
North Kent Bible Church
Rockford, Michigan

Constitution and By-Laws

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ARTICLE ONE: NAME

The corporate name of this Church shall be the North Kent Bible Church of God, of Rockford, Michigan, aka North Kent Bible Church.

ARTICLE TWO: MISSION STATEMENT

Section 1: PURPOSE

The purpose of North Kent Bible Church is to honor God, the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by carrying out his command to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). Specifically, we believe he has called us to focus on reaching those people in our surrounding communities who do not know and serve Jesus Christ as Lord. Thus, North Kent Bible Church is called to “Bring Christ to families and families to Christ.”

Section 2: STRATEGY

In order to accomplish the purpose stated above, North Kent Bible Church will be an equipping center where every Christian can develop to his or her full potential for ministry. This development will come through:

1. Creative, inspiring worship;
2. Teaching which is Biblical and relevant to life;
3. Vital, supportive fellowship for all ages; and
4. Opportunities for outreach into the community in both service and evangelism.

Section 3: VALUES

In order to encourage a consistent and high level of integrity in our ministry, all ministries of North Kent Bible Church will remain committed to these standards:

1. Relevant Bible Exposition;
2. High commitment to prayer;
3. Ministry by the Church Body (lay ministry);
4. Small group ministry (home Bible studies, fellowship, ministry groups);
5. Innovation and creativity;
6. Excellence (doing our best);
7. Pro-active Leadership; and
8. Growth.

Section 4: MEMBERSHIP (See Article Four for detailed information on Membership)

In order to strive toward unity and “body life”, we believe that membership with one another is vital. To instill a high calling in Jesus Christ, one must meet the following standards:

1. Active relationship with Jesus as Lord and Christ;
2. Faithful attendance in worship and ministry of the body;
3. Devotion to the Word of God and its authority in one’s life;
4. Personally involved in ministry using the Christ-given gifts and abilities; and
5. Supportive of the ministry through faith and financial stewardship.

Section 5: DOCTRINE

“North Kent Bible Church” has a rich heritage of firm Bible teaching. We do not easily accept doctrinal traditions, nor do we seek to harmonize the Word of God with social or religious standards. Often Christians become overly attached to precise wording of doctrine and statements of faith. We believe it is important for the presentation of Christian faith to be in accord with God’s Word. Therefore we will stand on these basic, biblical doctrines:

a. The Bible

The Bible is the inspired word of God. It has authority over our lives and ministry. It is the inspired, infallible guideline to teach, rebuke, correct and train us to be thoroughly equipped to be God’s people. The central theme of both the Old and New Testaments are the revelation of Jesus Christ and his presence in every believer. (Psalm 119:105; Galatians 1:11-12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; II Peter 1:20-21)

b. God

We believe the living God is the Father, Creator and only true God. He is eternally existent, Creator of the universe and all life. He is the sustainer of all nature and active in all human affairs. He is God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 121:1-2; Isaiah 44:24, 45:18; John 20:17; Acts 17:28; I Timothy 2:5, 6:15-16; I Corinthians 8:6)

c. Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ (Messiah) is the Son of God, born of woman through the power of the Holy Spirit. His life, death and resurrection were all given according to God’s plan to reconcile man to Himself. He is the one and only way for man to know and serve God. (Matthew 3:16, 16:16; Luke 24:51; John 20:31, 14:28; Romans 8:34; I Corinthians 15:3-4; Ephesians 2:12-14; Colossians 1:20; I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 1:3)

d. The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the power and presence of God active and at work in the lives of all believers. The Holy Spirit renews us and persuades us to repent of our sins and confess Jesus Christ as Lord. Each believer receives the Holy Spirit at conversion and is equipped with spiritual gifts for the work of the ministry. It is through this Spirit that we receive the fruit of the Spirit and the mind of Christ. (John 14:15-17, 16:5-15; Romans 5:5, 8:9; II Corinthians 3:2-3, 3:17-18; Galatians 5:22-26; Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:11-13; I John 4:2-3)

e. Man

We believe that man was made in the image of God and is now in rebellion against him, thus under his judgment. The only way for reconciliation with the Father to take place is through God’s grace revealed in Jesus Christ. The natural man of body and soul is subject to death because of sin. Man can only attain eternal life by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. All who have died sleep in the grave awaiting the second coming of Christ. (Genesis 2:7; Job 14:1-15; Psalm 146:4; Daniel 12:2; John 11:25-26; Acts 2:29; Romans 5:17, 6:23; I Corinthians 15; I Thessalonians 4:13-18)

f. Grace and Salvation

God’s single most important attribute is that he loved us while we were yet sinners. Through his grace we can know, love and serve Him and those He loves. (John 3:16; Romans 3:23-25, 5:6-8, 6:12-13; Galatians 2:20, 6:14-15; I John 4:7-21)

g. Eternal Life and The Kingdom of God

The gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus. Those who receive Christ will be included in the Kingdom of God in the age to come. It will be physically established on this earth at the return of Jesus Christ. This Kingdom will follow the resurrection of the dead (those who sleep in death). Then, shall the whole earth be filled with the glory of God in the Eternal Kingdom of God. (Psalm 37; Acts 1:11; I Corinthians 15:51-52; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Timothy 2:11-12; Revelation 5:10, 19:16, 21:1-8, 22:1-5)

h. Baptism

Baptism by immersion is an act or expression of faith and obedience to Christ. Baptism symbolizes putting to death the old person, to rise from the water and walk in a new way of life. (Matthew 3:15; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:2-11; Colossians 2:12)

i. Communion

We believe that communion is an ordinance of the church, remembering the body and blood of Christ, proclaiming the power of Christ's death and resurrection until he comes. We believe it is for those who accept the reality of sin in their life and the grace of God through His son Jesus Christ. As a church, we practice open communion. (Isaiah 53:4-9; Matthew 26:17-30; I Corinthians 11:17-34)

j. Church

We believe and teach that the church is formed of believers called from among all nations. It is a community of those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and have received God's Holy Spirit. The church is called to worship God, preach the Gospel, make disciples, and build up other believers. The church presents God's transforming purpose to the world. (Matthew 5:16, 28:19-20; Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians 12:12-14, 12:25-27; Ephesians 2:19-22)

k. Marriage

We believe that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Genesis 2:18-25)

Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct

The 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 sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of North Kent Bible Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Board of Elders is North Kent Bible Church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

ARTICLE THREE: ORGANIZATION AND AFFILIATION

Section 1: CHRIST AS HEAD

- a. This church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its Head. In him we find our guidelines, unity and source of life. In order that the Church may be a medium through which Christ can work, and that it may heed the biblical instruction that all things be done decently and in order, this Church is organized with an Elder Cabinet, Executive Cabinet of Elders, Ministries Leaders and Committees.

Section 2: LEADERSHIP

- a. At the prescribed congregational meeting, the membership shall confirm or deny selected Executive Cabinet members who, along with selected Elders, will serve as the "leadership" and are responsible for directing the affairs of the Church as set forth by scripture, the congregation, this Constitution and By-laws.

Section 3: AFFILIATION

a. This church is a Bible-based church, evangelical in outlook. We are independent in structure being locally autonomous and leadership governed. We enjoy affiliation with a fellowship of churches nationally called the Church of God General Conference, with headquarters in Morrow, Georgia. We also enjoy affiliation with a fellowship of churches within the state of Michigan called the Michigan State Conference of Churches of God.

Section 4: DISSOLUTION CLAUSE

a. In case of dissensions and/or division, the title of all church property, real and personal, shall remain with the group abiding by this Constitution. In case of dissolution of the church program, all church property and assets shall be transferred to the Church of God General Conference, headquarters in Morrow, Georgia, along with the Church of God Michigan State Conference, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

ARTICLE FOUR: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: CRITERIA

- a. Membership is based upon criteria stated in Article Two, Section Four: Membership.
- b. Each candidate for membership must subscribe to the scriptural statement of faith as set forth in Article Two.
- c. Candidates for membership shall enroll in and complete the “New Members” class (or its equivalent) which includes the study of church doctrine, history of the Church and the responsibility of being a member of the body of Christ.

Section 2: MEMBERSHIP ACTIVATION

- a. An individual desiring to join this Church may express his desire to do so by responding to the invitation to accept Jesus Christ as Lord, or by making their desire known to a member of the Pastoral Staff or Elders.
- b. The candidate shall meet with the Pastor and two Elders for counseling as to their personal relationship with Christ, their baptism, statement of faith and the responsibilities of membership.
- c. A member shall have voting rights at age 13.

Section 3: MEMBERSHIP TERMINATION

- a. Membership shall be terminated by death; for holding false or heretical teachings; by inconsistent or immoral living; for causing division or disruption in the Church, as determined by the Elders; or by transfer to another church; by inactivity.
- b. Failure to show interest for a period of six months (attendance, reasonable service or financial contribution) will be cause to place a member on the inactive list. If after counsel the member remains inactive for a period of one year, he will be removed from membership.

Section 4: DISCIPLINE AND DISMISSAL

- a. Any member guilty of gross misconduct, contrary to the teachings of the scripture, will be requested to meet with the Elders. The restoration of the member shall be the single purpose, and love shall be the motivating force in this interview.
- b. If a member should continue in his unrepentant condition, he shall be deprived of membership. This can only be done by unanimous recommendation of the Elders and the Executive Cabinet.

Section 5: RESTORATION

- a. Restoration of a dismissed member will occur when repentance is expressed through appeal to the Board of Elders and by their unanimous recommendation to the Executive Cabinet.

Section 6: GRIEVANCES

- a. In all cases of grievances among members, the offenders shall be dealt with in accordance with the rules laid down in Matthew 18:15-17. They will be expected to talk over the matter in private and try to settle any differences among them. If that fails, the offended party is expected to take two or three witnesses and speak to the offender again.
- b. If both of these steps fail, the matter may be brought to the Church. Charges, when made, shall be submitted to the Elders for proper recommendation to the Church.

Section 7: VOTING REQUIREMENTS

- a. A member has voting privileges when they have met the criteria stated in Article Four, Sections One through Six and when they have met the criteria for membership considered by the Constitution of the Church of God General Conference which calls for attendance of at least thirteen (13) worship services per year.
- b. Exceptions will be given for leaves of absence due to military service or education. Members requesting an exception on any other basis can apply to the elders and decisions will be made on a case by case basis.

ARTICLE FIVE: CHURCH ORGANIZATION

Section 1: GOVERNING BODY

- a. This Church's business affairs shall be governed by the leadership consisting of the Sr. Pastor, Associate Pastor, Elders and Executive Cabinet. Leaders (Pastors, Elders and Executive Cabinet Members) will be added as in Article 5, Sections 2 and 3 and Article 6, Sections 2 and 5.
- b. The number of officers shall be in proportion to the size and growth of the church membership. Pastors, Elders and Executive Cabinet members shall be adjusted proportionately with the growth of the church membership.

Section 2: ELDERS

- a. The elders shall oversee the *spiritual vision* of the church, its members, the pastor(s) and its programs according to the Word of God and the guidance of this constitution.
- b. The Elders shall foster their own spiritual development to be examples to the church in faith, believing, prayer, Bible study, Christian living and ministry involvement.
- c. They shall assist in all spiritual activities of the church and take an active ministry role along with the Pastor in counseling, teaching, calling and prayer.
- d. The Senior Pastor shall select the candidates for Elders to minister to the spiritual needs of the congregation. Selected candidates for Elder will be presented to the Elder Board for evaluation. The Elder Board may then recommend candidates to the Executive Cabinet for approval. Upon Cabinet approval, candidates will be presented to the Congregation for confirmation of their selection at a properly called meeting. A two-thirds majority confirmation is needed of those present to approve the selection.
- e. The Elder's first term will be for three years. The Elders will then review and make a recommendation to the Executive Cabinet. Upon approval by the Executive Cabinet and a two-thirds majority confirmation by those present at a properly called Congregational Meeting, the Elder shall serve until resignation or termination.

Section 3: EXECUTIVE CABINET

- a. The Executive Cabinet shall oversee the *spiritual responsibilities* of the church, and will direct matters of program, finance, property, etc.
- b. Each member of the Executive Cabinet will serve a two year term, with approximately half the Cabinet members elected one year and approximately half the next. The Elders will then review and make a recommendation to the Executive Cabinet. Upon approval by the Executive Cabinet and a two-thirds majority confirmation by those present at a properly called congregational meeting, the Cabinet member shall serve an additional two year term, serving no more than three consecutive terms (6 years).
- c. The term for the Cabinet members will run from November to October.
- d. Untimely or unexpected vacancies in the Executive Cabinet may be filled by unanimous vote of the Executive Cabinet at any regular or specially called meeting of which notice has been given by mail to each Cabinet member two weeks in advance. Members appointed in such case will serve to the end of the unexpired term. The member may then serve up to two more consecutive terms if so appointed.
- e. Nominations for member at large for the Executive Cabinet may be made by any member at least two months prior to the annual business meeting (October). Nominees must: be spiritual and wise (Acts 6:3); be willing to serve; an active member of NKBC for at least one year; qualified according to the guidelines of I Timothy 3:8-13; understand and agree to the duties and commitments for the position.
- f. The Executive Cabinet will select the Church secretary, the Church Treasurer and the Church Assistant Treasurer. The terms for the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer will be two years, with no more than three consecutive terms served.

Section 4: LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

- a. The Executive cabinet shall meet monthly for the purpose of praying for, coordinating and promoting the ministry of the Church and the transacting of Church business.
- b. A Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Executive Cabinet. The Chairperson shall be selected by and from the Cabinet membership for a term of one year.
- c. The elders shall meet monthly for the purpose of prayer, study and discerning the spiritual needs and vision of the Church.
- d. The Sr. Pastor will serve as Chairperson of the Elders and spiritual leader of all services and activities of this Church.

Section 5: PROVISIONS GOVERNING SPECIFIC BUSINESS AFFAIRS

- a. A sale of the Real Estate upon which the primary church facility is located (7210 Courtland Drive, Rockford, Michigan) shall require the approval of three-fourths of the Church membership in attendance at a properly scheduled congregational meeting and unanimous approval of the leadership.
- b. A purchase of Real Estate by the church shall require the approval of three-fourths of the church membership in attendance at a properly scheduled congregational meeting and unanimous approval of the leadership.
- c. An encumbrance upon or divesture of the Real Estate on which the primary church facility is located (7210 Courtland Drive, Rockford, Michigan) shall require three-fourths confirmation of the church membership in attendance at a properly scheduled congregational meeting and the unanimous approval of the leaders; except for an encumbrance to secure a church loan or debt not exceeding the principal amount of \$5,000.00.
- d. Legal documents necessary to (a) the purchase of Church Assets; or (b) the sale of Real Property; or (c) an encumbrance upon or divesture of Real Property, such as Broker listing agreements, Contracts, Escrow documents, Deeds, Affidavits of Value, Promissory Notes, Trust Deeds, and the like, shall be co-executed by the Senior Pastor; one Elder; and one member of the Executive Cabinet. Where signatures are required for the aforementioned, four persons must sign including the Senior Pastor and at least one Elder.
- e. The property of the church including land, church building, parsonage, apartment, ball field, and out buildings are for the use of the members. Any other organization or individual seeking to use the facilities or property for other use must have the permission of the Cabinet and Elders in order to be considered as valid ministry purposes. A building use policy will be administered by the Cabinet and will be formulated to the goal of using our physical resources towards appropriate ministry and charity, and following Biblical principles.

Section 6: CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

- a. One congregational meeting will be held in the month of October for the purpose of electing leaders, giving of annual reports and yearly planning.
- b. Additional congregational meetings may be called by the decision of the Executive Cabinet or Elders upon the request of three or more members with two weeks advance notice.

- c. The Chairperson of the Executive Cabinet will chair the congregational meetings.
- d. A member has voting privileges at congregational meetings when they meet the requirements of Article 4, Section 2c and Article 4, Section 7.

Section 7: DISQUALIFICATION

- a. A member of the Executive Cabinet or Elder may be disqualified for reasons of faith, practice, morals or inability to fulfill the requirements and duties of the office.
- b. In the event of such charges disqualification shall occur with a unanimous agreement of the Elders and Executive Cabinet.

ARTICLE SIX: SENIOR PASTOR

Section 1: PRIORITIES OF MINISTRY

- a. In I Timothy 3:1-7 the Apostle Paul lists the qualifications for Pastors / Elders. Once a man becomes a Pastor, his responsibilities include teaching, leading, praying, and ordaining other elders. In addition, Scripture gives several priorities for elders to uphold. It takes a special person to understand the priorities and meet the demands of ministry. He must be empowered by the Holy Spirit, called by God, and qualified for leadership according to the standards of Scripture.
- b. The priorities of the Senior Pastor are: Edifying Believers, Evangelizing the Lost, Teaching God's Word, Praying for God's People, Strengthening Families, Attending to Special Needs, and Promoting Believing and Holy Living.

Section 2: THE DEMANDS OF MINISTRY

- a. Beyond the priorities of ministry there are certain demands or skills that are required for Pastoral Ministry.
- b. The Senior Pastor must demonstrate: Discipline, Self-Denial, Hard Work, Organizational Skills, Proper Attitudes, and Patience.
- c. During time of employment by NKBC the pastor may be asked to preach, teach, or officiate at other organizations' events or services. All outside participation is to be discussed with the Cabinet and must be permitted by Cabinet and Elders approval. A Sabbatical or leave of absence by the Senior Pastor is subject to the same requirements.

Section 3: SELECTION

- a. The Senior Pastor shall be selected by a three-fourths confirmation of those present at a regular or specially called congregational meeting for that purpose, followed by the unanimous decision of the leadership.
- b. The recommendation of a candidate for Senior Pastor will be made by a pulpit committee appointed by the Executive Cabinet for presentation to the congregation. The committee shall consist of five members of which at least two shall be Elders.
- c. The committee shall investigate the merits of every person under consideration in regard to character, education, ministerial record, pastoral qualifications and abilities in determining his fitness for ministry.

Section 4: TERM OF OFFICE

- a. The Pastor's first term of office shall be for two years and then an indefinite term thereafter until resignation or termination.
- b. The Pastoral year shall run from September through August.
- c. The Senior Pastor is to have a contracted agreement with the church and congregation. The Cabinet will determine agreed terms of employment including items such as pay, vacation, parsonage use, and retirement benefits. All will be reviewed annually.

Section 5: ASSOCIATE PASTOR

- a. Associate Pastors shall be called as needs warrant and as the congregation approves. (Same process to be followed as in selection of Senior Pastor.)

Section 6: VACANCY

- a. A vacancy shall be declared by the Executive Cabinet by disqualification, resignation or death.
- b. Disqualification for reasons of faith, practice, morals, or inability to fulfill the priorities and demands of the Pastoral office shall be reason for a declaration of a vacancy in the Pastoral office subject to: 1) In the event of charges or disqualification it shall be brought to a vote of the congregation only if such action has been approved by the Elders and the Executive Cabinet, and 2) a two-thirds confirmation of the active church membership shall be necessary for such action to be final.
- c. In the event of resignation, a 90 day notice will be submitted by the Pastor to the Executive Cabinet.
- d. In the event of disqualification, termination of office will be immediate. A 90 day severance pay will be provided, along with a 90 day continued use of the parsonage.

ARTICLE SEVEN: FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Section 1: FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- a. This church shall be financed, along with its affiliated ministries, by tithes and offerings.

Section 2: FINANCIAL MATTERS

- a. All financial matters shall be the responsibility of the Executive Cabinet and Elders in cooperation with the Stewardship Ministry. Regular execution of financial responsibilities of the church shall be the duty of the Stewardship Ministry with the appointed treasurer presenting monthly and yearly reports.

ARTICLE EIGHT: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 1: MEETING STYLE

- a. Meetings (Cabinet, Elder, Committee, and Congregational) shall be “round table” style meetings. Open discussion is encouraged.

Section 2: DECISIONS

- a. Decisions will be made according to the conclusions reached by the leadership. Matters or decisions brought to the congregation for confirmation will return to the leadership for final conclusion.

Section 3: QUORUM

- a. A quorum shall consist of those who attend the meeting, provided it is either a slated meeting or one that has been properly called. A “properly called meeting” is one announced and in publication two weeks in advance.

Section 4: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

- a. This Constitution may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the congregation by a three-fourths vote of those present, provided that notice of said intended amendment or amendments shall have been: 1) submitted in writing to each member of the leadership, by three or more members, 2) unanimously approved by the leadership.

Section 5: ADOPTION

- a. This Constitution shall become effective upon adoption by a two-thirds majority confirmation by the members present at a regular or special congregational meeting, followed by the unanimous decision of the leadership.

Adopted: December 6, 2015