other, open our hearts to and aid each other in times of trouble and discouragement. We will be positive in our conversation; assuming the best of each other. In our relationships we will resist becoming offended and will quickly pursue reconciliation. Above all we will live our lives expecting that Jesus could return today.

ARTICLE VI – AMENDMENTS

The Board of Elders in consultation with the Deacon/Deaconess Board shall at least annually review this constitution with its bylaws and make recommendation to the church for any proposed changes. This constitution may be amended at a business meeting of the church, provided a copy of the proposed amendments has been a) conspicuously posted in the church, b) emailed to the membership and c) posted on the church website for at least ninety (90) days prior to such action. Voting on any proposed amendment shall be by ballot, and shall require at least two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes cast for passage.

NORTH ISANTI BAPTIST CHURCH BYLAWS

ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and giving testimony of regeneration and baptism by immersion may be received into membership of the church.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

All applicants for membership shall give testimony before the Board of Elders or committee thereof and the pastor. Upon the affirmation of the Board of Elders, applicants will be welcomed into the membership by announcement in all services on a following Sunday.

LETTERS OF TRANSFER OR WITHDRAWAL

Any member in good standing shall, upon request, be granted a Letter of transfer to any church such member designates. A member in good standing may resign their membership at any time.

MEMBERSHIP EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Members shall participate in the life and fellowship of the church as described in the Church Covenant (Constitution Article V) and will be encouraged to regularly attend, contribute financially and serve.

MEMBERSHIP LIST DEFINITIONS

In this Constitution, the following definitions are used:

1. An "Active Member" is someone who has made positive contact with NIBC through attendance at its services or giving in the last 12 months.
2. An "Inactive Member" is a member who does not live within reasonable driving distance from the church or a resident member who has not made positive contact with the church through attendance or giving in the last 12 months.
3. A "Member in Good Standing" is a member not under church discipline.

The Elder Board shall with discretion annually review the membership lists and exercise reasonable effort to maintain that active members remain on the membership rolls and that inactive members are deleted from the membership rolls.

ARTICLE II - TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS

RULES OF ORDER

Robert's Rules of Order shall guide the conduct of all business meetings of the church, except where otherwise indicated in this constitution.

QUORUM

Twenty five percent (25%) of the active membership shall be the required quorum at all business meetings of the church.

VOTING

All active members shall have voting privileges on routine matters. Any matters voted upon by ballot require a voter to be eighteen (18) years or older. A ballot may be called by the moderator or by request from the floor. Absentee votes will be accepted only for annual confirmation vote of officers

or as recommended by the Elders in the call for the meeting.

SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

The Board of Elders, Deacon/Deaconess Board, the senior pastor, or any ten (10) members of the church may call for a special meeting of the church. Such call shall be directed to the moderator of the church or the senior pastor and shall state the nature of the business to be considered. The moderator or the senior pastor shall without delay establish the date and time of the meeting. No more than two (2) weeks shall elapse between the call for a special business meeting and placement on the church calendar.

At least one (1) week prior to the special business meeting, public notice of the call and the business to be considered shall be a) posted in the church, b) sent by email to the membership (a letter to those without email accounts), c) included in the weekly email newsletter and d) posted on the church website. The call shall also be read during all services on the Sunday prior to the scheduled meeting date.

Only such business as is specified in the call may be considered at a special business meeting.

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the church shall be held during the last half of April. The specific date and time shall be set by the church moderator and the pastor. The fiscal year of the church shall begin on April 1, and close on March 31.

ARTICLE III - CHURCH OFFICERS

The officers of the church are Moderator (Elder Chair), Financial Secretary, General Fund Treasurer and Clerk (see Article IV paragraph 4). The Deacon/Deaconess Board shall appoint or hire individuals to serve as Financial Secretary, General Fund Treasurer, and Clerk. The duration of their service shall be determined by the Deacon/Deaconess Board.

CLERK

The clerk shall record the minutes of all business meetings, maintain a full and complete record of all members, and such reports as the boards, officers or congregation may require. The clerk shall act as corresponding secretary as directed by the church or pastor.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY

The financial secretary shall keep a full and accurate record of all contributions, collections, and donations received by the church, and shall report the same to the church treasurer weekly. All funds shall be deposited in the banks designated by the Deacon/Deaconess Board. The financial secretary shall be hired or appointed by the Deacon/Deaconess Board, and shall be an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee.

GENERAL FUND TREASURER

The treasurer shall keep a full and accurate account of all funds received from the financial secretary or any other source, and shall disburse the funds as directed by the church or any duly authorized board or committee. The treasurer shall be hired or appointed by the Deacon/Deaconess Board, and shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee of the Church.

ARTICLE IV – BOARD OF ELDERS

The Elders of the church, under the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall strive as under-shepherds

to equip the congregation to properly minister, so that the church may be built up in Christ-likeness and unity (Eph. 4:11-16). The Elders shall be entrusted to provide vision and leadership over all areas of congregational life (1 Tim. 5:17). The Elders may delegate tasks and oversight of various areas of the church to committees and/or individuals as they see fit, empowering the laity to do ministry.

All boards, committees and ministry teams shall be under the leadership of the Board of Elders. Committees deemed to be primarily functioning in an administrative role will be under the direction of the Deacon/Deaconess Board.

The Board of Elders shall appoint ministry teams in the following areas:

1. Christian Education,
2. Missions,
3. Music & Worship,
4. Prayer Commission

The Board of Elders shall make recommendations for the addition or deletion of pastoral staff members. (see Article VII)

The Elders shall watch over the spiritual life of the church, and be responsible for all local ministries, examine candidates for baptism and church membership, assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual life of the church and its ministry in the community.

FUNCTIONS AND PRIORITIES OF ELDERS:

1. To keep right with God (Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:2).
2. To spiritually nurture and protect the congregation (Acts 20:28 and John 21:15-17).
3. To pray and study the Scriptures (Acts 6:4).
4. To be free from self-interest (Acts 20:33 and 1 Peter 5:2).
5. To direct the affairs of the church well (1 Timothy 5:17).
6. To model before the congregation a high priority on constant spiritual growth (1 Peter 5:3, Titus 2:7).

QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS:

1. An elder shall be an active member of the church.
2. An elder shall meet the Biblical qualifications for Eldership as described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
3. Consistent with a traditional understanding of biblical instructions for Elders, Eldership shall be reserved for men.

PROCEDURE FOR ELDER APPOINTMENT:

The church membership shall be encouraged and given regular opportunity, to recommend (through a written recommendation) candidates for the Elder Board.

Elders may recommend candidates for the Elder Board.

Candidates for the Elder Board shall be reviewed and evaluated according to the biblical qualifications of the office. They shall be required to be in supportive agreement with the doctrine and constitution of the church. They shall be shown to be in possession of the appropriate spiritual gifts (i.e. leadership, shepherding, teaching, wisdom, discernment, prophecy).

Participation in ongoing spiritual and leadership training shall be an expectation upon the Elders. Future candidates for Elders may be invited to participate with such training and to apprentice themselves to current Elders.

A unanimous endorsement of the current Elders and a seventy-five percent (75%) affirmative vote of the members present and voting shall be required for an Elder to be seated on the Board.

An Elder shall be commissioned before the congregation at any meeting of the church.

An Elder's term of office shall be for three years. A second consecutive three-year term may be served if the Elder so chooses, the other Elders approve, and the Elder is reaffirmed by a 75% majority of the members present and voting.

An Elder (other than the Senior or Associate Pastor) who has served two consecutive three-year terms, may only be re-elected to the active eldership after at least one year off the board following the close of his last term of service as an Elder. In unusual circumstances, the Elders may ask the congregation to allow an elder to serve an additional one-year term.

The Elders shall select a candidate for Chairman of the Elder Board from among the board's voting members and present that candidate for approval at the annual meeting. Such approval shall require a 50% affirmative vote of the members present and voting. The Chairman shall function as the church Moderator. He shall be an ex-officio member of all boards, committees and ministry teams. He shall preside at all annual and special meetings of the church.

The Elder board will consist of a minimum of three laymen and a maximum of six active, serving Elders. The senior pastor will be an ex-officio, member of the Elders. Other pastors may be appointed to the Board of Elders in the same manner that other Elders are appointed. Any salaried personnel serving on the Board are non-voting Elders.

REMOVAL OF ELDERS

Elders may be removed from office by:

1. Withdrawal from church membership.
2. Voluntary written resignation.
3. Failure to receive a seventy five percent (75%) reaffirmation after serving for three years.
4. A unanimous decision of the remaining Elders in the unlikely event of conduct unbecoming of a spiritual leader, major doctrinal incompatibility or unwillingness to work together with the rest of the Board.
5. Five percent (5%) of the membership, but not less than five members, may petition the Elder Board for an early reconsideration of an Elder. If brought to reconsideration of the congregation, failure to receive seventy five percent (75%) reaffirmation of the membership will then result in the removal of the Elder from his position.

ARTICLE V - DEACON/DEACONESS BOARD

DEACON/DEACONESS BOARD QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Deacon/Deaconess Board shall consist of people possessing the qualifications described in I Timothy 3:8-13.

They shall have the primary responsibilities of administering the affairs of the church and shall consist of the following members, nominated by the Elders and confirmed by the congregation.

1. Chair of the Deacon/Deaconess Board
2. An At-large member,

AND the Chairperson of the following committees:

3. Human Resources
4. Finance
5. Building and Grounds
6. Men's Ministries
7. Women's Ministries

Each member of the board will serve for a period of three (3) years with two or three members being confirmed at each annual meeting.

The Deacon/Deaconess Board shall have oversight of standing committees not specifically assigned to the Elders. Standing Committees shall be listed and defined in the Manual of Operations, Policies and Procedures.

The Deacon/Deaconess Board shall act on behalf of the church in financial matters.

1. They shall submit a yearly-proposed budget to the church.
2. The Deacons shall direct an annual informal audit of church financial records and shall direct a formal audit every 5 years.
3. They shall supervise the expenditure of church funds,
4. They may spend up to fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) in any budget year without church approval.
5. At the direction of the church membership they may borrow money in the name of the church.
6. They shall be charged with such other powers and duties required of them by the laws of the State of Minnesota as trustees of the corporation
7. The Deacon/Deaconess board shall have the authority to hire non-pastoral staff.

ARTICLE VI - MINISTRY TEAMS and COMMITTEES

The ministry of the church shall be coordinated by the Elder and the Deacon/Deaconess Boards and carried out by working ministry teams under the direction of the two Boards. The chair of each ministry team shall be nominated by the Elder Board and affirmed by the membership. Additional ministry team positions will be filled by appointment of the Elder Board. The Board of Elders may assign as much responsibility and authority to a ministry team as the Elders feel is appropriate. Quarterly reports shall be required from Ministry Teams to their supervising board (or more often if requested). Any ministries and activities not specifically identified with a particular ministry team shall be under the general supervision of the Board of Elders. The purposes and areas of responsibility of Ministry Teams shall be described the Manual of Operations, Policies and Procedures. Ministry Teams and Committees shall be responsible to the Board of Elders or Board of Deacons as described in Article IV and Article V

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEES

The Boards or congregation may appoint special committees to promote and carry out the ministry of the church. When the work assigned to a special committee has been completed, it will be dissolved.

ARTICLE VII - THE PASTOR

The position, responsibilities and relationships of any pastor shall be described in a position description which shall be maintained by the Board of Elders and contained in the Manual of Operations, Policies and Procedures.

The pastor shall perform all the Scriptural duties of his office and shall have the freedom of the pulpit under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He may also, perform other duties in connection with the work of the church as delegated by the Board of Elders. The pastor shall be ex-officio non-voting member in all elected boards and committees of the church except the Pastoral Search Committee. He shall have the right to resign his office at any time. The resignation shall be in writing and need not state the reason for his resignation.

Provisions for the calling of a Senior or Associate Pastor are found in Article VIII.

In discussion with relevant ministry leaders, the Elders may develop and recommend to the congregation other leadership ministry position descriptions. The approval of such recommendations shall be by closed ballot at any business meeting and require a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present and voting.

The Elders may fill those approved positions without engaging a search committee.

Any proposal to dismiss a pastor shall be referred to the Board of Elders for its consideration before any action may be taken by the church. The Board of Elders must present to the church any written request for the dismissal of a pastor when signed by twenty per cent of the active membership of the church. Action on such a request shall be taken at a regular or specially called business meeting and shall be by closed ballot with two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting to carry a motion for dismissal.

ARTICLE VIII- THE PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE ELECTION OF THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

When a vacancy occurs in an office of a pastor, within thirty (30) days the Board of Elders will select two and the Deacon/Deaconess Board shall select two to serve on the Pastoral Search Committee. At least four (4) additional Search Committee members must be nominated and 4 shall be elected from the congregation at large. This committee shall serve until a new pastor has been called, welcomed and installed. The Moderator shall be an ex-officio member of the Search Committee.

DUTIES OF THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Search Committee shall, elect a chairman and a secretary. The Search Committee shall make diligent search for suitable candidates for the office of interim pastor and for the office of pastor. The Search Committee shall recommend one finalist candidate to the Board of Elders for confirmation before inviting the candidate to visit the church and preach at a worship service. Any candidate recommended to the church shall be by a joint recommendation of the Search Committee and Elders. A report to the congregation shall detail, in writing, the name, age, former experience, educational background and any other information that may be pertinent in determining the qualifications and suitability of the candidate. The Elders shall call for a special business meeting of the church, with notice as required in Article II.

At that special business meeting the church shall vote by ballot on the on the joint recommendation of the Search Committee and Elders. No candidate shall be extended a call unless approved by at least seventy-five percent (75%) of all votes cast. The Moderator may, at his discretion, re-submit the candidate and call for a second ballot.

**ARTICLE IX - CHURCH DISCIPLINE
DISCIPLINE OF CHURCH MEMBERS**

A member of the congregation may be removed from membership only at the recommendation of the Elders and by majority vote of the congregation.

DISCIPLINE OF CHURCH LEADERS

An elected or appointed leader may be removed from their position subsequent to an investigation by the Elders and by unanimous recommendation of the Elders and majority vote of the combined Elder and Deacon Boards.

ARTICLE X - GRIEVANCES

All grievances between members shall be dealt with in accordance with the rules of scripture (Matthew 18:15-17). There will be no public consideration of the concern until this course has been pursued. Details of the issue must be made in writing, and shall be submitted to the Board of Elders for appropriate recommendation to the church.

ARTICLE XI - VACANCIES OF ELECTED OFFICES

In the event that a vacancy occurs in any position that was filled by an affirmation vote of the congregation, the Board of Elders may decide whether or not this vacancy is to be filled. If it is to be filled, the Board of Elders shall present at least one (1) candidate to the church for confirmation.

ARTICLE XII - MANUAL OF OPERATIONS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Elder Board and Deacon Board shall develop and maintain a Manual of Operations, Policies and Procedures clarifying the methods to be used in carrying out the actions outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws. The Manual of Operations, Policies and Procedures may be modified by action initiated and approved by either the Elder Board or the Deacon Board and ratified by the other."

ARTICLE XIII- AMENDMENTS

The Board of Elders shall annually review these by-laws and make recommendation to the church for any proposed changes. By-laws may be amended at any business meeting of the church, provided that the proposed amendment has been announced from the pulpit and posted in the church at least ninety (90) days prior to the vote. Voting on any proposed amendment shall be by ballot, and no amendment shall be adopted unless it received two-thirds (2/3) or more of the votes cast.