

Bylaws of NorthCreek Church

Adopted by the congregation, August 27, 2000

Preamble

We, the members of the NORTHCREEK CHURCH, banding ourselves together in order to carry out more effectively the commission given by our Lord Jesus Christ, do ordain and establish the following bylaws to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

Article I – Name

The name of this organization shall be the NORTHCREEK CHURCH.

Article II – Purpose

The purpose of this organization shall be to build Christians who reach the lost. These guidelines of biblical evangelism and discipleship are to be carried out under the guidelines and mandates of Scripture.

Article III – Statement of Faith

Section 1.

We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men, and the divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life.

Section 2.

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Section 3.

We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into Heaven, where at the right hand of God, He is now our High Priest and Advocate.

Section 4.

We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service.

Section 5.

We believe that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost, and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.

Section 6.

We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become children of God.

Section 7.

We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the Church during the present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation.

Section 8.

We believe that the true Church is composed of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which He is the head.

Section 9.

We believe that only those who are thus members of the true Church shall be eligible for membership in the local church.

Section 10.

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church, and that every local church has the right under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs.

Section 11.

We believe in the personal and pre-millennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this "Blessed Hope" has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.

Section 12.

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead, of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.

Article IV – Membership

Any individual 18 or over who has given public testimony of receiving Jesus Christ as his/her Lord and Savior, and who gives evidence of living a godly lifestyle may apply for church membership.

Section 1. Method of Admission to Membership

Admission to membership in this church shall be obtained in the following manner:

- A. Anyone 18 or older who desires membership shall complete one of the regularly scheduled membership classes.
- B. An individual younger than 18 may become a member but will not be able to vote until he/she is 18.
- C. Having completed the membership class and signed *A Commitment to Membership*, the candidate shall fill out an application for church membership.
- D. Upon testimony of, or completion of believer's baptism, the candidate will meet with an elder(s) of the church to give his/her personal testimony of faith in Jesus Christ.
- E. Having successfully completed the elder interview, the candidate's name is presented to the Board of Elders. Upon approval, he/she is accepted as a member.
- F. If it is the determination of the elder(s) doing the interview that the prospective member does not confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, or that there is a lack of evidence of a godly lifestyle, membership will be denied.

Section 2. Members Classification

- A. The voting membership of the church shall consist of those who remain active in the life and ministry of the church. Those who, because of sickness or age, cannot regularly attend services and support the church shall also be considered voting members.
- B. Any voting member who has not been active in the life and ministry of the church for a period of six consecutive months may, at the discretion of the Board of Elders, be removed as a member.
- C. A non-resident member shall consist of anyone who is not able to attend services regularly for reason of temporary residence in another locality, membership in the armed forces, and those in missionary and other Christian work.
- D. Withdrawal from membership will be allowed upon request of the member. Members of good standing will receive a letter of recommendation.

Section 3. Church Discipline

If any member shall conduct himself in a manner which in the studied opinion of the senior pastor and the Board of Elders is not in harmony with scriptural principles and for which he does not show evidence of repentance, he shall be interviewed and counseled by the pastoral staff and/or the Board of Elders after the manner clearly indicated in the Word of God: Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1. The sole motivation of the disciplinary process is love for the erring member and a desire for his/her repentant heart. The process of discipline is halted at any time by a confession on the part of the erring member and a commitment to turn from his/her sin. Confrontation of a member in sin with the goal of restoration shall proceed as follows:

- A. The erring member is confronted one-on-one by someone observing his/her sin.
- B. If the erring member does not turn from his/her sin, he/she is confronted with at least one other person regarding his/her sin.
- C. If the erring member still does not turn from his/her sin, a specific allegation of sin shall be submitted in writing to the chairman of the Board of Elders, or his designee.
- D. If the chairman of the Board of Elders or his designee regards this as an issue that needs to be pursued (as defined in our policy paper on church discipline), he will appoint at least two elders and/or pastors to talk with the erring member regarding his sin. The specific allegation, the timing of the visit by the elders and/or pastors, and the results of the meeting shall be documented in writing with a copy sent to the erring member.
- E. If the erring member still does not turn from the sin or is not responsive, the matter will be referred to the Board of Elders.
- F. The elders shall make another attempt to meet with the erring member, and shall document the specific allegations, the ensuing attempts at reconciliation, and the further attempts being made to bring a godly resolution to the matter. This documentation shall be sent to the erring member in written form.
- G. If the erring member continues to rebuff the attempts of the elders, or is not responsive, they will “tell it to the church” for the purpose of removing the erring member from the fellowship and membership of the church. Written notice shall be sent to the erring member, both of the intent to follow this final procedure, and when the procedure has been completed. There shall be no appeal to any court from the final decision of the elders.
- H. It is understood that the discipline process will be carried through to its conclusion even if the erring member leaves the church or seeks to withdraw membership to avoid the discipline process.
- I. If, after dismissal, the erring member demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement to the elders, he/she will be publicly restored to membership upon the approval of the elders.

Article V – Membership Requirements

Section 1. Duties

It is the duty of the voting members to approve elder candidates, approve the annual operating budget, bylaw changes, major decisions regarding property or building projects, and the calling or dismissal of a senior pastor. Members shall seek to progress in their spiritual walk by carrying out the commitments of in *A Commitment to Membership*.

Section 2. Business Meetings

- A. Annual business meeting - The annual business meeting of the church shall be held in May. Notice shall be given the two Sundays prior to the meeting.
- B. Special business meetings - Special business meetings for the transaction of legitimate business are to be called by the Board of Elders as deemed necessary or when petitioned in writing, signed by ten percent of the voting membership of the church. Notice of such special meetings shall be given by announcement at the regular services of the church, and written notice mailed in time to reach all voting members at least seven days prior to the date of the meeting.
- C. Rules of Order - The rules of order contained in *Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern all annual and special meetings of the church except in instances of conflict between said Rules of Order and the Articles or Bylaws of the Church, or provisions of law.
- D. The chairman shall take appropriate measures to ensure that only eligible members vote.

Section 3. Quorums

- A. The quorum for the annual meeting of the church and any other specially called business meetings shall be the members present.
- B. The quorum for a specially called meeting for the purpose of hiring or firing the senior pastor or major acquisition of property shall be at least a majority of the voting membership of the church.

Section 4. Reports

Written reports shall be presented to the congregation at the annual meeting by the pastoral staff, financial secretary, treasurer, and by the chairman of the Board of Elders. All church committees and approved organizations shall report through the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders shall make a written evaluation of the year's activities, giving special emphasis to the spiritual aspects. This report shall also embody any recommendations of the Board of Elders directed to program and/or organizational improvement.

Article VI – Ministerial Staff

Section 1. Senior Pastor

A. Descriptions and Definitions

1. As a spiritual leader and shepherd he shall be well prepared for his office by meeting the qualifications of elders (as outlined in Article VII, Section 1E), experience, training, and education, including seminary level education, or the equivalent. (Luke 12:47; 2 Tim. 2:15)
2. He shall be in full accord with the Statement of Faith of the church, shall become a church member, and shall accept and work within the organizational structure of the church as determined by the Board of Elders.
3. He will be a voting elder who is responsible to the Board of Elders. As spiritual leader and coworker, he shall assist the Board of Elders in shaping the policies, objectives, plans, and courses of action for implementing the stated purposes of the church.
4. He shall, with the approval of the Board of Elders, hire, direct, and supervise the other members of the ministerial staff, delegating responsibility and authority where appropriate, establishing priorities in the ministries, and promoting the effective

functioning of the total staff. With the approval of the Board of Elders, he may dismiss members of the ministerial staff.

B. Calling, Discipline, Termination of Senior Pastor

1. He shall be called to serve by a two-thirds vote by secret ballot of the members present and voting at any annual or special business meeting (see Quorum Requirements).
2. Accusations against him shall be considered by the Board of Elders only if supported by the written testimony of two or more witnesses. (1 Tim 5:19-21). If it is determined he has erred in doctrine or conduct, the Board of Elders shall admonish him. If the cause of complaint continues, the matter shall be presented to the congregation for action at a special business meeting.
3. If he desires to resign, or if by two-thirds vote by secret ballot (see Quorum Requirements) the church members present and voting desire the termination of his ministry, a notice must be given in writing by either party three months in advance of the termination date, unless waived by mutual consent.

Section 2. Ministerial Staff

A. Descriptions and Duties

1. He/she shall be in full accord with the Statement of Faith of the church, shall become a church member, and shall accept and work within the organizational structure of the church as determined by the senior pastor.
2. In his/her public ministry, he/she shall be responsible to the senior pastor. Also as a spiritual leader and coworker, he/she shall assist the ministerial staff and the Board of Elders in shaping the policies, objectives, plans, and courses of action for implementing the stated purposes of the church which relate to his/her area of specialty.

B. Calling, Discipline, Termination of Ministerial Staff

1. He/she shall be called to serve at the request of the senior pastor with the approval of the Board of Elders.
2. Accusations against him/her shall be considered by the senior pastor and the Board of Elders only if supported by the written testimony of two or more witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19-21). If it is determined he/she erred in doctrine or conduct, the senior pastor and Board of Elders shall admonish him/her. If the cause of complaint continues, the senior pastor with the approval of the Board of Elders has the authority to dismiss him/her.
3. If he/she desires to resign, or the senior pastor, with the approval of the Board of Elders, desires the termination of his/her ministry, a notice must be given in writing by either party three months in advance of the termination date, unless waived by mutual consent.
4. Upon the installation of a new senior pastor, he/she shall submit his/her resignation for consideration by the senior pastor and the Board of Elders.

Article VII – Government

Section 1. Board of Elders

- A. The Board of Elders shall be men who govern the church through their spiritual oversight and managing the business of the church.

- B. The Board shall consist of as many members as it deems necessary to carry out the ministry, but there will always be a minimum of seven elders from the congregation.
- C. An elder may leave the Board of Elders of his own free will at any time, or he may be removed from office if 75 percent of the Board of Elders feels that he is unable or not qualified to continue serving.
- D. Elders must be members in good standing of NORTHCREEK CHURCH.
- E. Qualifications of an elder are as follows:
 - He must be above reproach (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 2:7), be husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6), be temperate (self-controlled) (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:8), be prudent (balanced in judgment) (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:8), be respectable (1 Tim. 3:2), be hospitable (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:8), be able to teach (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:9), not be given (addicted) to wine (1 Tim 3:3, Titus 1:7), not be pugnacious, but gentle (1 Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:7), be uncontentious (1 Tim. 3:3), be free from the love of money (1 Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:7, 1 Pet. 5:2), be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with dignity (1 Tim. 3:4-5, Titus 1:6), not be a new convert (1 Tim. 3:6), have a good reputation with those outside the church (1 Tim. 3:7), not be self-willed (Titus 1:7), not be quick tempered (Titus 1:7), love that which is good (Titus 1:8, 1 Pet. 5:2), be just (Titus 1:8), be devout (Titus 1:8), and hold fast the faithful word (Titus 1:9).
- F. The Board of Elders shall appoint corporate officers yearly. The corporate officers shall be the chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, and treasurer. The chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary shall be elders. The senior pastor may not be the chairman of the Board of Elders. The treasurer is not required to be an elder. These officers shall sign all official documents pertinent to the corporation approved by the Board of Elders. The elders shall also appoint a financial secretary, a recording secretary, and such other officers as deemed necessary, none of whom needs to be an elder.
- G. The Board shall nominate new elders yearly or as the need arises. They will be nominated to serve a three-year term, at the end of which they will be reviewed and may be nominated to another term through the process outlined below.
- H. The procedure for selecting new elders shall be as follows:
 - 1. A person indicates an interest in being an elder, or someone presents his name to the elders as a potential candidate. This must be a member who is actively involved in the ministry in the church.
 - 2. The name is brought before the elders for their initial consideration. On their recommendation, the nominee is asked to fill out a questionnaire.
 - 3. The elders review the questionnaire.
 - a. If the elders feel the person does not have the qualifications of an elder, he is counseled by an elder regarding areas where he might serve best.
 - b. If the elders feel he has the potential to be an elder, but is not ready yet, he is counseled by an elder on personal or ministry areas in which work is needed.
 - c. If the elders feel he is ready to be an elder they schedule an interview with the whole Board of Elders.
 - d. Current elders completing a three-year term will be reviewed by the Board of Elders and may, upon mutual agreement, be nominated as elder candidates for another three-year term.

4. Upon a successful completion of the interview, the individual is now viewed as an elder candidate and is assigned to work with an elder. If the individual is denied candidacy status, he is told why and encouraged in other areas of ministry.
5. The candidate is then presented to the congregation, either in a business meeting or a public service.
6. A 90-day candidacy period follows where the congregation is encouraged to question and talk to the candidate as well as the staff and elders regarding any questions they may have about the candidate. Opposition to his candidacy will be considered by the elders only when it comes in signed, written form with specific allegations. During the candidacy period, the candidate is expected to attend all elder meetings, and receive the guidance of the elder assigned to him.
7. Upon the successful completion of the 90-day candidacy period, the candidate's name shall be placed before the voting membership for a vote of approval. Each candidate for elder must receive a two-thirds majority of the ballots cast to be confirmed as an elder.

Section 2. Role of Women

A woman may serve in any elected or appointed position of trust or responsibility in this church except as a pastor or as an elder.

Section 3. Organizations

- A. No organization, activity, program or business shall be formed or considered a part of the church activity before the sponsors have submitted their plans to the Pastor and the Board of Elders or their designees for sanction and approval.
- B. No organization shall be permitted to function under the name of the church whose chairman or supervisor is not a member of the church.
- C. All funds donated for any ministry of the church shall be reported quarterly to the church financial secretary and treasurer.
- D. Methods of raising funds shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Elders of the church.

Article VIII – Standing

This church shall remain free and independent and shall not join itself to any other denomination or synod. It shall remain its own highest authority and conduct its affairs through its own business sessions. This church shall remain a part of, and shall cooperate with, the Evangelical Free Church of America and its branches by authorizing delegates to conferences, by supporting home and foreign missions, and by uniting in mutual efforts for the furtherance of the gospel as the church itself may officially decide.

Article IX – Church Property

Section 1.

In case of a division of the church, the property of the church shall remain in the control of the serving Board of Elders.

Section 2.

In case of dissolution of the church, the property shall be assigned to the Western District Conference of the Evangelical Free Church of America.

Section 3.

The church shall be considered dissolved when only five or fewer than five members remain.

Article X – Amending the Bylaws

Amendments to the Bylaws may be proposed by the Board of Elders. If any member of the church wishes to recommend an amendment, it shall first be presented to the Board of Elders in writing for approval. Any amendment approved by the Board of Elders must be presented to the church membership at two separate meetings with a period of at least three months in between. Voting at both meetings shall be by secret ballot and both shall require a two-thirds majority of ballots cast.