

NORTHRIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH CONSTITUTION

Adopted 1965; Revised 1978, 1993, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2004, 2010

ARTICLE I - Name

This organization shall be known as Northridge Baptist Church, Inc. of Mitchell, South Dakota.

ARTICLE II - Purpose

The purpose of this church shall be...

1. To fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew 28:18-20.
2. To equip believers to fulfill this commission through instruction in the Word of God, public worship, fellowship, discipleship, stewardship and missionary endeavors.
3. To practice the precepts of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ and to administer and sustain the ordinances and doctrines of the New Testament church.

ARTICLE III - Statement of Faith

1. The Word of God

We believe that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word and revelation of God, 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. (John 17:17; Romans 15:4; II Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:19-21)

2. The Trinity

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. (Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-4; I John 5:7)

3. God the Father

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 individuals, that He hears and answers prayer and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (John 3:16,17; John 4:24; John 17:5)

4. 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 on the cross, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His People, and personal visible return to earth. (Isaiah 7:14; John 1:14; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 1:2,3; I John 1:7)

5. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit who was sent from the Father and Son to convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and 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. (John 14:26; John 16:7-15; Romans 8:14-17; Ephesians 1:13, 14; I Corinthians 12:7,13)

6. Regeneration

We believe that all people 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, or reborn, by the Holy Spirit. (John 1:12,13; John 3:3,16,17; Acts 20:21; Ephesians 2:1-9; Titus 3:5)

7. The Church

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual 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, fellowship and stewardship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world (Matthew 16:16-18; Acts 2:38-41; Ephesians 2:19-22; Ephesians 5:25-27)

8. Christian Conduct

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well being of humankind; that the Christian should maintain conduct blameless before the world, be a faithful steward of possessions and talents, and seek to realize for self and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. (II Corinthians 9:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 2:14-16; Colossians 3:17-23; I Thessalonians 5:17,18)

9. The Ordinances

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe Christ commanded that these two ordinances be observed and administered until His return. (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:41; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 11:23-32)

10. Religious Liberty

We believe that every human being can have a personal and vital relationship with God through prayer and His Word, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith. We believe 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 in the pursuit of Godliness and betterment of mankind. (I Timothy 2:5; Romans 13:1-5)

11. The Last Things

We believe in the personal, visible, return of the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the just and the unjust. We believe that the church shall meet the Lord in the air according to His promise, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. We believe in the final judgment, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost with Satan and His followers. (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28,29; I Corinthians 15:42-44; II Corinthians 5:10; I Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelations 20:1-15)

ARTICLE IV - Church Covenant

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and to confess Him as Lord, and on confession of this faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully covenant with one another, as one body in Christ, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him.

1. For the Advancement of this Church

We promise by the aid of the Holy Spirit to forsake the ways of sin and to walk together in Christian love and in the paths of righteousness. With this in view we engage to strive together for both the peace and purity of his church, to sustain it in worship, and steadfastly to cherish and abide by its ordinances, discipline and doctrines.

2. As Christian Stewards

As faithful stewards, we promise to contribute time, talent and money as God prospers each of us, that the responsibility for the work of the local church and worldwide ministry of spreading the Gospel be faithfully and effectively discharged.

3. Alone and at Home

We promise to maintain family and private devotions; to teach the Bible to our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances.

4. Before the World

We promise to be just in our dealings and faithful in our engagements; to be exemplary in our behavior; to avoid unkind words and unrighteous anger; to combine zeal and knowledge in our efforts to advance the cause of our Savior; and to make Christ first in all things both spiritual and temporal.

5. Toward One Another

We promise to give and receive admonition with meekness and affection; to remember each other in prayer, and to aid each other in case of sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for a reconciliation and mindful of the Scriptures, to seek it without delay, to encourage one another in the blessed hope of our Lord's return.

ARTICLE V - Membership

SECTION 1 - Reception of Members

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and holding the views of faith and practice in conformity with those of this church may be received into its membership by baptism, Christian experience, restoration, or by letter.

1. Baptism

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of a change in heart and life and accepting the views of faith and practice as adopted by this church, may upon baptism by immersion, be received into its membership.

2. Christian Experience

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of the same in their life and accepting the views of faith and practice as adopted by this church, and having been previously immersed in obedience to the Scriptures, may be received into the membership of the church.

3. Restoration

Persons who have been members of this church from whom the hand of fellowship has been withdrawn, or whose membership has lapsed, may, upon recommendation of the Pastor and the Board of Overseers, be received back into the membership of the church.

4. Letter

Any person presenting a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church or any other church of like faith and practice may be received into the membership of the church. All applicants for membership shall appear before the Pastor and the Board of Overseers for consultation and examination. Applicants recommended to the church by the Pastor and the Board of Overseers shall be presented to the church and received into its membership by a simple majority vote of the members present at any regular meeting of the church.

SECTION 2 - Duties of Church Members

Members shall subscribe to this Constitution, support the statement of Faith, keep the Church Covenant obligations, and assist in carrying out the purpose of the church. It shall be the responsibility of each member to support the ministry of Northridge Baptist Church by the use of their respective gifts of the Spirit, attendance, tithes and offerings, service, and by living a life that points the unsaved toward Christ. The Holy Spirit gives gifts to the believer for the purpose of building up the body of Christ (I Corinthians 14:17; Ephesians 4: 11-13), and any gift or talent claimed to be spiritually endowed must be judged doctrinally (I Corinthians 12), morally (I Corinthians 13), and practically (I Corinthians 14). Each member shall support the Pastor(s) and fellow members through prayer and love.

SECTION 3 - Separation of Members

Members may be removed from the official church roll under the following circumstances:

1. By death.
2. By release to another church of like faith and practice. A letter of transfer will be issued and signed by the pastor, and sent to the new church upon request.
3. By written request of the member that their name be removed from membership.
4. By disciplinary procedure of the church. Discipline and correction of church members shall be under the guidance of the pastor(s) and Board of Overseers, who shall seek the authority of the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit in such matters.

SECTION 4 - Voting Members

Those eligible to vote consist of all regularly attending members of Northridge who are 15 years of age and older. They include those who are away for the purpose of missions, military service, and further education. The Board of Overseers shall have the responsibility to maintain this list and can make exceptions as necessary. A list of all voting members shall be compiled by the office and provided to the Board of Overseers prior to each annual meeting. This list will serve as the official quorum list for the following calendar/fiscal year.

ARTICLE VI - Church Property

1. All property belonging to the Church shall remain intact. Members severing their connection with the Church, for whatever reason, relinquish all claims on its property. By Incorporation, the Church has legal standing before the courts of the State.
2. In case of division of the Church, the property shall revert to that group that adheres to this Constitution.
3. This corporation (Church) shall not be controlled by any other corporation or persons except in an advisory manner, but is entirely independent and sovereign in all its actions.
4. The Church Chair and the Church Clerk shall sign all legal documents on behalf of the Church as a Corporation, without personal liability, as authorized by Church action.

ARTICLE VII – Amendments

1. This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended at any meeting of the Church properly called, if a resolution to that affect has been presented in the previous meeting, and if two-thirds (2/3) of those members present are in favor of such amendment.
2. Articles VI and VII cannot be changed.

BY-LAWS OF THE NORTHRIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH

ARTICLE I - Meetings

1. Church Meetings
 - a. SUNDAY - Services shall include:
 - i. Sunday School.
 - ii. Morning Worship.
 - b. WEEKLY - mid-week prayer and Bible study.
 - c. BUSINESS MEETINGS
 - i. Shall be conducted as announced by the Board of Overseers.
 - ii. The Annual Business meeting will be held during the last quarter of the fiscal year. The Church Chair, Church Clerk, and Treasurer will be affirmed at the annual meeting.
 - iii. Shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.
 - iv. Shall be presided over by the Church Chair.
 - v. Special meetings may be called at any time by the Pastor, the Board of Overseers, or any ten voting members upon written request to the Board of Overseers.
 - vi. All meetings will be announced two Sundays prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE 1A

1. The Financial Fiscal year will be from Jan 1 thru Dec 31.
2. Quorum: A Quorum for transaction of business at meetings of the church shall consist of 10% of the voting members (15 years of age or older). When there is no quorum, the business can proceed only upon recommendation and unanimous vote of the Board of Overseers.

ARTICLE II - Officers

General Qualifications:

1. All officers of this church must be members who believe in the Statement of Faith, and who are actively discharging the Duties of Members to the best of their abilities.
2. No officer, except the Pastor and/or Associate Pastor, may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms in succession. One year must elapse before they can be re-elected to the same position.
3. All officers will be elected at the Annual Business meeting and start serving their term of office effective January 1st.
4. Termination of Office: Any officer of the church may terminate their office by:
 - a. A 30-day notice given by the officer to the Pastor or Associate Pastors and/or Board of Overseers.
 - b. Notice may be less than 30-days by mutual consent of the officer and the church.
 - c. A 30-day notice given by the church to the officer after a vote conducted by secret ballot at any church meeting called for that purpose and decided by a simple majority vote of those members present. In the case of giving a 30-day notice to the Pastor or Associate Pastors, a 2/3 (two thirds) majority vote is necessary.

Board of Overseers

1. Consist of at least seven elected male members.
2. Overseers will be elected by the congregation for a term of 3 years. They may serve no more than two consecutive terms. One year must elapse before they may be re-elected as an Overseer. A partial term does not constitute a full term.
3. Overseers shall meet the qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and shall be a member of Northridge Baptist Church for a minimum of 2 years preceding election to office.

4. Overseers shall meet regularly and before business meetings.
5. Overseers will select one of their own to serve as chair of the Overseers who would serve as Church Chair.
6. Overseers will select one of their own to serve as clerk of the Overseers who would serve as Church Clerk.
7. Overseers will select one of their own to serve as Treasurer. The Treasurer will obtain from the financial office staff monthly financial updates and present them to the full board.
8. The Lead Pastor will serve as a voting Overseer. The Lead Pastor may not serve as Chair of the Overseers.
9. The Lead Pastor will provide oversight to the ministry staff. Staff evaluations will be conducted by the Lead Pastor with input from the Overseers.

Overseers will be responsible for:

1) Direction of the church:

- Serve as the main governing board of the church.
- Provide oversight to Ministry Teams. Provide advice when necessary and provide affirmation when possible.
- Empower Ministry Teams to carry out the work of the church.
- Pass along items to the congregation for voting purposes.
- Oversee the prayer ministry of the church.
- Along with representatives from the Ministry Teams, collect budget items for the yearly church budget.
- Review and approve Ministry Team applications.
- Appoint Overseers to serve as a Nominating Committee.
- Perform yearly evaluations of the Lead Pastor.

2) Doctrine of the church:

- Affirm all teachers on a yearly basis.
- Address all issues of doctrine that face the church.
- Interview prospective members and acquaint them with the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant.

3) Discipline in the church:

- Handle church discipline from a Biblical perspective.

Ministry Teams

1. Ministry Teams will submit an application for their formation to be approved by the Board of Overseers.
2. Ministry Team leaders shall be a member of Northridge Baptist Church for a minimum of 1 year.
3. Ministry Team members will make decisions for their ministry focus.
4. Ministry Teams will work with and report to church staff who serve in that ministry focus.
5. Ministry Teams will minister under the accountability and authority of the Overseers.
6. Ministry Team leaders may enlist other church members or regular attenders to help carry out their responsibilities.
7. The Board of Overseers will determine the number and type of Ministry Teams.

ARTICLE III - Committees

1. Auditing Committee

- a. Shall consist of one or more members.
- b. Shall be appointed by the Board of Overseers at least one (1) month prior to the Annual Business Meeting.
- c. Shall audit the books of the Church prior to the Annual Business Meeting and report to the Church at that meeting.

2. Search Committee

- a. Shall be nominated by the Board of Overseers as the need arises, and shall consist of three or more members from the Board of Overseers and three or more members from the congregation and shall cease to exist when a new Pastor arrives and is installed.
- b. Shall seek the names of possible pastoral candidates and secure as much information as possible about the candidates including conversion, call to the ministry, and doctrinal position. The Church shall consider only one candidate at a time. All candidates must be nominated through the Search Committee.
- c. Shall announce the calling of a Special Business meeting in the Sunday services on two consecutive Sundays prior to the congregational vote. A vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members present shall be necessary to issue a call to a candidate to become a Pastor.
- d. Shall in conjunction with the Board of Overseers propose a Pastoral Compensation Package.

ARTICLE IV - Policies

Section 1 - Missionary and Benevolence Policy

1. Purpose: To establish church policy for the decision making process of directing funds and services to those organizations, missionaries or individuals who make such a request.
2. Theological Basis - Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19,20; II Corinthians 8, 9; Galatians 6:9-10; I John 3:17.
3. Procedure:
 - a. The Missionary and Benevolence Committee shall present a proposed budget to be approved in conjunction with the annual Church Budget.
 - b. Organizations, missionaries, or individuals who seek the long-term support of Northridge Baptist Church must submit the following to the committee:
 - i. Statement of faith and purpose of ministry.
 - ii. Personal testimony of the individual(s) requesting support.
 - iii. Recommendations of their Missionary Board or Church Elders.
 - c. Approval of requests by the committee will result in a vote to be taken at the Annual Business Meeting.
 - d. Yearly review of all missionaries and ministries supported by the Church shall be accomplished prior to the Annual Business Meeting. Such review shall include updates, ministry reviews, etc. In the event a missionary or ministry is considered to be no longer serving in the best interest of God's Kingdom and/or the overall goal of the Church's ministry emphasis, they may be denied further church support by a vote to be taken at the Annual Business Meeting.
4. Individuals or Organizations who request immediate support for basic sustenance of life's needs shall be handled in the following manner:
 - a. Such request shall be reviewed by the Pastor and at least one overseer.
 - b. Following their approval they may issue financial support to said individual(s) or ministry. This amount shall not exceed \$100.00 in value.
 - c. In the event a request for support by an individual(s) is repetitive, the Committee may request such individual(s) to meet with the Pastor or Board of Overseers. Such request will be for the purpose of examining Biblical financial principles; i.e. personal budget, etc.

CONSTITUTION DEFINITION: The set of principles adopted by a state or society for its government.

BY-LAW DEFINITION: A law or regulation made by a local authority, club for controlling its affairs.