

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

OF THE

**NASHUA BAPTIST CHURCH
NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

PREMISE:

- I. The Constitution and By-Laws should be constrained to those elements considered:
 - (1) so central to the life of the church that any change would be infrequent.
 - (2) so essential to the maintenance of order or function of the church that protective controls over change are desired.
- II. A Church Policy Manual (formulated and maintained by the Leadership Team and approved by the Church Body) shall contain specific policies of the Church in the daily ministrations of her duties. These policies shall be of an adaptive nature to optimize the functioning of the Church.

THE CONSTITUTION

NASHUA BAPTIST CHURCH NASHUA, NEW HAMPSHIRE

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches.

I. NAME AND INCORPORATION

This body shall be known as the Nashua Baptist Church of Nashua, New Hampshire located at 555 Broad Street. This Church shall be incorporated in accordance with the laws of the State of New Hampshire governing religious bodies, and the handling of property shall be in accordance with such laws.

II. OBJECTIVES

To be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with as many people as possible in church, community, and throughout the world.

To be a worshipping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing his person, and responding in obedience to his leadership.

To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers.

To help people experience a growing knowledge of God and man.

To be a church which ministers unselfishly to persons in the community and the world in Jesus' name.

To be a church whose purpose is to be Christlike in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the lordship of Christ.

III. STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEFS

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired word of God and the basis for our beliefs. This Church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of The Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000. We voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper.

This Statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself — as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind — is the final source of all that we believe. For the purposes of Nashua Baptist Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Elder Team will serve as Nashua Baptist Church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

IV. CHURCH COVENANT

This Church subscribes to the Church Covenant as a guide to Christian conduct:

Because I have repented of my sin and submitted to Jesus Christ as Lord, I hereby commit to value what He values. As a follower of Jesus, I choose to covenant together with Nashua Baptist Church for the purpose of my own spiritual growth, and the collective obedience to what Jesus has called His people to do and be.

This covenant is pictured in Baptism and fleshed out by my attitudes and my actions. I hereby commit to live peaceably with my brothers and sisters in Christ; to seek their good and to meet their needs when I am able. I commit myself to submit to the leadership that God has placed over our church when it is biblical and carried out with Christlike intent. I commit to provide for the financial and volunteer needs of our church body as I am reasonably able. I commit to continually repent of my sin and seek reconciliation when necessary.

I will freely and joyfully abstain from things that harm my brother or sister in Christ, or from things that may damage my witness to a world that does not know Him. I understand that my membership of Nashua Baptist Church brings with it certain rights but also certain responsibilities, and I will do my very best to live in a manner that counts both of those as important.

Finally, I commit in all things, both inside and outside of the church, to conduct myself in a way that brings glory to God and His Kingdom, through my public testimony and my obedience to the Great Commission.

V. POLICY AND RELATIONSHIPS

The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership.

All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable only to the church, unless otherwise specified by church action.

This Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support associations, state conventions, the Southern Baptist Convention, or any other network that the church has approved.

VI. SCHISM AND DISBANDMENT

In the event of any schism in the church, all property and equipment owned by Nashua Baptist Church shall be retained by the group which most closely aligns with the official statement of faith as outlined in Article III.

In the event of a disbandment or permanent closure of Nashua Baptist Church by a vote of its active members; the current trustees or a designated person shall be approved to liquidate all property and equipment on behalf of the church and forward those funds on to the New Hampshire Special Projects Fund of the Baptist Foundation of New England.

In the event of a merger between Nashua Baptist Church and another church by vote of Nashua Baptist Church's active members, all property and equipment shall become the property of the new combined church entity unless otherwise agreed to in the formal merger negotiations.

BYLAWS

I. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. General

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist Church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this Church and the conditions of such membership.

Section 2. Candidacy

Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this Church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular church service as a candidate for membership in any of the following ways:

- A. By profession of faith and baptism according to the policies of this Church and the Statement of Basic Beliefs. This includes those Christians from denominations other than Baptists. Those candidates, who have experienced believer's baptism, will not be required to be baptized.
- B. By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church.
- C. By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Baptist church when no letter is obtainable.

Upon completion of the Nashua Baptist Church New Member Conversation and at the next regularly scheduled business meeting, each candidate shall be received into active membership upon receiving two-thirds favorable vote of those present and voting. In the event of the unfavorable vote (failure of the two-thirds majority), the candidacy shall be postponed, and the objections inquired into by the Elder Team. Then admission shall be by two-thirds favorable vote of those present and voting at the next regularly scheduled business meeting.

Section 3. Definition of Membership

A church member will be placed into either the active or the inactive status on the church membership rolls.

Membership status will be defined by the following:

- A. An active member shall be moved to the Inactive Church Roster when church attendance, for ten (10) services in a six-(6) month period at regularly scheduled services on Sunday is not met. Attendance assessment will be determined by the deacons.
- B. All membership rolls will be reviewed and updated every January and July for accuracy by the Church Clerk or designated person.

Members on the inactive roll will remain there until either a member is brought back to active membership by reinstatement or is removed by termination, both of which are defined below. Upon being moved to the Inactive Roll, the Deacons and Elder Team will attempt at a minimum, the following means of communication (in order) to explain the importance of maintaining active membership and return a person to full fellowship. If contact cannot be made or the person does not attempt to restore themselves, the Deacons will make:

- A. A phone call immediately following the roster move.
- B. A personal visit after one (1) month.

- C. A letter from the Deacon Body after six (6) months
- D. A phone call after nine (9) months
- E. A hand delivered letter from the deacons after eleven (11) months with a 30-day warning of pending removal.

For active members who are not able to attend regular scheduled services for the above time frame due to unusual circumstances (such as being homebound, having extended illness, going on missions' activities or college attendance), it shall be up to the discretion of the Deacons and Elder Team as to what the member's status will remain.

For reinstatement to the active membership roll the following must be accomplished by the inactive member:

- A. The inactive member can request reinstatement to the active membership roll upon meeting the attendance requirement.
- B. If the inactive member has been inactive for more than two years, they must re-attend the church New Member Conversation.

Termination of Membership of the Active or Inactive Membership Roll will be by the following ways:

- A. Death of the member.
- B. Transfer of letter.
- C. Individual erasure upon either written or verbal request.
- D. Disciplinary action as per Bylaws Section 5: Discipline.
- E. Failure to report as per Bylaws Section 6: Inactivity

Section 4. Rights of Members

- A. Every active member of the church age 16 and above is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church business meeting, provided the member is present, or provision has been made for absentee balloting.
- B. Only an active member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the church.
- C. Every member of the church can participate in the Lord's Supper.

Section 5. Discipline

It shall be the practice of this Church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Elder Team, members of the professional ministerial staff, and Deacons are available for counsel and guidance.

Should some serious condition exist, which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, the Elder Team and the Deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for reconciliation rather than punishment. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds vote of the active members present is required; and the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. A spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance shall pervade all such proceedings.

The church may restore to active membership any person previously excluded, upon completion of the reinstatement steps in Section 3, and by vote of the church upon verbal evidence from the excluded person of repentance and reformation.

Section 6. Inactivity

It shall be the practice of this church to maintain our membership rolls as limited to those who fellowship in good standing with our body. If, after 1 year (12 months) on our church's Inactive Rolls, and our Deacons and Elder Team have exhausted the approved efforts to return a member to active status, the names of those Inactive Members will be brought before the church at the next regularly scheduled business meeting and will be removed from membership upon a two-thirds vote of the active members present.

II. ORDINANCES

Section 1. Baptism

This Church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

- A. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- B. The Elder Team or those that they authorize, shall administer baptism. The Deacons shall assist in the preparation for, and the observance of, baptism.

Section 2. The Lord's Supper

- A. The Elder Team and Deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.
- B. The Deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparation of the Lord's Supper.
- C. When observing the Lord's Supper, all those who publicly claim salvation through Jesus Christ are invited to participate and should be admonished to examine themselves and repent of sin, before taking the elements.

III. ORGANIZATION

Section 1. Elders

- A. The Elder Team shall be responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament Church. The Elder Team will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks, and will be ex-officio member of all committees.
- B. The qualifications of an Elder will be those listed in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The Elder Team shall be comprised of however many men it is determined will best lead the church in its duties and care. Due to the current size of our church, the ideal team will include a minimum of three (3) men and a maximum of ten (10). The Elder Team must include at least one (1) man who is not on staff.
- C. Under the leadership of the Elder Team, and affirmation of the church body, the church may choose to employ one or more Elders to staff positions (also known as "Pastors") for either limited or indefinite periods of time to focus vocationally on the needs of the church. In this case, matters pertaining to election, dismissal, and financial packages shall be outlined in the Church Policy Manual.

Section 2. Non-Elder Church Staff

- A. Under the leadership of the Elder Team, and affirmation of the church body, the church may choose to employ one or more staff members as the church shall need.
- B. A job description shall be written when the need for staff members is determined by church action. These positions shall be known as “Directors” of that specific ministry.
- C. Matters pertaining to election, dismissal, and financial package shall be as outlined in the Church Policy Manual as maintained by the Leadership Team and approved by the Church Body.

Section 3. Deacons

- A. Under the leadership of the Elder Team and affirmation of the church body, the role of Deacon shall be established to meet the needs of an expanding congregation. The elections, duties, and tenure shall be as outlined in the Church Policy Manual as maintained by the Leadership Team and approved by the Church Body.
- B. The qualifications of the deacons shall be as listed in I Timothy 3:8-13.

Section 4. Leadership Team

- A. The Leadership Team is an advisory and correlating agency through which all organizations and committees may coordinate their activities into one harmonious program of work. Members shall be determined by vote of the church. The Elder Team, Church Staff, Chairman of Deacons, Church Clerk, Church Treasurer, and other members as outlined in the Church Policy Manual as maintained by the Leadership Team and approved by the Church Body.
- B. They will develop and recommend to the congregation strategies for reaching the goals set forth by the Elder Team.
- C. They are to coordinate program plans and actions.
- D. The Leadership Team will prepare recommendations for the congregation regarding the use of resources in terms of the needs of the church programs as they work toward the achievement of the objectives and goals of the church.
- E. They will provide for adequate communication among church officers, organizations, and committees.
- F. They will function as the Policy Committee for the church and maintain the Church Policy Manual. All policies adopted, changed, or deleted shall be reported to the Church Body.

Section 5. Church Officers

- A. General: Except where otherwise stated, all officers of the church shall be elected for a period of one (1) year and shall be nominated for such offices by the Deacons; however, any active member of the church may nominate a candidate for office. All church officers must be active members of this church.
- B. Moderator: The Moderator shall be presiding officer at all church business meetings. The Church Policy Manual will identify officer(s) to preside in event of the Moderator's absence.
- C. Clerk: The church-elected Clerk of the church shall keep in a suitable book a record of all the actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. He/she is responsible for keeping a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, termination, or death, together with a record of baptisms. He/she shall issue letters of transfer voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church

secretary. All church records are church property and should be filed in the church office when an office is maintained.

D. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer:

- A. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel all money or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding month. The Treasurer's report shall be audited at least annually by an auditing committee or public accountant. The Treasurer shall be bonded with the expense being born by the church. He/she shall render an annual account at the end of each fiscal year. All records shall be kept and preserved as a part of the permanent records of the church.
- B. The Assistant Treasurer shall have the same authority and responsibilities as the Treasurer, in the event the Treasurer is absent or disabled. The Assistant Treasurer shall also be bonded.

E. Financial Secretary: The Financial Secretary shall receive the empty collection envelopes after the money has been removed and counted by the proper persons selected by the church. From these, he/she shall give each donor individual credit. He/she shall keep the envelopes for reference for a period of thirteen (13) months. He/she shall be responsible for preparing and distributing, by hand or by mail, to all contributors. The Financial Secretary has no responsibility for keeping money of the church.

F. Trustees: Three (3) trustees elected by the church will hold in trust the church property. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents where the signatures of the trustees are required. Trustees shall serve on a rotating basis, with one new trustee being elected every year. All trustees shall be members of the Properties Committee. The term of service shall be for three (3) years.

IV. COMMITTEES/COORDINATORS

Section 1. General Comments

- A. Committees of this church shall be classified as follows:
 - A. (1) Standing
 - (2) Special
- B. Committee members must be members of Nashua Baptist Church.
- C. The church shall establish and regulate committees as required to meet church functions and goals. Duties and responsibilities of committees shall be outlined in the Church Policy Manual as maintained by the Leadership Team and approved by the Church Body.

V. CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship of Almighty God on a schedule as outlined in the Church Policy Manual as maintained by the Leadership Team and approved by the Church Body.

Section 2. Regular Business Meeting

Regular business meetings shall be held three times a year during the months of March, July, and November on a schedule determined by the Leadership Team.

Section 3. Special Business Meeting

The Moderator shall call a special business meeting at the recommendation of either the Elder Team or the Leadership Team to consider special matters of a significant nature.

Section 4. Quorum

The quorum consists of 10% of the active members for a regular business meeting and 15% of the active members for special business meeting.

Section 5. Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

VI. PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1. General

All organizations of the church shall be under church control, all directors being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church. Organizational goals and responsibilities shall be as outlined in the Church Policy Manual as maintained by the Leadership Team and approved by the Church Body.

VII. CHURCH FINANCE

Section 1. Unified Budget System

There shall be a Unified Treasury - one (1) church treasury and one (1) church treasurer. At no time shall there be a separate organization treasury and treasurer. There will be no special offerings taken by this church unless authorized by the church.

Section 2. Budget

The budget preparation procedures are maintained in the separate Finance Committee Manual.

Section 3. Stewardship

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. Each member shall, therefore, be encouraged to support the church's unified budget.

Section 4. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the church shall run from January 1 to December 31.

Section 5. Missions

The primary missionary effort of the Nashua Baptist Church shall be carried forward through the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention, and through the state and local associations. The percentage of participation shall be included in the budget adopted at the Business Meeting.

VIII. AMENDMENTS

Changes in this Constitution and Bylaws may be made at any regular or special business meeting of the church, provided that each amendment shall have been presented in writing to the church office for distribution to the church body at least three (3) weeks in advance. Amendments to the constitution shall be affirmed by a three-fourths vote of all members of the church present entitled to vote.