



Tax Exemption, Constitution, Bylaws, and Position Papers

January 31, 2024

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Constitution and By-Laws

Northside Assembly of God

Lakeland, Florida – Originally Adopted March 15, 2013

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Updated/Revised January 31, 2024

Preamble

For the purpose of establishing and maintaining a place for the worship of Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, to provide for Christian fellowship for those of like precious faith, where the Holy Spirit may be honored according to our distinctive testimony; to assume our share of responsibility and the privilege of propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ by all available means, both at home and in foreign lands; we, the members of this church, do hereby recognize ourselves as a local church in fellowship with and as a part of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, with headquarters in Springfield, Missouri, and also of the Peninsular Florida District Council of the Assemblies of God, with headquarters in Lakeland, Florida, and that we do hereby adopt the following Constitution, Bylaws, and Position Papers of church order and submit ourselves to be governed by them.

OUR COVENANT

We, having been called out of the world by the precious Spirit of God, and having become acquainted with the articles of Faith of the Assemblies of God, and believing it to be of God, and having become members of same, do solemnly, but cheerfully, and with joy and gladness enter into this covenant.

We will watch over each other with brotherly and sisterly love and kindness, not that we may have whereof to accuse our brother and sister, but that we may with meekness correct each other's faults. We will abstain from filthy conversation, and from backbiting and gossiping about our fellow Christians, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in bonds of peace.

We will warn them that are unruly or who walk disorderly; comfort the feeble-minded; support the weak; be patient toward all men; see that none render evil for evil unto any man; and ever follow that which is good, both among ourselves and those who are without. We will provide things honest in the sight of all men; and if it be possible, as much as lieth within us, live peaceably with all men (I Thessalonians 5:14, 15; Romans 12:17)

Realizing that the church is the Body of Christ, and that He purchased it with His own blood (I Cor 11:25), and since we are members of His church, we will faithfully attend its services and support it with our tithes and offerings. We will strive to so live as not to bring any reproach upon the church and will faithfully seek to adhere to its doctrines and teachings, as well as support its programs. We will do this by God's enablement, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

CONSTITUTION

PARAGRAPH I. NAME

The name of this church shall be NORTHSIDE ASSEMBLY OF GOD of the city of Lakeland, State of Florida. The church is incorporated with the state of Florida. This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) of 1986, for such purposes including, but not limited to proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, establishing and maintaining religious worship, educating believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture, and maintaining missionary activities in the United States and around the world.

PARAGRAPH II. PREROGATIVES AND PURPOSES

The prerogatives and purposes of a General Council affiliated assembly shall be:

1. **TO GOVERN:** This church will govern itself and conduct its own affairs according to the standard of the New Testament Scriptures. This responsibility shall specifically include such matters as the calling of a senior pastor, the election of the official board, the discipline of its members, and the conducting of its own services and church program.
2. **TO ACQUIRE AND DISPOSE:** In connection therewith, or incidental hereto, this church shall have the right to purchase or acquire by gift, bequest or otherwise, and to own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease, or otherwise dispose of any real estate or chattels as may be necessary for the furtherance of its purposes, and to exercise all other powers conferred upon it by its charter or by the applicable nonprofit corporation law of this state, all in accordance with its Constitution and Bylaws as the same may be hereafter amended.
3. **TO WORSHIP, FELLOWSHIP, AND PROPAGATE:** The purpose of this church shall be to establish and maintain a place for the worship of Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, to provide Christian fellowship for those of like precious faith, where the Holy Spirit may be honored according to our distinctive testimony; and to assume our share of responsibility and the privilege of propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ by all available means, both at home and in foreign lands.
4. **TO COOPERATE:** This church shall cooperate with the District Council and the General Council to extend the work and the Kingdom of God throughout the world. It shall support the missionary program as agreed upon. It shall participate in District Council and General Council sessions through its chosen delegates and share in the support of the ministries of these bodies.
5. **TO RECOGNIZE:** This church shall recognize that the District Council and the General Council have the authority and right to withdraw their certificates of affiliation if deemed necessary.

PARAGRAPH III. AFFILIATION

While maintaining its inherent rights to sovereignty in the conduct of its own affairs as herein set forth, this church shall voluntarily enter into full cooperative fellowship with churches of like precious faith, associated in the Peninsular Florida District Council of the Assemblies of God and The General Council of the Assemblies of God, with headquarters in Springfield, Missouri; and shall share in the privileges and assume the responsibilities enjoined by that affiliation. Officers of the District Council and General Council shall be recognized and respected by the pastors and members of this church.

As a member of the General Council, this church has the right to request the assistance of both the General Council and the District Council in dealing with any of its problems, upon the request of the senior pastor, a majority of the church board, or a petition signed by at least 20 percent of the active voting members of the church. Only those members who have regularly attended services of, and supported, this church for a period of at least three consecutive months prior to signing the petition shall be counted.

PARAGRAPH IV. TENETS OF FAITH

The Bible is our all-sufficient rule for faith and practice. This Statement of Fundamental Truths is intended simply as a basis of fellowship among us (i.e., that we all speak the same thing, I Corinthians 1:10; Acts 2:42). The phraseology employed in this statement is not inspired or contended for, but the truth set forth is held to be essential to a full-gospel ministry. No claim is made that it contains all biblical truth, only that it covers our need as to these fundamental doctrines.

1. THE SCRIPTURES INSPIRED

The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct (2 Timothy 3:15-17; I Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:21).

2. THE ONE TRUE GOD

The one true God has revealed himself as the eternally self-existent "I AM," the Creator of heaven and earth and the Redeemer of mankind. He has further revealed himself as embodying the principles of relationship and association as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10, 11; Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:22).

(a) Terms defined: The terms trinity and persons, as related to the Godhead, while not found in the Scriptures, as words in harmony with Scripture, whereby we may convey to others our immediate understanding of the doctrine of Christ respecting the Being of God, as distinguished from "gods many and lords many." We therefore may speak with propriety of the Lord our God, who is One Lord, as a trinity or as one Being of three persons and still be absolutely scriptural (examples, Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14; John 14:16-17).

(b) Distinction and relationship in the Godhead: Christ taught a distinction of persons in the Godhead which He expressed in specific terms of relationship, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but that this distinction and relationship, as to its mode is inscrutable and incomprehensible, because unexplained (Luke 1:35; I Corinthians 1:24; Matthew 11:25-27; 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14; I John 1:3,4).

(c) Unity of the One Being of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: Accordingly, therefore, there is that in the Father which constitutes Him the Father and not the Son. There is that in the Son which constitutes Him the Son and not the Father; and there is that in the Holy Ghost which constitutes Him the Holy Ghost and not either the Father or the Son. Wherefore the Father is the Begetter, the Son is the Begotten, and the Holy Ghost is the One proceeding from the Father and the Son. Therefore, because these three persons in the Godhead are in a state of unity, there is but one Lord god Almighty and His name one (John 1:18; 15:26; 17:11,21; Zechariah 14:9).

(d) Identity and Cooperation in the Godhead: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are never identical as to person nor confused as to relation; nor divided in respect to the Godhead; nor opposed as to cooperation. The Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son, as to relationship. The Son is with the Father and the Father is with the Son, as to fellowship. The Father is not from the Son, but the Son is from the Father, as to authority. The Holy Ghost is from the Father and the Son proceeding, as to nature, relationship, cooperation, and authority. Hence, no person in the Godhead either exists or works separately or independently of the others (John 5:17-30,32,37; John 8:17,18).

(e) The Title, Lord Jesus Christ: The appellation, Lord Jesus Christ, is a proper name. It is never applied in the New Testament either to the Father or to the Holy Ghost. It therefore belongs exclusively to the Son of God (Romans 1:1-3,7; II John 3).

(f) The Lord Jesus Christ, God with us: The Lord Jesus Christ, as to His divine and eternal nature, is the proper and only Begotten of the Father, but as to His human nature, He is the proper Son of man, and the title Son of Man His proper humanity. He is therefore, acknowledged to be both God and man; because He is God and man, He is "Immanuel," God with us (Matthew 1:23; I John 4:2,10,14; Revelation 1:13,17)

(g) The Title, Son of God: Since the name Immanuel embraces both God and man in the one person, our Lord Jesus Christ, it follows that the title Son of God describes His proper deity, and the title Son of Man his proper humanity. Therefore, the title Son of God belongs to the order of eternity, and the title Son of Man to the order of time (Matthew 1:21-23; II John 3; I John 3:8; Hebrews 7:3; 1:13).

(h) Transgression of the Doctrine of Christ: Wherefore, it is a transgression of the doctrine of Christ to say that Jesus Christ derived the title Son of God solely from the act of the Incarnation, or because of His relation to the economy of redemption. Therefore, to deny that the Father is a real and eternal Father, and that the Son is a real and eternal Son, is a denial of the distinction and relationship in the Being of God; a denial of the Father and the Son; and a displacement of the truth that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (II John 9; John 1:1,2,14,18,29,49 ; I John 2:22,23; 4:1-5; Hebrews 12:2).

(i) Exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord: The Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, having by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; angels and principalities and powers having been made subject unto Him. And having been made both Lord and Christ, He sent the Holy Ghost that we, in the name of Jesus, might bow our knees and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father until the end when the Son shall become subject to the Father that God may be all in all (Hebrews 1:3; I Peter 3:22; Acts 2:32-36; Romans 14:11; I Corinthians 15:24-28).

(j) Equal Honor to the Father and to the Son: Wherefore, since the Father has delivered all judgment unto the Son, it is not only the express duty of all in heaven and on earth to bow the knee, but it is an unspeakable joy in the Holy Ghost to ascribe unto the Son all the attributes of deity, and to give Him all the honor and the glory contained in all the names and titles of the Godhead except those which express relationship (see paragraphs b, c, and d) and thus honor the Son even as we honor the Father (John 5:22,23; I Peter 1:8; Revelation 5:6-14; Philippians 2:8,9; Revelation 7:9,10; 4:8-11)

3. THE DEITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. The Scriptures declare:

- a. His virgin birth (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:31,35).
- b. His sinless life (Hebrews 7:26; I Peter 2:22).
- c. His miracles (Acts 2:22;10:38).
- d. His substitutionary work on the cross (I Corinthians 15:3, II Corinthians 15:4).
- e. His bodily resurrection from the dead (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; I Corinthians 15:4).
- f. His exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 1:9,11; 2:33; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:3).

4. THE FALL OF MAN

Man was created good and upright; for God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." However, man by voluntary transgression fell and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God (Genesis 1:26,27; 3:6; Romans 5:12-19).

5. THE SALVATION OF MAN

Man's only hope of redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

- (a) Conditions to Salvation: Salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, being justified by grace through faith, man becomes an heir of God according to the hope of eternal life (Luke 24:47; John 3:3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7).
- (b) The Evidences of Salvation: The inward evidence of salvation is the direct witness of the Spirit (Romans 8:16). The outward evidence to all men is a life of righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24; Titus 2:12).

6. THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

- (a) Baptism in Water: The ordinance of baptism by immersion is commanded in the Scriptures. All who repent and believe in Christ as Savior and Lord are to be baptized. Thus, they declare to the world that they have died with Christ and that they also have been raised with him to walk in newness of life (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:47,48; Romans 6:4).
- (b) Holy Communion: The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements – bread and the fruit of the vine – is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Peter 1:4); a memorial of His suffering and death (I Corinthians 11:26); and a prophecy of His second coming (I Corinthians 11:26); and is enjoined on all believers "till He comes!"

7. THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY GHOST

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,8; I Corinthians 12:1-31). This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9). With the baptism in the Holy Ghost comes such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; Acts 4:8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Hebrews 12:28), an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:42), and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost (Mark 16:20).

8. THE INITIAL PHYSICAL EVIDENCE OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY GHOST

The baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2:4). The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues (I Corinthians 12:4-10,28), but different in purpose and use.

9. SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God (Romans 12:1,2; I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:12). The Scriptures teach a life of "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). By the power of the Holy Ghost we are able to obey the command, "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15,16).

Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing our individual identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and by faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:11,13; Romans 8:1,2,13; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:12,13; I Peter 1:5).

10. THE CHURCH AND ITS MISSION

The church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her Great Commission. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven (Ephesians 1:22,23; 2:22; Hebrews 12:23).

Since God's purpose concerning man is to seek and to save that which is lost, to be worshipped by man, and to build a body of believers in the image of His Son, and to demonstrate His love and compassion for all the world, the priority reason for being of the Assemblies of God as part of the church is:

- (a) To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 15:15,16).
- (b) To be a corporate body in which man may worship God (I Corinthians 12:13).
- (c) To be a channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Ephesians 4:11-16; I Corinthians 12:28; 14:12).
- (d) To be a people who demonstrate God's love and compassion for all the world (Psalm 112:9; Galatians 2:10; James 1:27). The Assemblies of God exists expressly to give continuing emphasis to this reason-for-being in the New Testament apostolic pattern by teaching and encouraging believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. This experience enables them to evangelize in the power of the spirit with accompanying supernatural signs (Mark 16:15-20; Acts 4:29-31; Hebrews 2:3,4).
- (e) It adds a necessary dimension to a worshipful relationship with God (I Corinthians 2:10-16; I Corinthians 12-14).
- (f) It enables them to respond to the full working of the Holy Spirit in the expression of fruit and gifts and ministries as in New Testament times for the edifying of the body of Christ and care for the poor and needy of the world (Galatians 5:22-26; Matthew 25:37-40; I Corinthians 14:12; Ephesians 4:11,12; I Corinthians 12:28; Colossians 1:29).

11. THE MINISTRY

A divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for the fourfold purpose of leading the Church in:

1. Evangelization of the world (Mark 16:15-20)
2. Worship of God (John 4:23,24)
3. Building a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Ephesians 4:11,16)
4. Meeting human needs with ministries of love and compassion (Psalm 112:9; Galatians 2:10; 6:10; James 1:27).

12. DIVINE HEALING

Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the Atonement and is the privilege of all believers (Isaiah 53:4,5; Matthew 8:16,17; James 5:14-16).

13. THE BLESSED HOPE

The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent and blessed hope of the Church (I Thessalonians 4:16,17; Romans 8:23; Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 15:51,52).

14. THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

The second coming of Christ includes the rapture of the saints, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints to reign on earth for 1,000 years (Zechariah 14:5; Matthew 24:27,30; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-14; 20:1-6). This millennial reign will bring the salvation of National Israel (Ezekiel 37:21,22; Zephaniah 3:19,20; Romans 11:26,27) and the establishment of universal peace (Isiah 11:6-9; Psalm 72:3-8; Micah 4:3,4).

15. THE FINAL JUDGMENT

There will be a final judgment when the wicked dead will be raised and judged according to their works. Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life, together with the devil and his angels, the beast and the false prophet will be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 19:20; 2:11-15; 21:8).

16. THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH

We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (II Peter 3:13; Revelation 21,21).

PARAGRAPH V. STATEMENT OF FAITH ON HUMAN SEXUALITY

Our understanding of human sexuality is derived from the following Biblical principles:

1. God created humans as relational beings — the only part of creation that God explicitly designed to have community with Himself (Genesis 1:26). All other forms of community are designed to reflect this relationship between divinity and humanity (Hebrews 10:24–25, 1 Corinthians 12:14, Ephesians 5:25).
2. As a direct result of sin, the community between divinity and humanity was broken (Genesis 3:23–24). This brokenness has permeated into all other relationships (Genesis 4:15). Human sexuality is not exempt from the marring effects of separation from the Divine (Romans 1:21-23).
3. God's intention for human sexuality is to occur between one genetic male and one genetic female within the covenant of marriage (Genesis 2:18, 21–24; Hebrews 13:4).
4. All forms of sexuality outside of God's intention are a result of separation from God (1 Corinthians 6:13, 18–20) and are illegitimate moral options for the confessing Christian. In Scripture, several sexual behaviors are expressly forbidden, which include but are not limited to fornication, adultery, incest, unnatural sexual intercourse and homosexual acts (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:7–23, 20:10–21; Matthew 5:27–28; Romans 1:20–27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:17–19; Colossians 3:5)
5. Into this broken world, God sent himself in the form of His only begotten Son, Jesus the Christ (John 1:1–3, 14). Through His sacrifice, Jesus became the Way to restoration of the Divine/human community (John 3:16). Until one has restored his or her relationship with God through His Son, Jesus, all other relationships — including human sexuality — will remain broken (John 14:6–7).

At Northside, we affirm human sexuality as a gift from God, designed to serve as a mirror of one's relationship with God. We believe that God's intention for human sexuality is between one genetic male and one genetic female within the covenant of marriage (Genesis 2:18, 21–24; Hebrews 13:4). In addition, Northside supports the dignity of individual persons affirming their biological sex — understanding that any attempts to change one's God-given sexuality through elective sex-reassignment or transvestite, transgender or nonbinary "genderqueer" acts or conduct is at odds with our biblical standards, denominational affiliation, and subsequently our membership code of conduct.

Our Commitment: Any deviation from a biblical standard of sexual behavior is a result of separation from God and therefore is an opportunity for repentance, grace, and redemption so that as a community, we might honor one another and glorify God.

Further detail and clarification on the position of Northside Assembly of God can be found in the Nashville Statement – A Coalition of Biblical Sexuality. (see APPENDIX: POSITION PAPERS)

PARAGRAPH VI. ORDINANCES

Section 1. Baptism in Water: The ordinance of baptism by immersion in water (Matthew 28:19) shall be administered to those who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls, and who give clear evidence of their salvation (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12).

Section 2. Holy Communion: The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly as enjoined in the Scripture (Luke 22:19-20; I Corinthians 11:23-26).

PARAGRAPH VII. PASTORAL CARE

Section 1. The church shall have the privilege to consider for senior pastor any properly credentialed (Certified, Licensed, or Ordained) Christian minister in agreement with all Northside Assembly positions.

Section 2. The senior pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the church.

Section 3. The senior pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period of time.

PARAGRAPH VIII. OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of the church for its spiritual oversight shall be the senior pastor, secretary, treasurer, and any other official board members. The members of the official board shall be persons of mature Christian experience and knowledge, who shall meet the requirements set forth in I Timothy 3, and Titus 1

PARAGRAPH IX. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership in the church shall be available to those persons qualified according to the Constitution and Bylaws, who attend all required sessions of the New Member's class, and who complete an application provided by the pastoral staff.

Section 2. The senior pastor shall be responsible for ensuring that the secretary maintains a current membership roll, which shall be subject to revision by the senior pastor and the official board.

Section 3: Since members of this faith-based community have voluntarily chosen to be participants, all Northside members are encouraged to follow these guidelines of scriptural and community standards and behavior. As Christ-followers and members of the community of Northside Assembly of God, members will:

- (a) Practice the spiritual disciplines—regular reading of God's Word, prayer, etc.
- (b) Understand that regular attendance at church services is necessary for spiritual growth and development
- (c) Pursue integrity and practice professional ethics
- (d) Adhere to guidelines of proper dress in public – clean, neat, and modest
- (e) Respect the dignity of all persons and highly value the diversity of the body of Christ
- (f) Respect the rights and property of others
- (g) Discourage bigotry, slander, and gossip among the members of the community and refuse to engage in such behavior
- (h) Refrain from getting drunk and/or using illegal drugs (including the possession, use, or distribution of illegal beverages, drugs, or other intoxicants)
- (i) Refrain from the possession, use, or distribution of illegal substances and the abuse or illegal use of legal substances, including prescription and over-the-counter medications
- (j) Refrain from all sexually immoral behavior including: premarital sex; adultery; lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender behavior; and involvement with pornography in any form. (Biblical marriage consists only of a faithful, heterosexual union between one genetic male and one genetic female, and biblical marriage is the only legitimate and acceptable context for a sexual relationship)
- (k) Resolve conflict according to the model in Matthew 18:15-20
- (l) Honor the servant-leaders who watch over this community and cooperate with their leadership
- (m) Demonstrate compassion for others and a passion for the lost as a representative of Christ

PARAGRAPH X. MEETINGS

Section 1. Meetings for public worship shall be held on each Lord's Day and during the week as provided for under the direction of the senior pastor or the official board if there is no senior pastor.

Section 2. There shall be an annual business meeting of the church at which time the reports of the senior pastor, secretary, treasurer, and all department officers shall be given. This meeting shall be held on the last Wednesday of January each year.

Section 3. Special business meetings of the church may be called, when necessary, by the senior pastor or a majority of the official board after announcing two Sundays prior to the meeting, and an attempt to contact all absent members.

Section 4. Special business meetings of the church may be called for by petition of a simple majority of the active members, provided copies of the petition have been placed in the hands of the senior pastor and official board.

Section 5. A quorum shall consist of all members present at any duly called business meeting.

PARAGRAPH XI. FINANCES

Section 1. The church shall be financed by the tithes and offerings of its members and friends, and such other special funds as may be solicited.

Section 2. No indebtedness shall be incurred by or for the church without the approval by the voting membership.

PARAGRAPH XII. PROPERTY

Section 1. Realty-Procurement of all real property shall be vested in NORTHSIDE ASSEMBLY OF GOD. An approved abstract or title insurance policy is required.

Section 2. Chattel-All chattel goods secured by or for the church shall be its corporate property.

Section 3. The senior pastor and official board shall be responsible for seeing that the property is adequately covered by insurance.

PARAGRAPH XIII. AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the membership of the church in attendance in any regular or special meeting called for that purpose, provided due notice of such proposed change shall have been presented in writing at all the services on at least two consecutive Sundays immediately prior to the time of such meeting. It shall be understood that this does not apply to Paragraph IV the Tenets of Faith, which is not amendable, except in any future circumstances should the Assemblies of God denomination change these tenets of faith (the Statement of 16 Fundamental Truths) to any degree that is contrary to Scripture as determined by the Board and 75% of the membership of Northside Assembly of God of Lakeland, FL.

Paragraphs II, XII and XIII OF THE CONSTITUTION MAY BE AMENDED ONLY BY THE AFFIRMATIVE VOTE OF 75% of the active voting members present at any annual or special business meeting called for the exclusive purpose of amending this constitution.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE 1. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership Eligibility: Active voting membership in this church shall be open to all those who possess the following qualifications:

- a. A testimony to an experience of the new birth
- b. Having been baptized in water by immersion.
- c. Evidence of a consistent Christian life (Romans 5:4; 8:1-4; 13:13,14; Ephesians 4:7 -32; 5:1,2,15; I John t:6,71.
- d. An indication of a willingness to contribute regularly to the financial support of the church of which they are to become a member.
- e. Acceptance of the Tenets of Faith as set forth in Paragraph IV of the Constitution.
- f. Acceptance of the Statement of Faith on Human Sexuality as set forth in Paragraph V of the Constitution.
- g. Having reached at least 18 years of age.
- h. Having regularly attended services of, and financially supported, this church for a period of at least three consecutive months prior to the date of application for membership.
- i. Agreement to being governed by the most current Constitution, Bylaws, and Position Papers of this church as any may be amended from time to time.

Section 2. Procedure for Membership Recognition: Those individuals eligible for membership who desire to become members of this church shall make a written application to the senior pastor or official board. The senior pastor and official board shall have the right and authority to determine the eligibility and acceptability of all applicants for membership by majority vote. Those approved for membership by the senior pastor and official board shall be received into the church publicly at any of its regular services, and their names thereupon added to the church membership roll. No applicant for membership shall be accepted as a member within 30 days before an annual business meeting or within 10 days before a special business meeting.

Section 3. Voting Membership

- a. All active members in good standing 18 years of age or older shall constitute the voting membership of the church, except in matters pertaining to real estate where the minimum age is 21.
- b. Any member who shall have withdrawn his/her financial support from the church, or who is no longer in harmony with its doctrines or stated purposes, or who has been absent for three consecutive months or more, shall be ineligible to vote. The senior pastor and official board shall have the right to rule in extenuating circumstances (i.e. snowbirds, online attendance, etc.).
- c. The senior pastor and official board shall examine and revise the membership roll annually or as it deems wise.

Section 4. Senior Pastor and Spouse (if applicable): By virtue of office the senior pastor shall be considered an active voting member(s) of the church. The senior pastor's spouse shall become an active voting member simultaneously with the senior pastor, subject to Section 10 of this Article.

Section 5. Transfer Members: A member in good standing of another Assemblies of God church, who satisfies the standards for membership eligibility specified in Section 1 of Article I, may apply for membership by submitting a letter of transfer from the senior pastor of the other church, upon the approval of a majority of the official board and senior pastor.

Section 6. Junior Membership: Junior membership shall be available to young people under 18 years of age who give evidence of the new birth.

Section 7. Honorary Members: The senior pastor and official board, at any regular or special called meeting, may approve honorary members by a majority vote of the members present. Honorary membership is available to any person who has left the church indefinitely. Honorary membership recognition shall continue as long as the person maintains a consistent Christ-like life, remains sound in doctrine, and maintains a cooperative attitude toward Northside Assembly.

Section 8. Inactive Membership: Active voting members who shall without good cause absent themselves from the services of the church for a period of three consecutive months or more, or who cease to contribute their means to its support for a period of three consecutive months, may be declared inactive members by the senior pastor and official

board, and thereupon shall lose their voting privileges until they are restored to the fellowship, their standing to be settled by the definite action of the church through its senior pastor and official board.

Section 9. Discipline:

a. Grounds: Discipline is an exercise of scriptural authority for which the church is responsible (Matthew 15:19; 18:15-20; Luke 17:3; John 20:23; Acts 16:4; Ephesians 5:11; I Timothy 5:20; II Timothy 4:2; Hebrews 13:17). The purpose of discipline is to promote repentance and restoration. It is to be redemptive in nature as well as corrective. Any member of the church is subject to discipline on the basis of unscriptural conduct or doctrinal departure from the Tenets of Faith of this church.

b. Procedure: The church will follow the disciplinary procedure set forth in Matthew 18:15-20. This procedure consists generally of the following steps:

1. The senior pastor or a designated member of the official board discusses the charges with the member in an effort to resolve the matter privately.
2. If the first step does not resolve the matter, then the member shall meet with the senior pastor and official board or with a designated committee of the official board in an effort to resolve the matter privately. If the first and second steps do not resolve the matter, then the senior pastor and official board may act as they deem necessary. A member found guilty may be dismissed from membership in the church (Matthew 18:17).

Section 10. Resignation: Resignation from membership is possible by those members in good standing, who are not under any disciplinary action.

ARTICLE II. GOVERNMENT

Section 1. In General

a. The government of this church shall be vested in the official board which shall consist of the senior pastor and at least three qualified members.

b. Duties of Official Board

- (1) Under the direction and oversight of the senior pastor, the official board shall assist in the management of the affairs, funds, and property of the church, and assist in carrying out the purposes of the church according to its charter and its constitution.
- (2) The senior pastor and official board shall act in the examination of applications for membership and in the administration of discipline.
- (3) When the church is temporarily without a senior pastor, the remaining members of the official board shall be empowered to select a temporary chairman of the official board.
- (4) The official board shall elect a board secretary from among its members.
- (5) The official board shall elect a treasurer from among its members who meet the qualifications for such office.

Section 2. Officers and Members.

At minimum, there shall be a president, secretary, and treasurer. The senior pastor, by virtue of office, shall be the president and chairman of the official board. All other full-time assistant/associate Pastors shall also automatically be ex-officio (non-voting) members of the Board by virtue of their office. Full-time and part-time pastors and/or staff are eligible to serve as voting members on the Board, but must be selected, nominated, and elected per the normal process. The offices of secretary and treasurer may be held simultaneously by the same individual, although this is neither required nor ideal. Officers must be chosen from voting-eligible board membership only (i.e. ex-officio members are not allowed to hold an official board officer position).

Qualifications

- (1) Senior Pastor - The senior pastor shall be in good standing with both The General Council of the Assemblies of God and the District Council.
- (2) Secretary - The secretary shall be an active voting member of this church and shall currently support the church with tithes, shall have a cooperative spirit, and shall be faithful in attendance at church services.
- (3) Treasurer - The treasurer shall be an active voting member of this church and shall currently support the church with tithes, shall have a cooperative spirit, and shall be faithful in attendance at church services.

(4) Additional Members – Additional board members shall be active voting members of this church and shall currently support the church with tithes, shall have a cooperative spirit, and shall be faithful in attendance at church services.

c. Duties of officers

(1) Senior Pastor

- a. Shall be the spiritual overseer of the church and shall direct its activities.
- b. Shall be recognized as a member of the official board, president of the church, and shall act as the chairman of all business meetings of the church and of the official board.
- c. Shall provide for all services of the church and shall specifically arrange for all special meetings, conventions, and revival campaigns. No person shall be invited to speak or preach in the church without the senior pastor's approval.
- d. Shall, as chairman of the official board, be chairman of the nominating committee for the selection of board nominees. The senior pastor shall privately interview those nominated, ascertaining their eligibility and availability to serve on the official board.
- e. Should conduct a training class at least once a year on the responsibilities of the official board, secretary, treasurer, and other church leaders. Such training courses shall be based upon the scriptural directives for church leadership and the church Bylaws.
- f. Shall be an ex officio member of all committees.

(2) Secretary

- a. Shall keep and sign-off the minutes of the official meetings of the official board and of the annual and special business meetings of the church.
- b. Shall periodically review the records of the membership of the church and perform any other clerical work necessary to the proper discharge of the secretary's duties.
- c. Shall be the custodian of all legal documents, which shall be maintained in the church office in a fire-proof container.
- d. Shall file such annual corporation reports with the secretary of state as may be required by state law.

(3) Treasurer

- a. Shall be entrusted with oversight of all the finances of the church, including any financial stewards of church funds (i.e. bookkeeper, assistant pastors, directors, employees, etc.) subject to the supervision of the senior pastor and official board. This shall include the establishment of proper protocols and procedures for counting, accounting for, and depositing all funds in board-approved accounts in the name of the church.
- b. Shall review the itemized account of receipts and disbursements, shall review the report(s) for each regular meeting of the official board, and shall review the presentation of an annual report to the church in its annual business meeting.
- c. Shall assist the church in acquiring and maintaining available tax exemptions under state and local law.
- d. Shall review the records of all identified giving to each donor at least annually.
- e. Shall be an additional custodian of all the financial records of the church, which shall be maintained in the church office.

(4) The Official Board

The official board shall be persons of mature Christian experience and knowledge, who shall be expected to meet the requirements set forth in I Timothy 3 and Acts 6. Official board members shall be at least 21 years old, and shall have been members of the church for at least one year. They shall currently support the church with their tithes and offerings, have a cooperative spirit, and regularly attend church services.

(5) Fiduciary Duties

The law imposes several fiduciary duties on officers, and the official board, including the duties of due care and diligence, loyalty, avoidance of self-dealing, expending designated contributions for the purposes specified, and not commingling personal and corporate funds.

ARTICLE III. ELECTIONS, VACANCIES, AND REMOVALS

Section 1. Elections

a. Senior Pastor

- (1) The official board shall nominate the senior pastor. Any member of the church may make recommendations to the official board.
- (2) The senior pastor shall be elected to serve for an indefinite period.

- (3) Election shall be by secret ballot at a special business meeting called for that purpose. Only one candidate shall be considered at a time.
- (4) A two-thirds majority vote of all votes cast shall be required to constitute an election.
- (5) In the event the senior pastor or any other member of the church shall challenge the validity of an election, the election shall be settled at the time of the election, and its decision shall be final.
- b. Secretary: The board secretary shall be elected by the official board from among its members. The terms of office shall be one year, and the secretary may serve consecutive terms.
- c. Treasurer: The treasurer shall be selected by the senior pastor and official board from among its members. His/her term of office shall be one year, and the treasurer may serve consecutive terms.
- d. The official board: The official board shall be nominated by a nominating committee appointed by the senior pastor and ratified by the official board (see Article II) and they shall be elected by a majority vote of those active voting members present at an annual business meeting. Active voting members may recommend nominees to the nominating committee; however, nominations for the official board shall not be accepted from the floor during any business meeting. Board members shall be elected for a three-year term, and shall hold office until the annual business meeting at which time their successor is elected. The terms of the official board shall be staggered appropriately.

Section 2. Vacancies and Removals

a. Senior Pastor

When a vacancy in the office of the senior pastor shall occur, the official board shall arrange for a temporary replacement until a senior pastor shall be chosen as prescribed in Article III. The counsel of the District Superintendent may be sought.

In the event a special business meeting is called by petition as provided in Article IV, for the purpose of considering the status of the senior pastor, a majority vote of all voting members present and voting shall be required to remove a senior pastor from office. Severance pay shall be governed by Article VII.

b. Secretary and Treasurer

The offices of secretary and treasurer shall be vacant upon the expiration of the term of office, or upon the termination of the officer's active membership.

c. The Official Board

The office of board member shall be vacant upon the expiration of the term of office, or upon the termination of a board member's active membership.

d. In General

Any office or position of leadership in the church (other than that of the senior pastor) may be terminated with or without cause by a majority vote of the active members present and voting at a special business meeting called for the limited purpose of removal of such member from office or position of leadership, which he/she holds.

e. Filling Vacancies

Any office or position of leadership in the church (other than that of senior pastor) may be filled by appointment of the senior pastor and official board for the unexpired term.

ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS

Section 1. Meetings for Worship

Meetings for public worship shall be held on each Lord's Day and during the week as may be provided for under direction of the senior pastor or the official board if there is no senior pastor.

Section 2. Annual Business Meeting

There shall be an annual business meeting of the church, at which time the election of officers shall take place and the report of all officers shall be presented. This meeting shall be held on the last Wednesday of January each year. The senior pastor shall announce the date, time, and place of the annual business meeting from the pulpit during morning worship services – one each Sunday immediately preceding the date of the meeting.

Section 3. Special Business Meetings

Special business meetings of the church may be called by the senior pastor, or by the majority of the official board, or by a petition of a simple majority of the active voting members of the church. Only those members who have regularly attended services of, and financially supported, this church for a period of at least three consecutive months prior to signing the petition shall be counted. A quorum shall consist of all active members present at any duly called business meeting. Petitions pertaining to the business affairs of the church shall be submitted to the senior pastor or the secretary of the official board.

Petitions pertaining to the status of the senior pastor may be directed to the District Superintendent, who shall arrange for a special business meeting of the church. No more than one petition on a given subject shall be recognized in any 12-month period. Notice of the date, time, place, and purpose of such special business meeting shall be announced from the pulpit during morning worship services on each of the two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting. No business other than that specified in the notice of meeting shall be transacted at any special meeting of the church.

Section 4. Parliamentary Order

All business meetings of the church shall be governed by parliamentary procedure as set forth in the current edition of ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER, in keeping with the spirit of Christian love and fellowship.

Section 5. Voting Constituency

- a. Qualifying of voters: The voting constituency at all business meetings of the church shall consist of the active voting members who are present and who are 18 years of age or older (Article I).
- b. Transfer Members: Transfer members shall have voting privileges after the successful transfer of membership (Article I).
- c. Members Under Process of Discipline: No member under the process of discipline shall be entitled to a vote until the process is completed.

Section 6. Quorum: A quorum shall consist of all active members present at any duly called business meeting.

Section 7. Order of Business: The suggested order of business for the annual business meeting of this church shall be as follows:

- a. Devotional
- b. Approval of previous minutes
- c. Report of treasurer
- d. Report of committees
- e. Unfinished business
- f. Election of officers
- g. New business
- h. Adjournment

Section 8. The Official Board. The senior pastor and official board shall meet regularly or at the call of the senior pastor for the transaction of business for the church. The time and place is to be announced by the senior pastor. A majority of board members present shall constitute a quorum.

Section 9. Membership Roll

The senior pastor and official board shall review the list of active voting members at least annually, at the regularly scheduled meeting of the board immediately preceding the annual business meeting and compile a current list of active voting members.

ARTICLE V. DEPARTMENTS

Section 1. In General

This church shall create and maintain such departments and sub-organizations as may be necessary and advisable for the extension of its work. All such departments and organizations shall be subordinate to the church and shall contribute to the harmony and development of the whole. They shall be under the general supervision of the senior pastor and official board, and the senior pastor shall be an ex officio member of all committees and departments. Additional

employee needs to serve as departmental pastors and/or staff shall be determined by the senior pastor and Board, with input from any other currently employed pastors and staff. Ministry (“job”) descriptions, remuneration, background checks, hiring, termination, etc. of such personnel shall be under the direction and supervision of the senior pastor and any organizational system and “chain of command” s/he determines is necessary for the various ministries of the church to function. There is a special process for hiring and termination of the senior pastor (see Article III of By-laws), but the Board retains the right to terminate any other employee, with or without cause, by a unanimous vote at any official regular or special called Board meeting.

Section 2. Northside Christian Preschool

The membership of Northside Assembly of God approved the opening of a Christian Preschool ministry at a special called business meeting on 4/10/2022. On 7/23/2023, the Northside Assembly of God Board approved the beginning of Northside Christian Preschool (NCP) in the fall of 2024. NCP will be an accredited and licensed religious exempt preschool. NCP will be a ministry of Northside Assembly of God of Lakeland, FL. NCP will be subject to all aspects of the Northside Assembly of God constitution, bylaws, and position papers. Specific preschool handbooks, policies, procedures, board(s), committees, etc. shall also be in compliance with the church’s constitution and bylaws and must be approved by the church board. The preschool Director must be a member of Northside and is chosen (and evaluated annually) by the church board.

ARTICLE VI. MINISTER LICENSING AND ORDINATION

Those desiring to serve in a specific AG office, AG ministry, AG mission’s field, etc. should seek licensure and ordination via the AG District office.

On the other hand, members called to church/ministry settings/positions that do not require specific denominational affiliation may seek licensing and/or ordination from Northside church via the pastoral staff. The pastoral staff of Northside Assembly shall serve as the licensure/ordination Council when church members are called of God into specific areas of ministry that necessitate official ministerial licensure and/or ordination. The difference between licensure and ordination is mainly that of function. Licensure is granted to those approved and called to preach/teach. Ordination is for those approved and called to pastor and/or lead a ministry of some kind. A candidate may seek and hold both if desired, although it is commonly assumed that someone “Ordained” is also called to preach and teach in whatever settings his/her ministry situation requires. Licensure is most often the first step toward Ordination. Assistant and associate pastors/leaders often begin at the licensure stage, and then pursue ordination after a period of at least one or two years of successful ministry.

Qualifications

- a. Any member who meets the qualifications/principles stated in Scripture to serve as a minister of the Gospel may be considered for licensure and/or ordination. Only members of Northside Assembly may be licensed and/or ordained by Northside Assembly.
- b. The candidate must have a divine call to the ministry, a consistent Christian walk, and a vital concern for the souls of mankind and the edification of the church at home and abroad.
- c. The candidate must affirm his/her adherence to the beliefs, practices, constitution, by-laws, and position papers of Northside Assembly. Any doctrinal positions on matters not specifically addressed in Northside Assembly’s Handbook must be based on the Scriptures as the Word of God.
- d. Graduation from a four-year Bible college, or its equivalent, is desired. However, candidates with an associate, or similar type of degree and/or experience, will be considered on a case-by-case-basis. In all cases, any uncertainty as to call or other obvious disqualifications will bar a candidate from licensure and/or ordination regardless of educational attainment.
- e. Candidates for licensure and/or ordination should have at least one year of previous experience in ministry.

Procedure

- a. Candidate must submit a request, in writing, to the pastoral staff (our Northside council) explaining his/her call to ministry, including an explanation of the need/desire for licensure/ordination. Included should be two letters of recommendation for licensure/ordination from other non-family ministers, and at least four personal references that can be contacted (phone, email, text, mail, etc.) to ascertain calling, character, witness, etc. Those writing the letters of recommendation may be included in the four personal references.

- b. Upon a majority vote from the pastoral staff (council), the candidate will be officially granted “Candidate” status, thus triggering the interview process.
- c. The pastoral staff (council) will further vet the candidate via reference checks and an interview(s) with respect to spiritual experience, call to ministry, and Christian doctrine.
- d. Upon recommendation of at least 75% of the pastoral staff (council), the candidate will be presented to the full church (Northside Assembly) for vote at a duly called business meeting, or at the required Annual Business meeting in January of each year.
- e. Upon majority approval from the church membership (see letter d), the senior pastor and staff will arrange for a licensure/ordination service. Such service will include applicable Scripture reading, information on the candidate, special music, a specific “charge” to the candidate from an agreed upon credentialed minister, and the laying of hands and prayer by the pastoral staff (council) and any other Northside members and/or believing family or friends of the candidate desiring to participate. A Certificate, good for one year, of licensure/ordination will be provided by the church.
- f. Any costs necessary in the license/ordination process, including the licensure/ordination service, must be incurred by the candidate.

Continuation and Revocation of License and/or Ordination

- a. Those licensed and ordained by Northside Assembly will be evaluated annually by the pastoral staff (council) in order to determine continued licensure/ordination. Any costs necessary in this updating license/ordination process must be incurred by the candidate.
- b. Should an active Northside Assembly licensed/ordained minister, at any time, be found living a life unbecoming to a servant of the Lord or preaching/teaching contrary to the Word of God, any pastor/staff of Northside Assembly may call the pastoral staff (council) to hear the charges and minister’s defense.
- c. Upon recommendation by a majority vote of the pastoral staff (council), the church will then revoke the minister’s license and/or ordination.
- d. Repentant individuals – after a period of removal from ministry for at least one year and ongoing faithfulness to the Lord, the church, membership, etc., and desiring future reinstatement – must start all over in the licensure/ordination process. After completion of this one-year “probationary” status, a period of at least one more year of successful ministry must be demonstrated before his/her licensure/ordination application would be considered.

ARTICLE VII. FINANCE

Section 1. In General

All funds for the maintenance of the church shall be provided by the voluntary contributions, tithes, and offerings of the members and friends of the organization. Offerings shall be accepted by the church at such times and in such ways as agreed upon by the senior pastor and official board and shall be subject to ongoing review by the treasurer (Malachi 3:10; Luke 6:38; I Corinthians 16:1,2; II Corinthians 9:6-8).

Section 2. Handling of Offerings

All offerings shall be counted by at least two authorized persons before the funds are removed from the church building. An offering receipt form shall be signed in duplicate by those counting the offering, with one copy going to the treasurer and the other to the senior pastor. A record shall be kept of all receipts and disbursements of the local church and of all individual giving.

Section 3: Designated Contributions

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. If the church receives a designated contribution for these funds or for any other designated purpose, the church will attempt to honor the designation; however, all designated contributions shall be deemed advisory rather than legally mandatory in nature—and shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the senior pastor and the board. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in these Bylaws.

Section 4. Senior Pastoral Remuneration

- a. Regular Remuneration: The senior pastor shall be remunerated for services by a salary or by other means agreed upon by the official board and the senior pastor. The official board shall review the senior pastor's remuneration at least annually.

b. Reimbursement for Expenses: The senior pastor shall be given consideration by the official board for expenses incurred by the senior pastor's attendance at District Councils, General Councils, and other district functions by reimbursement of such expenses or by an offering to help defray such expenses, according to the ability of the church as determined by the senior pastor and official board.

c. Severance Pay: In the event a senior pastor is removed from office by a vote of the active voting membership of the church, or shall fail to be sustained by a vote of the active voting membership, the senior pastor shall, at the discretion of the official board, be given a minimum of two months regular or average remuneration as severance pay.

d. Retirement/Voluntary Termination: In the event a senior pastor resigns and/or retires in good standing, at the discretion of the official board, that pastor may be given an applicable remuneration package as a gift of thanksgiving.

ARTICLE VIII. PROPERTY

Section 1. Title

All property of the church shall be deeded to the church and be held in its name.

Section 2. Purchases and Sales of Property

All tangible or personal property, i.e. furnishings, equipment, or otherwise, purchased or sold shall be at the discretion of the senior pastor and official board. All transactions regarding real property, fixed or otherwise, exceeding \$20,000 shall be authorized by a two-thirds vote of the members present at the annual business meeting or special called business meeting.

Section 3. Discontinuation/Dissolution of Church Services

Should this church vote to dissolve and/or cease to maintain a weekly worship service (face-to-face and/or on-line) for a period of three months under the direction of a leader duly authorized by the church it shall be dissolved. Upon the dissolution of the church, the board shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as the board shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to tax-exempt organizations that agree with the church's statement of faith.

Section 4. Disaffiliation

In the event that the church shall vote to disaffiliate (requires 75% vote) from the Assemblies of God, all property of the church shall remain with the incorporated Northside church.

ARTICLE IX TAX-EXEMPTION PROVISIONS

1. Private Inurement: No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in these Bylaws.

2. Political involvement: No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. To the extent prohibited by law, the church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

3. Nondiscrimination Policy: The church shall not discriminate against members, applicants for membership, students, or others on the basis of race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin; however, as a religious institution it reserves the right to deny or terminate employment or to deny or terminate any other status of persons whose lifestyle, words, actions or otherwise do not align with the church's statement of faith, standard of conduct, or other policies of the church. This policy statement is not intended to waive the ministerial exception or any other exception or exemption to federal, state, or local antidiscrimination laws or regulations.

4. Limitation of Activities: Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, the church shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes stated in these Bylaws.

ARTICLE X. ARBITRATION OF DISPUTES

Inasmuch as the Scriptures require Christians to take their disputes to the saints and not to the civil courts (I Corinthians 6:1-8), All disputes which may arise (1) between any member of this church and the church itself, or (2) between any member of this church and any pastor, officer, director, employee, volunteer, or other workers of this church, shall be received by binding arbitration if efforts to mediate or conciliate the dispute have failed. Either party to the dispute may initiate the arbitration process by filing with the other party a written request of arbitration within a 30-day time period after the dispute has arisen and efforts to mediate or conciliate have failed. In such a case, the member and the church shall each name an arbitrator, and the two so selected shall name a third. All arbitrators must be born-again, Spirit-filled believers who are members of an Assemblies of God church.

The third arbitrator chosen by the other two shall disclose, before accepting the appointment, any financial or personal interest in the outcome of the arbitration, and any existing or past financial, professional, or social relationships which are likely to affect impartiality, or which might reasonably create an appearance of impartiality or bias. Either of the parties to the arbitration, on the basis of such disclosures, may disqualify such a candidate from serving as the third arbitrator. A third arbitrator who serves without objection from either party has a continuing duty to disclose relationships or interests which may impart their impartiality. Either party, regardless of the stage of the arbitration process, may on the basis of such disclosures disqualify such a person from further participation. The arbitration process shall not proceed until the third arbitrator is selected.

The arbitrators shall appoint the time and place for the hearing and cause of notification to the parties to be served personally or by registered mail not less than 30 days before the hearing. Appearance at the hearing waives such notice. The arbitrators may adjourn the hearing from time to time as necessary and, on request of a party and for good cause or upon their own motion, may postpone the hearing to a later date. The arbitrators may hear and determine the controversy upon the evidence produced notwithstanding the failure of a party duly notified to appear. The parties are entitled to be heard, to present evidence material to the controversy, and to cross-examine witnesses appearing at the hearing. All the arbitrators shall conduct the hearing, but a majority of them may determine any question and render a final award. If during the course of the hearing an arbitrator for any reason ceases to act, the arbitrator shall be replaced in the same manner in which s/he was originally selected. The arbitrators may in their absolute discretion admit as evidence any affidavit or declaration concerning the matters in dispute, a copy thereof having been given at least five days previously to the party against whom the same is offered, but the person whose evidence is so taken shall be subject to cross-examination by such party. The arbitrators shall have the power to order and direct what they deem necessary to be done by either of the parties relating to the matters in dispute. Cost of the arbitration shall be determined and assessed by the arbitrators. Any submission of a dispute to arbitration shall not be revoked by the death of any party to the dispute, and any award will be binding upon such person's heirs and successors.

The decision of the arbitrators shall be binding on both parties, and both parties submit themselves to the personal jurisdiction of the civil courts in the state (including federal courts), as well as the courts of any other state, which may have jurisdiction over any dispute contemplated by this Article, for the entry of a judgment confirming the arbitrators' award.

The arbitration process is not a substitute for any disciplinary process set forth in the Constitution or Bylaws of the church and shall in no way affect the authority of the church to investigate reports of misconduct, conduct hearings, or administer discipline.

Any matter not provided for herein shall be governed by the provision of the Uniform Arbitration Act. If a dispute may result in an award of monetary damages, then use of this arbitration procedure is considered on acceptance of the procedure by the liability insurer of the church, and the insurer's agreement to honor any arbitration award up to any applicable policy limit.

Submission To Arbitration: Members of the church must agree to submit to binding Christian arbitration any legal matters within the church that cannot otherwise be resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bring any civil disagreement before a court of law, except that judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.

In the event further arbitration is needed, the church will use arbitration procedures provided by the National Center for Life and Liberty. This arbitration provision is ecclesiastical and faith-based in nature and is intended to operate under the rules and guidelines of this local church. It is not intended to operate under any state or federal guidelines for arbitration.

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS

The Bylaws may be amended at any annual or special business meeting of the church by a majority vote of the membership present. However, Article VIII (Property) of these Bylaws requires 75% approval for any amendments. All amendments should be consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws of the District Council except in any future circumstances should the Assemblies of God denomination change their tenets of faith (the Statement of 16 Fundamental Truths) and/or policies/procedures to any degree that is contrary to Scripture as determined by the Northside Board and 75% of the membership of Northside Assembly of God of Lakeland, FL.

This Article XI (Amendments) of these Bylaws may be amended only by the affirmative vote of 75% of the active voting members present at any annual or special business meeting called for the exclusive purpose of amending these Bylaws.

This Constitution and Bylaws were adopted by the required minimum votes of the members present and voting at a duly called meeting of the church in which a quorum was present.

This Constitution and Bylaws supersede any other Constitution and Bylaws of Northside Assembly of God church

Date

Church Secretary

APPENDIX: POSITION PAPERS

“Position papers” reflect the senior Pastor’s and Board’s Biblical rationale for more contemporary challenges facing the Church at large, and Northside as a part of that larger Body of Christian Believers. They are not formally adopted “bylaws” or “constitutional paragraphs,” but they are most certainly built upon the foundational truths and convictions stated in such. Position papers allow a better explanation for why we believe what we believe, in more current language and understanding, that is specific to the issues we are currently facing in our culture.

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NASHVILLE STATEMENT

A COALITION FOR BIBLICAL SEXUALITY

*“Know that the LORD Himself is God;
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves...”*

—Psalm 100:3

Preamble

Evangelical Christians at the dawn of the twenty-first century find themselves living in a period of historic transition. As Western culture has become increasingly post-Christian, it has embarked upon a massive revision of what it means to be a human being. By and large the spirit of our age no longer discerns or delights in the beauty of God’s design for human life. Many deny that God created human beings for his glory, and that his good purposes for us include our personal and physical design as male and female. It is common to think that human identity as male and female is not part of God’s beautiful plan, but is, rather, an expression of an individual’s autonomous preferences. The pathway to full and lasting joy through God’s good design for his creatures is thus replaced by the path of shortsighted alternatives that, sooner or later, ruin human life and dishonor God.

This secular spirit of our age presents a great challenge to the Christian church. Will the church of the Lord Jesus Christ lose her biblical conviction, clarity, and courage, and blend into the spirit of the age? Or will she hold fast to the word of life, draw courage from Jesus, and unashamedly proclaim his way as the way of life? Will she maintain her clear, counter-cultural witness to a world that seems bent on ruin?

We are persuaded that faithfulness in our generation means declaring once again the true story of the world and of our place in it—particularly as male and female. Christian Scripture teaches that there is but one God who alone is Creator and Lord of all. To him alone, every person owes glad-hearted thanksgiving, heart-felt praise, and total allegiance. This is the path not only of glorifying God, but of knowing ourselves. To forget our Creator is to forget who we are, for he made us for himself. And we cannot know ourselves truly without truly knowing him who made us. We did not make ourselves. We are not our own. Our true identity, as male and female persons, is given by God. It is not only foolish, but hopeless, to try to make ourselves what God did not create us to be.

We believe that God’s design for his creation and his way of salvation serve to bring him the greatest glory and bring us the greatest good. God’s good plan provides us with the greatest freedom. Jesus said he came that we might have life and have it in overflowing measure. He is for us and not against us. Therefore, in the hope of serving Christ’s church and witnessing publicly to the good purposes of God for human sexuality revealed in Christian Scripture, we offer the following affirmations and denials.

Article 1

WE AFFIRM that God has designed marriage to be a covenantal, sexual, procreative, lifelong union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife, and is meant to signify the covenant love between Christ and his bride the church.

WE DENY that God has designed marriage to be a homosexual, polygamous, or polyamorous relationship. We also deny that marriage is a mere human contract rather than a covenant made before God.

Article 2

WE AFFIRM that God's revealed will for all people is chastity outside of marriage and fidelity within marriage.

WE DENY that any affections, desires, or commitments ever justify sexual intercourse before or outside marriage; nor do they justify any form of sexual immorality.

Article 3

WE AFFIRM that God created Adam and Eve, the first human beings, in his own image, equal before God as persons, and distinct as male and female.

WE DENY that the divinely ordained differences between male and female render them unequal in dignity or worth.

Article 4

WE AFFIRM that divinely ordained differences between male and female reflect God's original creation design and are meant for human good and human flourishing.

WE DENY that such differences are a result of the Fall or are a tragedy to be overcome.

Article 5

WE AFFIRM that the differences between male and female reproductive structures are integral to God's design for self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that physical anomalies or psychological conditions nullify the God-appointed link between biological sex and self-conception as male or female.

Article 6

WE AFFIRM that those born with a physical disorder of sex development are created in the image of God and have dignity and worth equal to all other image-bearers. They are acknowledged by our Lord Jesus in his words about "eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb." With all others they are welcome as faithful followers of Jesus Christ and should embrace their biological sex insofar as it may be known.

WE DENY that ambiguities related to a person's biological sex render one incapable of living a fruitful life in joyful obedience to Christ.

Article 7

WE AFFIRM that self-conception as male or female should be defined by God's holy purposes in creation and redemption as revealed in Scripture.

WE DENY that adopting a homosexual or transgender self-conception is consistent with God's holy purposes in creation and redemption.

Article 8

WE AFFIRM that people who experience sexual attraction for the same sex may live a rich and fruitful life pleasing to God through faith in Jesus Christ, as they, like all Christians, walk in purity of life.

WE DENY that sexual attraction for the same sex is part of the natural goodness of God's original creation, or that it puts a person outside the hope of the gospel.

Article 9

WE AFFIRM that sin distorts sexual desires by directing them away from the marriage covenant and toward sexual immorality— a distortion that includes both heterosexual and homosexual immorality.

WE DENY that an enduring pattern of desire for sexual immorality justifies sexually immoral behavior.

Article 10

WE AFFIRM that it is sinful to approve of homosexual immorality or transgenderism and that such approval constitutes an essential departure from Christian faithfulness and witness.

WE DENY that the approval of homosexual immorality or transgenderism is a matter of moral indifference about which otherwise faithful Christians should agree to disagree.

Article 11

WE AFFIRM our duty to speak the truth in love at all times, including when we speak to or about one another as male or female.

WE DENY any obligation to speak in such ways that dishonor God’s design of his image bearers as male and female.

Article 12

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ gives both merciful pardon and transforming power, and that this pardon and power enable a follower of Jesus to put to death sinful desires and to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ is insufficient to forgive all sexual sins and to give power for holiness to every believer who feels drawn into sexual sin.

Article 13

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ enables sinners to forsake transgender self-conceptions and by divine forbearance to accept the God-ordained link between one’s biological sex and one’s self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ sanctions self-conceptions that are at odds with God’s revealed will.

Article 14

WE AFFIRM that Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners and that through Christ’s death and resurrection forgiveness of sins and eternal life are available to every person who repents of sin and trusts in Christ alone as Savior, Lord, and supreme treasure.

WE DENY that the Lord’s arm is too short to save or that any sinner is beyond his reach



Pastoral Position Paper from Dr. Doug Roth

Unanimously approved by church board on 11/11/2021

Approved by church congregation (100%) at the January 26, 2022, Annual Business Meeting

Dear Northside Family,

Although directed toward future pastors and staff the principles herein really should apply to all members as well. We all are “priests” before the Lord and those that have covenanted themselves to Northside specifically, via membership, should aim to follow the same principles that are guiding the board, pastors, and staff. Conversely, please do NOT use these principles as clubs against visitors, non-believers, non-members, etc. These are principles for the immediate Northside family, not to judge anyone, but to better experience God’s anointing and blessing.

Text of Paper

By no means do I claim to be “infallible,” and there may come a time, if the Lord tarries, when future pastors/boards sense the need to change things stated in this paper. However, it is encouraged that any such changes have the support of 100% of the pastoral staff and board, and a super majority (75% or higher) support of the church congregation. The reason for such a strong suggestion should be self-evident as the paper’s tenants are read and followed.

This position paper is largely a word to future pastors and staff. It is not a “thus saith the Lord” but it is close. I believe you will find the ideas and convictions in this paper to be very Scriptural, or at least based on sound Scriptural principles. Following them may not make you, or the church, popular or large, but it will keep you and the church on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ. Maintaining Scriptural integrity and conviction is a cornerstone of pastoring – clearly stated by Christ Himself (see for example the entire *Sermon on the Mount* in Matt 5-7).

1. Make God’s Word (Genesis – Revelation) your ultimate guide, for everything.
2. Pastors (and all staff) keep God first, your spouse second, family next, then the church family. You will be no good to the church as a pastor if your priorities are out of order!
3. Each pastor/staff is a team with one’s spouse; they are one. No matter what other external responsibilities any spouse has (job, kids, etc.) she is still always one with her husband – or if the pastor/staff is female, then the husband is one with his wife. As such you work together, speak as one, act as one in concert together, support each other, etc. (Unmarried pastor/staff issues are dealt with later in the addendum of this paper.)
4. Pastors need breaks. The pulpit should especially be a place of variety. Members need to hear from the pastors on staff, and many outside speakers as well. Northside should be a place of great teaching from many solid Biblical sources.
5. A pastor is part of the congregation, not above it (I Cor 12). His/her function is different, but no better or more important. Pastors/staff must give each other respect in the areas to which God has called them.

Explanation/illustration: I am a firm believer (and I can back it up Scripturally) that God speaks to each of us first, individually, in our areas of ministry/careers. After that, others will assist with confirming that it is Scriptural and timely. That will mean that sometimes I may wonder about what you are choosing to do, but as long as it's not against the Word of God, I will trust that you are following God's leading. (But as your pastor I might still ask "what in the world are you doing?!") However, this will also mean that sometimes you will wonder about something I say, or do, or lead us into as a local body of believers. As long as it's not against Scripture, I only ask that you trust me the same way I trust you. (Yes, you can ask – "Pastor, what in the world are you thinking?!")

6. Don't be afraid to do different things. If something isn't working, doing it even more or harder, will not produce different results. You cannot keep doing the same things and expect different results. If we want new people to join us, we may have to do some different things. If we want unsaved people to get saved, we may have to do some different things. We will let God show us each step of the way. But we have to be like the Israelites coming out of Egypt and follow His leading wherever He goes. Moses knew where they were going, but he had no idea how God was taking them there! Every day was a new adventure.
7. The Pentecostal and charismatic movements in general, and Northside specifically, have shifted gears over the years – in a good way. Denominational dogma, pride, and unscriptural practices have subsided and there is a greater emphasis upon the entire Body of Christ, His Kingdom work on this earth. Upcoming generations are not as concerned about denominational titles/practices, and they are searching for a genuine Biblical experience in church. There is a better understanding that church is a place to worship and grow in faith. Strong Biblical teaching, apologetics, and actually doing things for the Kingdom are, and should be, the cornerstones of the church's vision.
8. While the Pentecostal/charismatic experiences and gifts are one trademark/distinction of the AG denomination, and thus Northside as a member church, they should not be used as a measure of someone's salvation, spiritual maturity, or church membership.
9. Similarly, the AG, and Northside specifically, are certainly premillennial in our end-times beliefs, but the actual timing of the rapture (pre, post, mid, pre-wrath, etc.) should not be a measuring rod for someone's salvation, spiritual maturity, or church membership. Solid Bible-believing Christians, even within the AG denomination, do not all agree upon one position. Indeed, only one of the positions will turn out to be correct – and in fact, perhaps none of them are correct in the timing! It is better to always remember that Jesus said no one knows, and to teach all of the pros and cons (Biblically) of each position. By no means does this mean to shun teaching on Biblical prophecy. On the contrary, it should be a major part of any Christian's regular Biblical diet so that when the events do eventually play out, s/he will be able to quickly and correctly discern how God is at work fulfilling His Word.
10. Order of worship is NOT a hill to die on. There is no Biblical mandate that P&W has to be first (and just 3 songs), then announcements, then sermon, etc. There is no Biblical mandate that an altar call always be given. There is no Biblical mandate how often communion should be given. Other than the early Church meeting the first day of each week (Sunday), there isn't even a mandate for other weekly services (i.e. Sunday night, Wednesday night, Tuesday night, etc.). The Spirit of God will give the pastor (special speaker, etc.) His desired order of worship each week. There is no requirement that it be the same every time. And yet, there is no condemnation for good traditions/order every week. And indeed, every church (even Northside) formulates traditions that are not in and of themselves wrong. The key is to always be open to what the Spirit of God is leading.

11. Know that you will not always agree with each other, or like the way others do some things. Most of you are, or have been, married. Do you always agree with your spouse? Probably not. But we give grace and love to each other, we don't complain, and we always remember that ultimately, we answer to God alone. We live life for an audience of ONE!
12. Pastor(s), develop some kind of schedule to visit your members. Breaking bread with each other (i.e. dinner/dessert/lunch, whatever works for you) is important to maintaining any healthy family. Get to know each other's gifts, dreams, visions, etc., especially for Northside. As the church grows, this duty will need to be divided out amongst multiple pastors/staff/board members. In such an event, a rotating schedule should be developed so that over time each pastor does still literally visit every member, eventually!
13. Always be welcoming, accepting, and loving of any person that comes to us. Remember how different it was for you to visit somewhere the first time. It is also often difficult to welcome people into our comfort zone, our cliques, our home, our favorite events, etc. But welcome them into the family here. And invite new people, no pressure on dressing up, acting a certain way, etc.
14. We (Northside) will be pro-life, pro marriage (one woman to one man), pro-human race (the human race in all its diversity), and pro-missions. While hopefully it would never happen, even if the AG denomination changed its positions on any one of these issues, do NOT follow! Each of these are "non-negotiables" in God's Word.
15. We will aim to make missions (foreign, local, benevolence, outreach, etc.) at least 10% of our annual budget.
16. We (Northside) will never talk down about any other (true Biblical) churches/ministries, or feel that we are better, or not cooperate with them, or refuse to do ministry together with them, etc. This generation is NOT about denominations. They are about actions and words matching up with God's Word. Unity doesn't mean we will compromise the Word, but we also won't get prideful or dogmatic about minor issues with others.
17. Pastors, your first job is to shepherd – to help all to be disciples of HIM. We are all to make disciples of Christ, not disciples of Northside, ourselves, or some other movement. Church is a time to learn, grow, mature, be energized, and fed – to go out into a hostile world and live for Him.
18. The principle stated at the outset of this paper should be followed for every **major** decision – i.e. the board and pastoral staff in 100% agreement. "Major" decisions relate to ministries, staffing, building projects, curriculum, etc. Even if only one leader has a check, that could be the Holy Spirit protecting an unforeseen problem, and it would be wise to wait or abandon the idea. The importance of unity at the leadership level cannot be overstated. Division will only hurt the overall ministry. I would even suggest that most, if not all, "minor" decisions should be unanimous at the leadership level. Many a church has split over minor, often ridiculous, issues! Now, expecting the entire church to be in 100% agreement with decisions is unrealistic. But a good rule of thumb is to not move forward on any major decisions without at least a supermajority (75%) of the entire membership. (See Acts 8:14; 11:22; 13:3; 15:3, 25, 28; 17:10 for examples of the church being in agreement for specific actions.)
19. It is also advised that the board membership (whatever the total number may be, 3 minimum) include no more than one member from any member family unit. In other words, each member should be a husband or his wife, (but not both), or a child, or a sibling, or a parent – just one board member per family. While this may not always be feasible, the wisdom of having just one board member per extended family should be

self-evident. It reduces conflicts of interest, it maintains visible integrity to the church and community, it reduces accusations of nepotism, and it generates a better plurality of ideas and viewpoints on the board itself. This would also mean that no family members of the pastor would be allowed on the board. In the event that other pastors/staff are added to the official board, it would also mean none of their family members should be placed on the board. Certainly, any family member (if a church member) is eligible to be on the board (per the Constitution and By-law conditions), and the one representative from any given family unit can rotate year to year; the intent is that in any given year, no more than one family member, per extended family unit, is serving at the same time. Practically speaking, the family members of any board member – by extension – are serving alongside their respective family board member, thus illustrating the wisdom in not letting any family unit dominate church decisions, polity, etc. God’s Word teaches to flee/abstain even the appearance of evil (I Thess 5:22) and this principle would apply here to avoid any situations where our integrity could be questioned.

20. Whatever the cost, do NOT go into debt to do it! If God calls Northside to do something, He will provide the funds to do it. And if the funds don’t come, don’t start it or do it until you do have the funds. There is no example in Scripture of Israel, or any Godly person/entity, going into debt to do God’s work. Indeed, both the tabernacle and temple were built debt free – actually more than enough was given! (Ex 36:4-7). Scripture teaches to owe no man anything (Rom 13:8). It also teaches that we should be the head, not the tail, and that we should be loaners, not borrowers (Deut 28:12-13). The principle that the debtor is enslaved to the loaner is consistent throughout Scripture (Prov 22:7). Pastors/boards/staff need to remember that they are stewarding the hard-earned money of their members. Our society is rampant with people/organizations that love to spend other people’s money, usually before they even have it, by borrowing incessantly. Any “leader” can spend money. It takes much more faith, patience, diligence, and integrity to wait and spend it once you have it. (Consider the ant in Prov 6:6-8; or planning to build in Luke 14:28-30.)
21. As a general goal, the church should aim to have at least the equivalent of one year’s operating budget total in the bank (checking + savings) at any given time (this may need to be much higher based upon insurance coverage). Admittedly, this stated amount (i.e. one year) is not specifically dictated in Scripture, but the Bible is clear that saving for the rainy day is very wise. Joseph led Egypt to save for the seven lean years. Churches are not immune from unexpected emergencies. Insurance usually has very high deductibles. Many things are not covered by insurance. What if a pastor/staff/member is suddenly facing a huge financial need? Be wise!
22. Keep adding to the savings/investment fund. This is the equivalent to an “endowment” fund. This is one way Prov 13:22b is fulfilled in this life. Let the world’s money come to us and be used to expand God’s Kingdom! Again, don’t borrow; let interest work for you, not against you.
23. Pay all pastors/staff equally well. This does not mean everyone gets paid the same amount. Rather, it means pay everyone proportionally the same based on how many productive hours they put in per week/month/year. If we truly believe in the priesthood of every believer (1 Pet 2:5 & 9), and that ALL parts of the body are equally important (I Cor 12:12-26), then EVERY person in the church is equally critical to its functionality. The “Church” has too often followed the worldly pattern of the hierarchal corporations where CEO’s and executives make huge salaries, while custodians (for example) in the same company can’t feed their families. Our Northside policy could in fact mean that some employees actually make more than the pastor(s)! For example, a single person may be able to put in numerous hours every week because s/he just loves serving at Northside and has fewer family responsibilities to fulfill. S/he should be paid accordingly. In essence, the general principle is that every paid personnel of the church is on the same hourly pay rate. Some, because of the financial situation God has put them in, may elect not to be paid, or

desire a lower salary, or do ministry more on a volunteer basis. Such situations should not change the guiding principle to pay everyone else well. Not everyone is in such a financial situation.

[(a) One argument often made against this principle is that people in an organization have different levels of education and experience – and that such education and experience cost that person personal time and money, thus higher salaries for such is a way of returning those personal expenses. There is some validity to this, except that it needs to be applied universally to every employee’s training and experience. In other words, some employees may not have a college degree, but still spent hours and money in training programs/classes/apprenticeships, and gaining experience in their field. They should not be penalized because it’s not a “college degree.” The better way to compensate for these issues is to communicate to pastor(s), staff, etc. and find out what costs they actually did incur (and still have) from their training and simply provide periodic bonuses to pay back such. If a person’s sole motivation to get an education was to get a higher salary, then s/he may not be the right fit for Northside. A person should be obtaining more education/training simply because it is required to fulfill the mission to which God has called such person.

(b) A second argument made to pay some people more (usually pastors) is that if they bring more people into the church, they should be rewarded for such. Again, that fundamentally misses the I Cor 3:7 and I Cor 12 principles. God is responsible for the growth, and all church personnel (and members and attenders) are equally a part of that growth process.]

While this whole concept may sound socialistic, it’s not. The early church clearly believed Christ’s work necessitated this idea (Acts 4:32-37). But it still operated with the understanding that a capitalistic system is the best financial structure. It taught that a worker is worthy of his/her hire, and that if you don’t work, you don’t eat (2 Thess 3:10-12). Yet ALL work is important (Prov 14:23) and in the body of Christ it should not be relegated to different levels of importance and pay scales.

24. Make sure you have people of high integrity counting the tithes and offerings each week. There should always be at least two counters, and all involved in counting must initial two receipt tallies. Give one to the bookkeeper/depositor (as we grow, these could be two different people), and one to the pastor/board. The pastor/board must double check actual bank deposits each week to make sure they match the tallied receipt for that week. This is a double-check and balance system to make sure all funds are accounted for each week.

Addendum/Commentary

Because we believe ALL of the Bible is authoritative (2 Tim 3:16), difficult passages cannot simply be ignored or explained away as applicable only to the “culture” of Jesus’ day. Certainly, the way we do some things (methods) over time has changed (examples: communion cups, music, baptism, etc.), but the underlying Biblical principle and requirements must still be maintained. A more controversial area where this issue is debated amongst Christians revolves around women in pastoral roles. While this is not an issue at Northside, or within the AG, we must still maintain kindness, brotherly love, and non-judgmentalism toward other churches/denominations that take a different approach to passages like 1st Cor 14:34 and 1st Tim 2:11-12. And to be fair, these are difficult passages, and they cannot be ignored simply because we don’t like what they say.

However, when properly understood, the underlying teaching that Paul is communicating is actually very consistent with the rest of scripture, and it is to be celebrated and followed. Without getting into a long discourse and explanation (that is for sermons, Sunday school, Bible studies, etc.), the proper role of women pastors is the same as that of men pastors – properly submitted to their spouses. Submission is a two-way street (Eph 5:21). Marriage is God’s natural way to establish “checks and balances” when it comes to the things we

say, believe, teach, and do. And yet, there is a proper order within the Christian home (Eph 5:22-33) where God calls the man to be a spiritual servant-leader to his spouse and family. This is not an issue of hierarchy, but rather an issue of different roles and functions for a husband and wife. God made males and females different, not better or worse, just different (this is why Satan is attacking God-given genders, to try and undermine God's created and purposeful gender differences).

If a female pastor (or any female church member for that matter) is usurping that family structure as she ministers, then she is an example of the ones Paul is talking about in his Spirit-inspired writings – the ones that should keep quiet and not teach. The same would be true of men pastors. If he is not submitting to his wife as a fellow believer, and lording himself over her and/or his family and not being a servant, then he too should be silent in the church and not teach. We have to remember that we constantly apply passages directed at the male (for example Matt 5:28) equally to the female. Just because a commandment in Scripture appears to be gender specific in its grammar does not mean that spiritual requirement only applies to that gender! That would create chaos within Scripture – a type of Pharisaical approach to God's Word. God created "them" male and female (Gen 1:27). Scripture applies equally to the entire human race. So, any person speaking out of order in church, or being disorderly, or saying things not cleared by his/her spouse, is violating the principles that Paul is teaching. And this applies to any pastor (any gender) the same as anyone else.

A fair and logical question is then commonly asked about the single (unmarried) pastor because s/he has no spouse to serve as that "check and balance," with whom to be mutually submissive. Does that mean the single person can speak out disorderly in church, teach others wrong ideas, etc.? Paul didn't directly answer this question – likely because single pastors in his day were extremely rare. (Many scholars even believe Paul himself was married, or possibly a widower.) But God gives us common sense, and clearly Paul would never have a different (lower) standard for single pastors. Extrapolating the principle for widows, that the church serves as a type of provider and spouse to such, the same would apply to single (unmarried) pastors – the church is a type of spouse to such a person. How is that practically carried out in a local church? I would suggest that any unmarried pastor/staff person should be submitted to any pastors/board/etc. that have direct supervision over such person. In other words, what is said, taught, practiced, done, etc. by any single (unmarried) person should be shared and cleared with the applicable church leaders prior to blurting it out, teaching it, doing it, etc. This is obviously in the "spirit" of Eph 5:21 and maintains the requirements in 1st Cor 14:34 and 1st Tim 2:11-12.

Finally, this understanding (stated above) of Paul's teaching about women being silent in church has to be correct because he himself mentioned women serving in ministerial/leadership roles (Acts 17:4, Acts 17:12, Phil 4:3, Titus 2:3). Scripture also mentions "a prophetess" (a common term for a female preacher) in several places, and they speak in "church" (Ex 15:20, Judges 4:4, Luke 2:36, Acts 2:17, and Acts 21:9.) Northside will thus not be opposed to women in any pastoral/ministry role. Ideally, especially for senior pastor(s), married, with children (past or present), better fulfills the principles in I Tim 3:1-13 (especially note that such should not be a "novice," implying a seasoned and mature Christian.) But the "ideal" male or female pastor could easily be single as well. Certainly, Christ Himself was single. And it is likely that many of Jesus' disciples (male and female) were single. Whomever (male or female), the most important factor is that the board (preferably unanimously) is in agreement that the person is God's chosen vessel for the position needed. (A word of wisdom to any future senior pastor would be that you also want a super majority of the vote from the members as well. Taking on the lead role with a divided house would be unwise.)