

North Hills Church
CONSTITUTION
Adopted 1993
(Revised 7/25/2017)

Article I NAME

This local expression of the body of Christ shall be called North Hills Church.

Article II PURPOSE

The purpose of NHC is to be a local group of baptized believers who glorify God through unified Christ-likeness (Acts 2:41; Eph. 4:11-16). Our method of pursuing this purpose is as follows:

- to magnify God through personal and public worship (Rom. 15:6)
- to edify others through service, fellowship and teaching (James 1:27; Eph. 4:12)
- to evangelize the world through living, preaching and teaching the Word of God (Matt. 28:19, 20)
- to keep our lives pure (Eph. 5:26, 27; James 1:27b) through personal examination (I Cor. 11:28-31) and public accountability (I Cor. 5:6, 7, 13)

Article III AUTHORITY

All decisions shall be made by the Board of Elders within the limitations of the constitution. Approval from the church membership is required in decisions outlined in Article VII, Section 1.8. This church can thrive only as decisions are made in conformity to the Word of God and each member (including leadership) submits in love to one another under the authority of Christ as the head of the body (John 16:12-14; II Tim. 3:16; Eph., 4:15, 16; 5:21).

Article IV MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Purpose

Membership in NHC does not produce a relationship with Christ, but is a public expression of a personal unity with Christ through salvation (I Cor. 1:9; I John 1:3). Mutual accountability is the primary purpose of membership. Christians are commanded to "come together" (I Cor. 11:20; Heb. 10:25) and are called to be accountable to each other (Acts 5:1-11; Eph. 5:21).

Section 2. Prerequisites

The following prerequisites must be fulfilled for membership at North Hills Church:

1. Salvation – Individuals desiring to become members of NHC must present a verbal testimony of their salvation experience (i.e., faith in Christ) to an elder. The members of NHC do not hold to professing a mere creed (truth about Jesus - Matt. 7:21-23), but to knowing a person – the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:36). All potential members are encouraged by the elders to share their testimony with the church for edification of believers and an example to the lost for praise to God.
2. Baptism – Believer's baptism is a public testimony to the inner identification with Jesus Christ (Acts 2:41). Therefore, conversion is a prerequisite to baptism. Due to the significance of

baptism in Scripture and the picture this act of obedience is of the work of Christ, believers must be baptized prior to joining (Matt. 28:19). NHC baptizes by immersion.

3. Membership Covenant – All potential members of NHC are asked to read and sign the membership covenant, thereby agreeing to support the policies and beliefs of this body and expressing a willingness to use their gifts for the edification of the body and to be held accountable by the leaders and members of NHC (Heb. 13:17).

Section 3. Procedure

The Board of Elders will approve a written procedure to be followed by persons desiring membership at NHC. The written membership procedure will include the following minimum requirements:

1. All of the prerequisites of Section 2 (above) are met;
2. A training process is completed addressing NHC doctrinal statement, practices, constitution and membership covenant;
3. An elder overseen interview with the interested individual to ensure eligibility for membership and to sign the membership covenant; and
4. A minimum one week notice to the congregation and Board of Elders of the individual's intent to join NHC prior to the membership becoming final.

The written procedure may be changed as deemed necessary by approval of the Board of Elders provided the above elements are included in the procedure.

Section 4. Policies

- NHC appreciates letters from other churches, but does not recognize these as substitutes for the membership procedure.
- Members seeking to withdraw their membership from NHC are requested to contact an elder and personally communicate this intent. Following this, a written request from the member to withdraw his membership shall be submitted to NHC. A request for removal from membership by an individual currently undergoing the church discipline process will not be recognized.
- Members who are absent from services for an unusual length of time are encouraged to notify church leaders of any difficulties. If a member is absent from services for over six months, the elders shall continue to seek to resolve any problem or meet any special need. But if an understanding is not reached, the absentee member shall be released from the roll at the discretion of the Board of Elders.
- NHC does not retain an "inactive" church membership roll.
- See NHC Church Discipline Policy Statement (a separate, written document approved by the Board of Elders) for the biblical method of dealing with an erring church member.

Article V STATEMENT OF FAITH

(See separate document)

Article VI CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1. Weekly Services

NHC holds services on Sunday and any other day deemed beneficial to the needs of the body.

Section 2. Business Meetings

2.1. Annual Meetings

There shall be an annual meeting of the membership held for the purpose of providing financial and ministry reports, approving the budget, and conducting other appropriate business. Time and place shall be announced publicly to the congregation and/or in written form at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.

2.2. Decisions

A congregational quorum shall consist of thirty percent of all voting members. Once a quorum has been established, a two-thirds majority of votes cast is required to approve a motion. Members must be sixteen years of age to vote. Within the confines of the constitution and as deemed appropriate by the Board of Elders, the meetings shall follow the procedures in *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Article VII LEADERSHIP

Section 1. Elders

1.1. Powers

Subject to the limitations of this Constitution, all the activities and affairs of NHC shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Board of Elders, who is responsible for the shepherding and the spiritual oversight of the membership (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17).

1.2. Priorities of the Board of Elders

The following are the priorities of the Board of Elders:

- to keep right with God (Acts 20:28)
- to rule the church of God with a servant attitude (I Tim. 5:17; I Pet. 5:1-3)
- to feed (i.e., teach) and lead the flock of God (Acts 20:28)
- to facilitate the ministries of the people (Eph. 4:11, 12)
- to warn and protect the flock (Acts 20:28; I Tim. 1:3, 4)
- to pray and study (Acts 20:32)
- to be free from self-interest (Acts 20:32)

1.3. Number

The authorized number of qualified men on the Board of Elders shall always be at least three. Elders should be added as necessary to properly shepherd an increase in the flock.

1.4. Equality

All elders are equal regardless of the position they hold in the utilization of their particular gifts (e.g., Chairman of the Elder Board or Teaching Pastor).

1.5. Selection

Candidates earnestly desiring the office of Elder, including the commitment inherent thereto, shall be carefully examined as to their qualifications (see Section 1.6) and support of the Constitution and Doctrinal Statement.

The following steps are the process by which the Board of Elders evaluates an individual to discern God's hand upon his life and to discern his qualifications for leadership:

1. Consideration – The Board of Elders agrees that an individual has the potential for leadership and thereby assumes the responsibility with the congregation to earnestly

seek confirmation from the Lord (Acts 13:2). This step may be initiated by the nominee (I Tim. 3:1).

2. Demonstration – The Board of Elders will present the nominee publicly to the congregation. In the given amount of time, the people may go to the nominee first with qualification questions or concerns, and then, if necessary, present these biblical concerns to the Board of Elders.
3. Presentation – After hearing the concerns of the people, the Board of Elders may, upon consensus, present the candidate to the congregation for affirmation (in accordance with Article VI, Section 2.2) as one whom God has qualified for leadership (Acts 15:22).

1.6. Qualifications

Each member of the Board of Elders must have been a member of NHC for at least a year and must have been demonstrating leadership qualities in ministry. Each elder must possess the qualifications described in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. He shall have the following characteristics:

- male (I Tim. 3:2)
- blameless (above reproach) as a steward of God (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6, 7)
- husband of one wife, "one-woman man" (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6)
- temperate (sober, vigilant) (I Tim. 3:2)
- sober minded (prudent) (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- of good behavior (orderly, respectable) (I Tim. 3:2)
- given to hospitality (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- apt to teach (exhort believers and refute false teaching) (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9)
- not given to wine (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- not violent (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- patient (moderate, forbearing, gentle) (I Tim. 3:3)
- not a brawler (not contentious, not soon angry or quick tempered) (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- not covetous (not a lover of money) (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- rules well his own house (which embodies proper relationships with all family members in his household as well as the responsible financial management of his family's needs) (I Tim. 3:4; Titus 1:6; I Tim. 5:8)
- his children must be faithful, not accused of rebellion to God (Titus 1:6)
- not a novice (not a convert, has demonstrated growth) (I Tim. 3:6)
- has a good reputation with outsiders (I Tim. 3:7)
- a lover of good (men and things) (Titus 1:8)
- just (Titus 1:8)
- holy (devout) (Titus 1:8)
- self-controlled (Titus 1:8)

1.7. Accountability

Elder accountability is first and foremost unto God (I Peter 5:1-5). It is mandatory, however, that the elders be accountable to one another and to the congregation. If an elder errs, the primary goal should always be spiritual restoration (Gal. 6:1-5). In situations where the erring elder has rendered himself unqualified, the Board of Elders may ask for his resignation. Accountability between elders and before the people must always be consistent with Matthew 18:15ff and I Timothy 5:19. Church members are encouraged to attend Board of Elder meetings and may share ministry opportunities and concerns if the member has notified the Chairman of the Board of Elders, or his designee, of his desire to be placed on the meeting agenda. The Chairman of the Board of Elders may reserve a part of the meeting for confidential business.

1.8. Decisions of the Board of Elders

Decisions shall be reached after prayerful consideration only by consensus of the Board of Elders in a spirit of humility with each elder regarding one another before himself.

- In cases of normal business, a quorum consists of a majority of elders present. The Board of Elders will approve a written procedure for absent Board member input on Board decisions. If absent Board members who follow the written procedure raise strong objections to any decision, a reconsideration of that decision will be warranted.
- Whenever the matter to be considered concerns (1) buying or selling real estate, (2) calling or dismissing an elder, (3) sending of a missionary, (4) approval of the yearly budget, or (5) the amendment to or modification of the Constitution or the Doctrinal Statement, a quorum shall consist of all the members of the Board of Elders (with the exception of any elder that is under consideration) whether responding in person or in absentia (to be later confirmed in writing). In the above decisions, the Board of Elders shall also seek the affirmation of the congregation in accordance with Article VI, Section 2.2.
- The Board of Elders may call or request the dismissal of a pastor by consensus (not including the pastor under consideration) with the approval of the congregation in accordance with Article VI, Section 2.2. The Board of Elders shall serve as a pastoral search committee.

1.9. Elder-appointed Membership Committees

To promote efficient handling of church business, the Board of Elders may appoint various committees from within NHC membership. The committees shall exist for that specific time period as directed by the Board of Elders. These committees shall perform tasks solely in accordance with the duties and with the powers specifically delegated by the Board of Elders. The general functions of the committees shall be the following:

- to bring considered recommendations to the Board of Elders concerning ministries
- to provide a wider base of counsel to the Board of Elders in their general oversight of specific ministries

1.10. Offices

The Board of Elders shall appoint a Chairman, Vice-chairman and Secretary. These officers may resign effective upon giving written notice to the Board of Elders or may be removed by the Board of Elders from these offices if deemed necessary. The Teaching Pastor shall not be Chairman of the Board of Elders.

- The secretary or his delegated representative at meetings of the Board of Elders shall record written minutes of each meeting and, following the Board approved written procedure for absent Board member input, shall make available for review by the elders a record of these minutes.
- Other responsibilities of each of the officers shall be at the discretion of the Board of Elders.

1.11. Terms

Elders are appointed to serve a term of three years with a maximum of two terms in a row. After two terms, an elder must have at least one year off prior to eligibility for another term. The length of service should be so arranged that no more than a third of the Board of Elders shall expire each year.

- Any elder may be removed from office if he becomes physically incapacitated, if he becomes spiritually unqualified as outlined in Section 1.6, or if his inability to serve is determined by consensus of the remainder of the Board of Elders and is agreed to by the congregation. (See Section 1.8.)
- Any elder may resign effective upon giving written notice to the Chairman or the Vice-chairman of the Board of Elders.

1.12. Delegation of Deacons

The Board of Elders shall appoint Deacons as delineated in Article VII, Section 3.

1.13 Hiring

Additional, non-pastoral church staff may be hired at the discretion of the Board of Elders.

Section 2. Pastors**2.1. Qualifications**

As elders, pastors must meet the qualifications set forth in Article VII, Section 1.6 and must clearly possess a "pastor's heart" (I Peter 5:1-4).

2.2. Responsibilities

The primary task of a pastor is the "equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry" (Ephesians 4:11-12). Along with the task of equipping, the pastors will also be responsible with the other elders for the spiritual welfare of the congregation. The Teaching Pastor is responsible to the Board of Elders for the preaching of the Scriptures and shall have in his care the stated services of NHC and the administration of the ordinances.

2.3. Term

The term of a pastor is for an indefinite period of time. Dismissal shall be in accordance with Article VII, Section 1.8 and, except in cases in which the pastor is rendered unqualified, should carry thirty days notice. A pastor shall give a thirty-day written notice prior to his resignation.

Section 3. Deacons**3.1. Purpose**

The biblical role of Deacons is one of Ministries of Mercy, compassionately ministering to the poor and needy. They are to ensure that the widows, orphans and suffering of the church are cared for in a thoroughly Christian manner. Deacons are to emulate our Lord's example of humble, loving service to needy people. Deacons are to be responsible for ministries such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Caring for widows and orphans
- Hospitality
- The poor
- Special needs
- Benevolence
- Helps
- Encouragement
- Stewardship

Deacons will be involved in other ministries as determined by the Board of Elders.

3.2. Qualifications

Deacons must meet the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

3.3. Selection and Terms

Deacons shall be appointed by and accountable to the Elder Board.

Article VIII FINANCES

Section 1.

NHC will be supported by the tithes and offerings of its people, who give as God prospers and according to His leading (II Cor. 9:6-7).

Section 2.

The church treasurer shall be appointed by the Board of Elders, shall be responsible for financial records and shall provide periodic reports to the Board of Elders. These reports will be made available for viewing upon request.

Section 3.

The annual budget will be prepared by the Church Finance Team and approved by the Board of Elders prior to being submitted to the congregation for approval. The proposed budget will be made available to the congregation a minimum of one week prior to the business meeting.

Section 4.

The Board of Elders may not spend more than one tenth of one percent (0.1%) of the annual gross budget per month of available funds without congregational approval (i.e., non-budget items).

Section 5.

NHC shall give a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of all undesignated tithes and offerings to missions with a goal of increasing that percentage.

Article IX LICENSING AND ORDINATION

Section 1. Licensing

NHC does not issue a "clergy license" as ordination is the official qualification considered by the State and counties of South Carolina for performance of recognized ecclesiastical duties (e.g., officiate a marriage, clergy-penitent privilege, etc.).

Section 2. Ordination

Ordination by NHC refers to the mutual recognition by the Board of Elders of a man's call to the ministry, preparation as a shepherd and qualification to serve. The council before which the candidate is examined shall be the NHC Board of Elders. The candidate shall be presented to the congregation. Ordination shall be conferred for life so long as the man continues to manifest the qualifications of an elder and supports the NHC Statement of Faith.

Article X ORDINANCES

Section 1. Believer's Baptism

See Article IV, Section 2.

Section 2. Lord's Supper

All who have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and are walking in fellowship with the Lord are welcome to join in this service.

Article XI DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution, the assets of NHC will be distributed in accordance with a plan of distribution adopted by the Board of Elders and approved by the congregation (simple majority vote). No part of the assets of NHC shall benefit any pastor, elder, deacon, member, donor or private individual. All assets must be distributed to one or more organizations whose purpose is consistent with that of NHC, and such organization(s) must be duly recognized by the Internal Revenue Service. Dissolution shall be only by three-fourths vote of the voting membership at a special meeting called for that purpose.

Article XII AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this constitution may be made by a two-thirds vote of the voting members at any regular business meeting. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the Board of Elders at least four weeks prior to the business meeting, at which the vote will be taken, and, if approved by the Board of Elders, must be publicly presented to the congregation at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.