



# **Bylaws of Northtown Trinity Church**

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## **ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP**

### *Section 1 — PROCEDURE*

All actions regarding membership, either of admission or dismissal, shall be made by the Elders. The Elders will present new members at quarterly meetings, but it shall not be necessary to wait until a quarterly meeting for the Elders to welcome candidates into membership.

### *Section 2 — INSTRUCTION TO NEW MEMBERS*

All persons uniting with this Church shall previously be made acquainted with the Membership Covenant and the Confession of Faith. New members shall pledge themselves to fulfill their stewardship obligations to regularly attend worship and participate in service and giving, when they make public profession of faith and join the Church.

### *Section 3 — CONFESSION OF FAITH*

While it is ideal for each member to fully affirm our Confession of Faith, members and member candidates who take exception to any part of the Confession should make such exceptions known to the Council of Elders. Only disagreement over essential Christian doctrines, as detailed in the Apostles' Creed, shall merit removal from the membership role. In matters of disagreement over non-essential teachings (adiaphora), members shall honor the Confession as the Church's formal position and not sew discord.

### *Section 4 — REMOVAL OF MEMBERS*

- a. Members may be removed from membership by the Elders.
- b. Members in good standing may request a letter of recommendation to present to a different church. Members who unite with another Church will be removed from the membership roll.
- c. Members who are found to be inactive in the worship, fellowship, and ministry of the Church will be removed from the membership roll. The Elders are responsible for reminding members of their duties in this respect.
- d. Members whose conduct consistently or grievously contradicts the commitments outlined in the Church Covenant may be subject to Church discipline under the leadership of the Elders.

## **ARTICLE II: CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

### *Section 1 — OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH*

The Biblical offices of the Church are Elders and Deacons. The Elders are legally the directors of the Church. Elders and Deacons shall be called to office by the already installed Elders of the Church as described in Article II, Sections 2–3 of these Bylaws. All Elders and Deacons of the Church shall be members in good and regular standing. The Church also recognizes the administrative positions of Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary and may employ additional personnel as described in Article III of these Bylaws.

### *Section 2 — ELDERS*

#### a. Qualifications

Elders and candidates for Elder shall be men of demonstrable godly character, above reproach in public and private, and committed to shepherding the flock of God and to teaching and guarding sound doctrine, as expressed in the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689. Elders and candidates will exemplify the biblical characteristics of elder-overseers in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and I Peter 5:1-4 and affirm the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689.

b. Responsibilities

The fundamental responsibility of the Elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word. The Elders are responsible for governing the Church as godly servant leaders. They must teach the Word and tend the flock of God in this Church. The responsibilities of the Elders shall include:

- i. examining prospective members and candidates for baptism and acquainting them with the Statement of Faith and Membership Covenant,
- ii. overseeing the process of Church discipline,
- iii. examining prospective candidates for office,
- iv. scheduling and providing a moderator for business meetings,
- v. providing for reporting and recording of official Church business,
- vi. overseeing the work of the Deacons and appointed Church agents and committees,
- vii. conducting worship services,
- viii. administering the ordinances of the Gospel,
- ix. equipping the membership of the Church for the work of the ministry,
- x. teaching the whole counsel of God both formally and informally,
- xi. correcting error,
- xii. overseeing, coordinating, and promoting the ministries of the Church,
- xiii. and mobilizing the Church for world mission.

c. Composition

The Elder Council shall be comprised of Staff and Non-Staff Elders. Staff Elders are men who receive financial compensation from the Church as they fulfill God's call to the specific ministries of the Word, prayer, and shepherding the flock. In addition to the duties of their office, as described in Section 'b' above, Staff Elders shall perform the duties determined by the Council of Elders. The duties shall be in writing at the time of employment, and the Elder Council shall approve substantial changes. Non-Staff Elders are men recommended by the Council of Elders and called by the Church who serve voluntarily without financial support from the Church as they fulfill God's call to the specific ministries of the Word, prayer, and shepherding the flock.

d. Organization

The Council of Elders shall organize itself however it determines to be best to achieve the mission of the Church. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. Meetings of the Council of Elders may be held at any location and may be conducted by means of electronic communication through which the Elders may simultaneously hear each other. Unless the Council provides otherwise, meetings of the Council may be held immediately upon notice. The Council shall annually select its Chairman and Vice-Chairman from among its Non-Staff Elders. The Council of Elders will meet at least quarterly and will consist of a quorum which is at least one-half of the Non-Staff elders plus at least one-half of the Staff Elders, except for matters on which only Non-Staff Elders are entitled to vote, in which case a majority of the Non-Staff elders shall constitute a quorum.

*Section 3 — DEACONS*

a. Qualifications

Deacons and nominees for Deacon shall be men and women who are members in good standing, demonstrate godly character, and possess particular gifts of service. Deacons will exemplify the godly characteristics set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-12.

b. Responsibilities

The Deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the Church, and the care for the members of the congregation. Their responsibilities may include:

- i. administering a fund to assist the poor and needy and otherwise providing aid in times of crisis or distress;
  - ii. the greeting and welcoming ministries of the Church;
  - iii. assisting in administering the ordinances of the Gospel;
  - iv. assisting at fellowship gatherings of the Church;
  - v. caring for and maintaining the Church properties;
  - vi. administering the business affairs of the Church that pertain to its material assets.
- c. Composition  
The Deacons may be both men and women. Deacons may or may not be employed by the Church. The number of Deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men and women in the Church.
- d. Organization  
Under the direction of the Elders, the Deacons shall organize themselves however they determine to be best to achieve the mission of the Church. The Elders or the Deacons may designate any specific Deacon or group of Deacons to specialize in some particular diaconal function. Meetings of the Deacons, or subcommittees thereof, shall be held as needed to best fulfill the responsibilities of the Deacons.

*Section 4 — REMOVAL*

- a. By resignation  
Elders or Deacons may resign their office at any time if they find they can no longer discharge the office's duties.
- b. Grievance  
Where a grievance exists against an Elder or Deacon due to teaching contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in Article II of its Constitution or to alleged conduct on their part unfitting an Elder or Deacon, such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing. If the Council, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the call of the Elder or Deacon may be terminated by the Council of Elders. Such action shall be communicated to the Members at a regular or special meeting.

*Section 5 — LICENSING AND ORDINATION*

In the matter of licensing and ordaining any person to the Gospel Ministry, the Church shall follow the procedure approved by the Council of Elders.

**ARTICLE III: CHURCH EMPLOYEES**

In addition to Staff Elders, the Church may employ additional personnel. The money for such personnel must be approved unanimously by the Elders. The Elders or their designees will be responsible for determining the duties of and hiring such personnel.

**ARTICLE IV: CHURCH FINANCES**

*Section 1 — IN GENERAL*

No method of raising funds shall be entertained which is in conflict with the Scriptural ideals of the Church. All funds donated for missions by the societies and organizations of the Church shall pass through the Treasurer in order that due record may be made and credit given to the Church. The Deacons shall provide assistance for the Treasurer in accounting for funds donated.

*Section 2 — CONTRIBUTIONS*

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligations to support the Church and its causes with regular and proportionate giving. Each member shall be encouraged in Scriptural giving, with tithing as the ideal minimum. The Church, or any of its organizations, may seek special offerings with the approval of the Council of Elders. This shall not preclude individuals from making special offerings or designated gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may lead them.

*Section 3 — FINANCIAL PLANNING*

The financial planning of the Church shall be carried out through the medium of annual budgets for carrying out the various programs of its work. The Council of Elders shall determine annual budgets, or, if authorized by the Council, the Deacons or other committee. Matters involving staff compensation shall be the responsibility of the lay members of the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate this responsibility provided such delegation is to lay Deacons or other lay members of the Church.

*Section 4 — ACCOUNTS*

The Treasurer shall account for financial receipts from all sources according to the purposes for which contributions are designated. The Treasurer of the Church shall disburse these funds promptly according to the Church's financial program as detailed in the Budgets or other authorized designations. All money for missions shall be remitted in accordance with the Mission Budget of the Church or otherwise designated, preferably each month and not less than each quarter.

*Section 5 — INDEBTEDNESS*

No note or contract exceeding 1% of the total annual budget whereby the credit of the Church is pledged shall be made except by approval of the Council of Elders.

*Section 6 — AUTHORITY TO BIND THE CHURCH*

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council of Elders are the only officers with authority, per these Bylaws, the Church Constitution, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finances.

**ARTICLE V: MEETINGS**

*Section 1 — FOR WORSHIP*

Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated each Lord's Day. Other religious services may be appointed as the advancement of the work of the Church may require.

*Section 2 — FOR BUSINESS*

a. Meeting Designation

All-Church meetings are those in which the entirety of the membership of Northtown Trinity Church is invited and encouraged to participate.

b. The Annual Meeting

The annual meeting shall be held sometime during the last month of the Church's fiscal year. This meeting exists to give the membership a formal opportunity to raise questions or concerns regarding pertinent issues including the Annual Budget.

c. Quarterly Meetings

Quarterly meetings of the Church shall be held within the first month of each quarter of the fiscal year.

d. Special Meetings

The Council of Elders may call for a special meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit or by other notification, the particular object of such meeting being clearly stated in the notice. In the calling of special meetings for purposes where an interval after advance notice is required by provision in these Bylaws or according to law, such provisions shall be observed. Notice shall be given at least one week in advance for meetings on especially important matters not otherwise provided for.

e. Notice Provisions

Unless specifically defined in other sections of these Bylaws or the Constitution, "resident membership" means those members who reside within 75 miles driving distance from the church building, "notice . . . in writing" means a written announcement sent by regular U.S. mail or other electronic means, and "notice . . . from the pulpit" means an oral announcement at each of the weekend worship services.

f. Electronic Meeting

When approved by the Council of Elders, any member business meeting may be conducted as an electronic meeting by remote communication using guidelines established by the Council of Elders. All members whose remote participation in a meeting complies with such guidelines are considered to be "present" for all purposes under these Bylaws. All members "present" by any of these means have the same rights as members. The Council of Elders is not required to offer remote communication for a meeting, and no member has a right to demand participation by remote communication for any meeting for which the Council of Elders has not approved it.

## **ARTICLE VI: ORGANIZATION OF MEMBERS FOR MINISTRY**

Members of this church shall have the liberty to participate in and organize themselves for ministry, provided that such participation and organization does not conflict with Article II of the Constitution. Any such organization may seek church sanction from the Council of Elders as an official ministry of Northtown Trinity Church. Such sanction may be granted provided that 1) the object, purpose, belief, and conduct of the organization and its members are consistent with Article II of the Constitution, and 2) the primary officers of the organization are: members of the church or other regular attenders of the church who have been approved under guidelines established by the Council of Elders. Sanction by the Council of Elders does not necessarily imply support of the organization by the church with personnel, finances, or facilities. Such support may be requested as provided by the leadership of the church.

## **ARTICLE VII: DISCIPLINE**

The Council of Elders shall carry out church discipline in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws and as explained in our Confession of Faith and consented to by the members.

## **ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to these Bylaws may be introduced through a written motion at any quarterly meeting, with the exception of Article II(4)(b) regarding amending the Elder Affirmation of Faith which as previously stated may only be amended by a recommendation of the Council of Elders to the church. Amendments shall not be acted on until the following quarterly or annual meeting, at which time an affirmative vote of the majority of the Council of Elders, or a two-thirds majority of those Elders present at the meeting shall be required for acceptance; provided that notice of the proposed change or amendment be given from the

pulpit on at least two weekends and in writing to the resident membership in the interim period between the meetings.