

# NORTH HAVEN CHURCH BY-LAWS

**Adopted April 25, 1999**  
*Amended May 2008*  
*Amended November 2022*  
*Amended May 2023*

## **ARTICLE 1. The Church Board of Elders**

### **Section 1. Purpose**

The purpose of the Board of Elders (see Constitution, Article IV, Section 2) is to be the spiritual custodians of the church's mission to make fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. They shall devote themselves to prayer and the study of the Word in order to discern the Lord's direction and priorities in carrying out this mission. They shall prayerfully evaluate the church's ministries in light of this mission. They are responsible for the spiritual health and welfare of the church.

### **Section 2. Composition**

The Senior Pastor and other Elders constitute the Board of Elders. The other Elders, a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 6, shall be elected by the members. The Board of Elders shall annually appoint one of the elected Elders to the position of Church Chairperson and one of the elected Elders as Vice Chairperson.

### **Section 3. Qualifications**

Elders should be persons who are not eager for power but eager to serve (Matthew 20:25-28, I Peter 5:2-3). They should have spiritual wisdom and mature judgment and be well respected by those inside and outside the church (I Timothy 3:2, 7,10; Titus 1:6; Acts 6:3). They should be under the Holy Spirit's control (Acts 6:3) and firmly convinced of the central tenets of the faith (I Timothy 3:9; Titus 1:9). Their lifestyle should be characterized by temperance (I Timothy 3:8), financial integrity (I Timothy 3:3,8), self-control (Titus 1:7-8) and stable family life (I Timothy 3:4, Titus 1:6).

In addition, an Elder must:

1. Be a member of the church for at least one year immediately prior to election.
2. Be at least 21 years of age.
3. Regularly participate in corporate worship and be actively involved in ministry of the church.

4. Not be a staff member other than the Senior Pastor.

**Section 4. Term of Office**

Elders shall serve a two-year term with no more than three consecutive terms. The term of office for Elders shall begin on June 1.

**Section 5. Duties**

The Board of Elders shall be responsible for the spiritual and strategic direction of the church and have the authority to manage the business and legal affairs of the church. This body will normally meet on a monthly basis and maintain a permanent record of meeting minutes. Specific duties shall include:

1. Annually review the spiritual direction of the church and establish strategies and objectives to accomplish the church's vision for ministry.
2. Annually evaluate the activities and approve the charters of Ministry Teams.
3. Annually review objectives established for paid staff.
4. Regularly review and evaluate the total program of the church to determine that objectives are being accomplished. Establish policies as necessary to guide the church.
5. Recommend to the congregation the creation of additional ministry staff positions.
6. Approve Ministry Team leaders.
7. Represent the congregation in staff relationships including:
  - Annual appraisal of the ministry of the Senior Pastor and other staff, providing Godly counsel or discipline as required
  - Review and recommend staff compensation annually and establish fair compensation for new staff
  - Establish personnel policies
  - Approve job descriptions for new staff positions
  - Maintain current job descriptions for all staff members
8. Recommend for congregational approval the ordination of a member based on the recognized procedure of Converge.
9. Recommend for congregational approval the granting of a license to preach.
10. Annually appoint auditors to audit the financial records.
11. Provide oversight of the missions committee and process.
12. Hear and respond appropriately to all members of the church.

13. Act as the budget committee and:
  - Communicate the proposed fiscal year budgets to membership prior to the congregational business meeting
  - Present budgets to the congregation for approval
  - Approve and submit to the congregation recommended disposition of any deficit or surplus in operating funds
  - Approve any expenditure not included in the budget up to an amount of two percent of the annual general fund budget in any one year. Amounts greater than this require congregational approval.
  - Approve and recommend the terms of the call for new pastoral staff.
14. Administer the process of membership acceptance and termination and maintain membership records.
15. Make provision for adequate representation of the church in all legal matters.
16. Sign legal contracts that are consistent with the budget, Constitution, and state law. This includes the authority to borrow money, and to acquire, encumber, and sell real and personal property consistent with the provisions of the Constitution.
17. Make recommendations on all matters to be brought before the congregation, other than from committees directly responsible to the congregation; and to call church meetings as necessary.
18. Form project teams as needed.

## **ARTICLE 2. The Board of Stewards**

### **Section 1. Purpose**

The Board of Stewards shall be specifically responsible, under the authority of the Board of Elders, to oversee financial matters and provide for the use, care and maintenance of all church property.

### **Section 2. Composition**

The Board of Stewards shall be composed of at least six but not more than eight members of the congregation. The Senior Pastor or staff person designee may serve as an ex-officio member in an advisory capacity. The Stewards shall annually select a Chairperson and Vice-Chair from their number. They shall also appoint a Treasurer and a Financial Secretary from the membership of the congregation.

### **Section 3. Qualifications**

Stewards shall meet standards as established by the Elders. The standard shall be biblical standards of character and conduct as well as a commitment to the ministry of the church. This shall normally be interpreted to mean:

- a member of the church
- committed to, active in, and having biblical knowledge appropriate to the specific ministry area
- possessing good reputation in and outside the church and having demonstrated self-control and appropriate biblical attitudes in relationship with others
- regular public worship with the church

#### **Section 4. Term of Office**

Stewards shall serve a two-year term with no more than three consecutive terms. The term of office for Stewards shall begin on June 1.

#### **Section 5. Duties**

1. Assume full responsibility for all the property of the church including repair and maintenance.
2. Supervise activities of the finance personnel and all financial matters of the church.
3. Supervise expenditures of the monies budgeted to the Board of Stewards and annually prepare budget recommendations for the next year.
4. Establish appropriate controls for the handling of all cash receipts and disbursements and obtain regular financial reports from the Treasurer.
5. Maintain adequate insurance coverages for the church.
6. Authorize emergency repair expenditures not included in the church budget for amounts not exceeding \$2,000 per project or \$5,000 per year. Larger amounts will be referred to the Board of Elders.
7. Meet on a regular monthly basis and provide a written report of each meeting to the Elders.
8. Establish policies relating to the use of the church facilities for purposes other than regular church functions.
9. Manage church vehicles and transportation issues.
10. Appoint a Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretaries each year.

#### **Section 6. Treasurer Duties**

The Treasurer shall serve as the chief financial officer of the church. The treasurer shall be responsible for establishing long-term financial strategies and shall provide that processes are established and administered to control handling and disbursement of funds in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and as a responsible Christian steward. The Treasurer shall make reports to the church at each regular business meeting.

The Treasurer and at least one Elder, other than the Senior Pastor, shall sign legal contracts consistent with the budget, the Constitution, congregational approval, and state law. This includes authority to borrow money, and to acquire, encumber, and sell real and personal property consistent with the provisions of the Constitution of the church.

### **Section 7. Financial Secretary Duties**

The Financial Secretary shall keep an accurate account of all monies received and deposit same in the name of the church. The Financial Secretary shall provide members with contribution envelopes and shall send statements of account at least annually to each contributor. The Financial Secretary shall keep individual giving records under strict confidence.

The Financial Secretary and Assistant<sup>s</sup> shall count all monies; in the absence of the secretary or assistants, a member of the Board of Stewards or Board of Elders shall help count monies. In any event there shall be not less than two counting. Paid pastoral staff and other paid staff shall not count monies.

## **ARTICLE 3. Ministry Teams**

### **Section 1. Purpose**

The purpose of ministry teams is to provide a framework through which the Holy Spirit calls, equips and directs the members to accomplish the mission of the church. Ministry teams are composed of people who are responding to the call of God in their lives to perform acts of service, exercise spiritual gifts and join God in the work He is doing in our church and community.

### **Section 2. Formation**

Ministry teams can be formed by the Board of Elders, the staff, or a church member in response to God's leading to conduct the ministries of the church. Prospective ministry team leaders will prepare a charter for submittal to the Board of Elders. The charter shall include the purpose of the ministry, a plan to accomplish the ministry, specific ministry objectives and required resources. Approval of the charter by the Board of Elders authorizes the ministry team leader to put out the call to the church regarding the availability of a ministry opportunity.

The charter for each ministry team must be approved by the Board of Elders annually and the Board of Elders may terminate the activity of the team if it determines there are not enough members to conduct the work of the team in a manner that glorifies God, or if their task or charter has been completed.

### **Section 3. Composition**

Each ministry team shall have a designated leader who must be either a member of the congregation or a program staff member. Other members of the ministry team shall be assembled by the team leader and must always be of sufficient number to carry out the

team's ministry in an effective manner. Each ministry team shall normally have at least one staff person as an ex-officio member who may or may not be the leader of the ministry team. The staff member will provide support, resources and administrative assistance.

#### **Section 4. Qualifications**

Ministry team members may be selected by the ministry team in accordance with the guidelines approved in its ministry charter. The Board of Elders may remove any member of a ministry team for just cause.

#### **Section 5. Duties**

1. Develop and annually present its charter for approval by the Elders.
2. Recruit and train ministry personnel.
3. Define and provide the necessary materials required for ministry.
4. Submit annually to the Elders the objectives and a proposed budget for the coming year.
5. Meet as required to plan and execute specific ministry objectives.
6. Provide a written report to the ministry team and Elders, at least semiannually, describing progress against objectives.
7. Provide opportunities for team prayer, support, encouragement and the exercise of spiritual gifts.

### **ARTICLE 4. Pastoral Leadership**

#### **Section 1. Senior Pastor**

The Pastor shall preach the Gospel, administer the ordinances and exercise a concern for the spiritual needs of the church.

- Spiritual leadership: The Senior Pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the church. The Senior Pastor shall fulfill the qualifications for office stated in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9; and in particular the duties of teaching and exhorting from the Word, leading in public worship and prayer, and providing visionary leadership to the church as it seeks to minister in its community and to reach out into the broader world with the message of Jesus Christ. The Senior Pastor shall administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and shall lead the members of the church by example by modeling practical Christian living. The Senior Pastor shall be, or shall become, an ordained Baptist minister in agreement with the faith and practices of Converge and shall be, or shall become, a member of the church. The Senior Pastor shall have freedom of the pulpit, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

- **Church Staff Leadership:** The Senior Pastor shall direct the pastoral staff, providing counsel, encouragement, and Christian discipline, so as to assist in the accomplishment of the objectives established for each member of the pastoral staff. The Senior Pastor shall annually evaluate the performance of the other members of the pastoral staff as well as the performance of any interns working at the church. The Senior Pastor shall also direct the non-pastoral staff. The entire pastoral and non-pastoral staff of the church shall be responsible to the Senior Pastor, either directly or through another supervising staff member appointed by the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor shall represent the staff of the church before the Board of Elders.
- **Administrative Leadership:** The Senior Pastor shall be a voting member of the Board of Elders and an ex-officio non-voting member of all other church organizations. The Senior Pastor shall faithfully and diligently work toward the establishment and the accomplishment of the objectives of the church, in conjunction with the Board of Elders and the other church organizations. The Senior Pastor shall not be expected or required to regularly attend all of the meetings of all the church organizations. However, the Senior Pastor shall be expected to regularly attend the business meetings of the church, the meetings of the Board of Elders, and the meetings of the pastoral staff.

### **Section 2. Calling Committee**

When it is necessary to call a pastor, a representative calling committee consisting of three members of the Board of Elders and three members of the congregation at large shall be named by the Board of Elders and ratified by the church. The persons selected shall serve for the duration of the calling process. This committee shall seek a suitable person for pastor of the church and shall arrange for the church to become acquainted with this person.

In seeking a suitable person, the calling committee shall consult the leaders of Converge and take suggestions from the members of the church. It shall investigate the merit of any potential candidate giving consideration to personal character, education, ministerial record and abilities.

The recommendation of the calling committee and the Board of Elders concerning the call of a pastoral candidate and the terms of the call shall be presented to the church at a business meeting. A vote of three-fourths of the qualified members present and voting shall be necessary to extend a call. Only one candidate shall be presented to the church at a time. The vote shall be by written ballot. When the call has been approved by the church, notification shall be sent to the candidate. The candidate's written acceptance of the call shall establish the pastoral relationship as of the date agreed upon by the church and the candidate.

### **Section 3. Dissolution of Pastoral Relationships**

The pastoral relationship may be terminated upon thirty day's notification in writing on the part of the pastor or on the part of the church. The pastor shall first give his

resignation to the Board of Elders before it is presented to the church at a regular or specially called business meeting. If in the judgment of the church the continuance of the pastor's ministry should be undesirable, the relationship may be discontinued immediately, but the salary shall be continued for thirty days.

Any proposal to dismiss the pastor shall be referred to the Board of Elders for its consideration before any action may be taken by the church. The Board of Elders shall be required to present to the church any written petition for the dismissal of the pastor when signed by twenty per cent of the membership of the church. Action on such a petition or a Board of Elders motion to dismiss shall be taken at a regular or specially called business meeting with a written ballot. To carry the motion for dismissal, a two-thirds majority of the votes cast shall be required.

In the event the pastor wins a vote of confidence of the church at such an election, all Elders and Stewards signing such a petition mentioned above or voting in favor of a motion to dismiss at the Board of Elders level, shall automatically relinquish their position.

#### **Section 4. Associate and Assistant Pastors**

When it is necessary to call an associate or assistant pastor, a representative calling committee consisting of three members of the Board of Elders and three members of the congregation at large shall be named by the Board of Elders. The persons selected shall serve for the duration of the calling process. This committee shall seek a suitable person for the position and shall arrange for the church to become acquainted with this person.

The recommendation of the calling committee and the Board of Elders concerning the call and the terms of the call shall be presented to the church at a business meeting. A vote of three-fourths of the qualified members present and voting shall be necessary to extend a call. Only one candidate shall be presented to the church at a time. The vote shall be by written ballot. When the call has been approved by the church, notification shall be sent to the candidate. The candidate's written acceptance of the call shall establish the pastoral relationship as of the date agreed upon by the church and the candidate. Associate and assistant pastors shall become members of the church.

The pastoral relationship may be terminated upon thirty day's notification in writing on the part of the pastor or on the part of the church. The pastor shall first give their resignation to the Board of Elders before it is presented to the church at a regular or specially called business meeting.

Any proposal to dismiss the pastor shall be referred to the Board of Elders for its consideration before any action may be taken by the church. The Board of Elders shall be required to present to the church any written petition for the dismissal of the pastor when signed by twenty per cent of the membership of the church. Such action shall be taken at a regular or specially called business meeting with a written ballot. To carry the motion for dismissal, a two-thirds majority of the votes cast shall be required.



## **ARTICLE 5. Other Staff**

### **Section 1. Program Staff**

The Board of Elders shall determine program staff positions and recommend qualified candidates for those positions. Candidates and job descriptions shall be presented to the congregation at a business meeting for ratification. Program staff candidates shall become members of the church.

Dissolution of program staff relationships shall be made by motion of the Board of Elders which shall be recommended to the congregation for ratification. A simple majority of those voting shall be required to ratify the motion for dismissal.

### **Section 2. Support Staff**

The Board of Elders shall determine support staff positions. The Board of Elders shall designate an individual or team to hire support staff within established budget guidelines. Support staff may include, but is not limited to, an Office Manager and a Building Manager. Dissolution of support staff relationships shall be by Board of Elders action.

## **ARTICLE 6. Meetings**

### **Section 1. Public Meetings**

The Church shall meet every Sunday for worship and may also schedule other meetings as deemed necessary.

### **Section 2. Observance of Ordinances**

- Ordinance of the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is open to all believers in Christ and shall be observed monthly except as authorized by the Board of Elders. The elements of the Ordinance shall be administered by members.
- Ordinance of Baptism. The ordinance of baptism shall be observed during a public meeting of the church as often as necessary.

### **Section 3 Board Meetings**

The Board of Elders and Board of Stewards shall meet as often as necessary to accomplish the purposes and tasks set forth in Articles 1 and 2 of these by-laws. A majority of the members of a board must be present for that board to conduct its business.

### **Section 4. Congregational Life Meetings**

- The Board of Elders Chairperson shall preside at all church business meetings.
- A business meeting shall be held prior to the end of the fiscal year to ratify the budget for the ensuing year.
- A business meeting shall be held prior to the end of May to ratify members of the Board of Elders and Board of Stewards.

- Special business meetings of the church may be held at any time by order of the Board of Elders, upon request of the Senior Pastor, or upon written request of a quorum of the membership submitted to the Board Chairperson.

## **ARTICLE 7. Ratifications and Voting**

### **Section 1. Time**

- The ratification of candidates for the Board of Elders and Board of Stewards shall be held prior to the end of May. Their term of office shall begin on June 1.
- The ratification of the budget shall be held prior to the end of the fiscal year.

### **Section 2. Procedure**

Beginning in the month of April, the Board of Elders will call for nominations from the congregation for Elders and Stewards. Nominations must be in writing and must indicate whether the member is being nominated for an Elder position or a Steward position and must include the name of the person submitting the nomination.

The Board of Elders will review the nominees and evaluate their qualifications and willingness to serve before preparing a ballot for the congregation. The Board of Elders will submit to the congregation a list of candidates for the Board of Elders consisting of all nominees who meet the qualifications. The candidate names will be posted at least one week prior to the ratification vote by the congregation.

If there are more candidates than open positions, a runoff election will be held to reduce the number of candidates to the number of openings. Using a written ballot, members will be allowed to cast as many votes as the number of openings.

When the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of openings, members will also use a written ballot to vote for any or all of the candidates. A candidate must receive an affirmative vote of 75% of those voting to be elected to the Board of Elders.

The Board of Elders will submit a list of qualified Board of Stewards candidates to the congregation for ratification. The number of candidates shall not exceed the number of openings on the Board of Stewards.

In the event of on-line voting for annual budgets, church membership or board candidates, all submitted votes shall be from a verified church member.

### **Section 3. Vacancies**

The Board of Elders may appoint qualified persons to fill vacancies required to maintain the minimum number of members on the Board of Elders or Board of Stewards on an interim basis until the next election.

### **Section 4. Quorum**

A quorum shall consist of at least 10% of the church membership. For the calling or dismissal of pastoral staff, a quorum shall consist of at least 30% of the church membership.

#### **Section 5. Voter Qualifications**

All members are eligible to vote with the exception that only those members 18 years of age or older may vote on corporate matters relating to property transactions. There shall be no voting by proxy or absentee ballot.

### **ARTICLE 8. Auxiliary Organizations**

All organizations to be affiliated with the church must secure approval from and be responsible to the Board of Elders. The officers of an organization of the church should be members of the church or shall receive approval of the Board of Elders prior to their nomination. If for any reason an auxiliary organization ceases to function, all unrestricted monies and properties of such organization shall become property of the church.

### **ARTICLE 9. Disposition of Church Property**

In the case of organic division of the church, the church properties shall belong to those members who abide by the church Constitution. Should any controversy arise as to who is abiding by this Constitution, the question shall be submitted to the Board of Stewards of Converge North Central District, or their successors, and their decision shall be final.

Should such conditions arise when, for any reason, the church work cannot continue, the church properties shall be transferred to Converge.

### **ARTICLE 10. Parliamentary Authority**

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order Revised shall guide the church in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution or the special rules of order of this church.

### **ARTICLE 11. Amendments**

Amendments to these By-laws may be introduced through formal motion at any business meeting but shall not be acted upon until a subsequent business meeting to be held a minimum of three months later. The adoption of an amendment shall require a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.