

**BYLAWS OF NOVUM BAPTIST CHURCH
as of May 15, 2017**

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Article I. Church Membership

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.

2. Candidacy.

Any person may offer themselves as a candidate for membership in this church.

- a. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership in any of the following ways:
 - i. By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church.
 - ii. By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Christian church which practices believer's baptism.
 - iii. By a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Christian church which practices believer's baptism when no letter is obtainable.
 - iv. While believer's baptism is essential for membership and while the proper form for baptism is by immersion, there can arise circumstances which render a candidate for church membership unable to undergo immersion. Those situations

will be referred by the Pastor to the Membership Committee for deliberation and recommendation. Such referral should be accomplished prior to the candidate presenting themselves for membership where such situations are known ahead of time.

- b. Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the membership committee for investigation and a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. A three-fourths vote of those members present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.
- c. In the absence of an established and functioning membership committee, the Deacon Body shall undertake the functions of this committee as a collateral duty.

3. New Member Orientation. New members of this church are expected to participate in the church's new member orientation program.

4. Rights of Members.

- a. Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all other questions submitted to the church in conference, provided the member is present or provision has been made for absence balloting. Proxy voting is not allowed.
- b. Every member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective and appointed offices in the church.
- c. Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.
- d. Inactive members, as defined below, do not have the rights of members described in this section.

5. Termination of Membership.

- a. Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:
 - i. death of the member;
 - ii. dismissal to another church;
 - iii. exclusion by action of the church in business meeting;
 - iv. erasure upon request or proof of membership in a church of another denomination.
- b. Inactive members are those members who have not attended church or participated in any church activities for two (2) years, except if the nonattendance is for reasons of the member's incapacity.
- c. Lost members, those members who are unknown to any current member or attendee and about whom no information or status can be determined, may be erased from the membership of the church by action of the church in business session when their best-established age exceeds 100.

6. Discipline.

- a. 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 Pastor, other members of the church staff and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment. The troubled person or the person in trouble should be the target of ministry and loving concern rather than discipline, censure or exclusion.
- b. However, should some serious condition exist which causes a member to become a liability or a threat to the general welfare or existence of the church, the Pastor and the deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member a two-thirds vote of the members present is required, and having received this, the church may then proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of a Christian kindness and forbearance.
- c. The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and by a *majority* vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

Article II. Church Officers and Committees.

1. **General.** All who serve as officers of the church and those who serve on church committees shall be members of this church.
2. **Church Officers.** The Officers of this church shall be the Pastor, the church staff, the Deacons, the trustees, a treasurer, a clerk, and a moderator.
 - a. **Pastor.** The Pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church. The Pastor will lead the congregation, the church program organizations, and the church ministerial staff to perform their tasks.
 - i. The Pastor is the leader of pastoral ministries in the church and is to:
 1. proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and
 2. care for the church's members and other persons in the community; and
 3. shall direct the worship services.
 - ii. The church shall, with all due decorum and dispatch, begin to seek, choose and call a Pastor whenever a vacancy occurs. This process need not be precipitous and the church may wish to arrange a church business meeting, either regularly scheduled or specially called, to seek out a suitable Pastor, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination.
 1. Any church member has the privileges of making other nominations according to the policy established by the church.
 2. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time.
 3. The election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notification of the membership has been given.
 4. Election of a new Pastor shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three fourths of those present being necessary for a choice.

5. The individual thus elected shall be issued a call to come and take on the duties of Pastor of this church.
 - a. If the call is accepted, the Pastor shall be provided with a written agreement specifying the terms of his service to include financial provisions and responsibilities agreed to, and
 - b. This individual shall serve as Pastor until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request.
 - c. He shall preside at meetings of this church, and if so designated may serve as moderator in all business meetings in keeping with the rules of order authorized by these bylaws.
- iii. The Pastor may relinquish the office as Pastor by giving at least two weeks notice, although four weeks is preferred, to the church at the time of resignation.
- iv. The church may declare the office of the Pastor to be vacant.
 1. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notification of the membership has been given (See Bylaws VI, 4).
 - a. Such a meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a majority of the deacons and the personnel committee.
 - i. In the absence of a personnel committee, the church council will be the other body whose majority vote is needed with the deacons.
 - b. Such a meeting may also be called upon the presentation of a written petition signed by not less than one fourth of the resident membership of the church.
 - c. The moderator for such a meeting shall be designated by the members present by majority vote, and he shall be someone other than the Pastor.

- d. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be secret ballot; an affirmative vote of two thirds of the members present being necessary to declare the office vacant.
- e. The church will compensate the Pastor so excluded from office in accordance with the terms contained in the original written agreement provided to the Pastor and the compensation shall be rendered in not more than thirty (30) days.

b. Church Staff.

- i. The ministerial staff shall be called and employed as the church determines the need for such offices.
 - 1. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined.
 - 2. Those staff members of whom the church requires evidence of a personal call of God to minister shall be recommended to the church by the personnel committee and called by church action.
 - a. The deacons will function as the personnel committee in this instance if there is not a standing personnel committee.
 - 3. At the time of resignation at least two weeks' notice shall be given to the church.
 - 4. The church may vote to vacate such positions upon recommendation of the personnel committee (deacons in lieu of), such termination being immediate and the compensation conditions shall be the same as for the Pastor except that the agreement shall be the written agreement that was provided to this individual at the time a call was accepted.
- ii. Non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the personnel committee (or Deacons in lieu of) determines the need for their services.

1. The church personnel committee shall have the authority to employ and to terminate services of non-ministerial staff members.
2. Such employment and termination of services shall be with the recommendation of the supervising staff member and, as appropriate, with the consultation of related committees of the church.
3. In the absence of a standing personnel committee, the Deacons of the church will fulfill the duties of the personnel committee with relation to non-ministerial staff members.

c. Deacons.

- i. Deacons are a group of men and/or women, set aside by the church, to be the primary servants of the church in accordance with the New Testament.
 1. The scriptures at 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Titus 1 in particular set forth the general guidelines of all deacons and all deacons shall adhere to these qualifications.
 2. The task of the deacon is to serve the church in
 - a. proclaiming the Gospel;
 - b. caring for the church members and the persons in the community;
 - c. leading the church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, and ministry;
 - d. and assisting in worship (e.g., distributing the elements of the Lord's Supper).
- ii. There will be a minimum of five (5) active deacons.
 1. Active deacons shall serve on a rotation basis of a standard term of five (5) years. Each year the assigned term of office of one fifth of the number of active deacons shall expire, and election by the church shall be held to fill vacancies.

2. In addition, any deacon may retire from active service at any time they may find themselves unable to fully satisfy the responsibilities of the office. In such cases the chairman of the deacons will initiate the process to replace the retired deacon.
3. As church growth may warrant, additional active deacons may be added upon church approval, up to the next odd number of deacons.
4. All candidates for deacon must be active members in good standing and must have been a member of Novum church for at least one (1) year before serving as deacon.
5. Deacons retiring from active service retain the title of deacon to the extent that their church membership remains in good standing.
 - a. These individuals are eligible to be reelected to active service only after a retirement period of one (1) year.
 - b. Inactive deacons remain in reserve status under the purview of the deacon body and they may be called upon to serve the church as special needs may arise.
6. At the beginning of each year, the active deacons shall elect a chairman from among their body. Generally, it is understood that this position will be rotated among the active body of deacons to permit fresh leadership perspectives.
7. The process for adding active deacons will be as follows:
 - a. Nominations will be received by the deacons.
 - b. The deacons will then meet with each nominee received to discuss the duties of the office and to confirm the candidate's willingness to serve.
 - c. Those nominees so confirmed will be presented to the church for election.

- d. The confirmed nominee receiving the greatest number of votes will then serve.
 - e. Persons elected to the office of deacon will be presented to the church for ordination, unless previously ordained by another Baptist church.
- d. **Moderator.** The church shall elect annually a moderator as its presiding officer for regular and special business meetings. In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of deacons shall preside, or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and preside for the election of an acting moderator.
- e. **Clerk.** The church shall elect annually a clerk as its clerical officer.
- i. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided.
 - ii. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a register of names of members (updated yearly by September 30th of each year), with dates of admission, dismissal, death, or erasure, together with a record of baptisms.
 - iii. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws.
 - iv. If the church has a church secretary, the church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to the church secretary who will assist the elected clerk.
 - v. All church records are church property and shall be kept in the church office when an office is maintained.
- f. **Treasurer.** The church shall elect annually a church treasurer as its financial officer.
- i. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon request of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel (as identified by the Deacons), all money or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements.

- ii. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding period.
- iii. The treasurer's report and records shall be audited annually by an auditing committee or public accountant.
- iv. Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year and its acceptance and approval by the church, the records shall be delivered by the treasurer to the church clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the church.

g. Trustees. The church shall have three (3) trustees (or more, as approved by the Deacons).

- i. A candidate for trustee must be an active member in good standing and a member of Novum Baptist Church for at least one (1) year before serving as a trustee.
- ii. Trustees shall serve on a rotation basis with at least one (1) trustee elected by the church biennially for a six (6) year term.
- iii. Trustees may serve longer than six years until successors are elected, or may be elected to successive terms.
- iv. A trustee who becomes an inactive member may not serve as a trustee and will immediately cease to hold the position of trustee without the need for any further action. A trustee may be removed by a majority vote of the church body at a special meeting called for that purpose by the deacons.
- v. Trustees shall:
 - 1. Hold in trust all church property;
 - 2. They shall have no authority to act regarding church property except as delegated by the church in a business meeting;
 - 3. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have authority to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or otherwise transfer any church property;

- a. All transactions involving real property require an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present and voting at a business meeting with 30 days advance notice by mail to the membership of the congregation. All other transactions may be authorized by the church at any business meeting by a simple majority vote.
 - b. When so authorized to act, two (2) trustees shall sign all deeds, mortgages, leases, or other legal documents related to church-approved matters.
4. Safeguard all legal documents such as mortgage loans, property deeds, cemetery transactions and insurance policies;
 5. Perform the liaison function on legal matters for the church;
 6. Be responsible for coordinating maintenance, care and use of the cemetery; and
 7. Complete all actions required by the local and state governments to validate their status as trustees in the eyes of civil authority.

3. Church Committees.

- a. Standing committees.
 - i. The standing committees of this church shall be:
 1. a membership committee, a nominating committee, a personnel committee, a church building and grounds committee, a stewardship committee, a missions committee, and such other regular and special committees as the church shall authorize.
 2. Additional standing committees may be added by the amendment procedure prescribed within these bylaws.
 - ii. All church committee members shall be recommended by the church nominating committee and elected by the church unless otherwise specified within these bylaws.

- iii. Committee members shall serve on a three-year rotation basis with one third to be elected each year.
 - iv. Each committee shall elect their committee chairman at the first meeting of each year.
- b. The Membership Committee receives referrals from the Pastor when circumstances arise which render a candidate for church membership unable to undergo baptismal immersion. Those situations are referred by the Pastor to the Membership Committee for deliberation and recommendation. Such referral should be accomplished prior to the candidate presenting themselves for membership where such situations are known ahead of time.
- c. The Nominating Committee shall be selected by the moderator and approved by the church council.
- i. Its duties are to coordinate the staffing of all church leadership positions filled by volunteer workers, unless otherwise specified herein, to include Sunday School Officers and Teachers, other program workers, all other committees and church officers: Deacons, Trustees, Clerk, Treasurer, and Moderator.
 - ii. Persons considered for any such positions shall first be approved by the Nominating Committee before they are approached for recruitment.
 - iii. The Nominating committee shall present to the church for election all who accept the invitation to serve.
- d. The Personnel Committee assists the church in matters related to employed personnel administration, including those called by church action.
- i. The work includes such areas as determining staff needs, employment, salaries, benefits, retirement, other compensation, policies, job descriptions, and personnel services.
 - ii. In the absence of an elected personnel committee, the Deacons shall fulfill these duties.

- e. The church Building and Grounds Committee assists the church in matters related to properties administration.
 - i. Its work includes such areas as:
 - 1. maintaining all church properties for ready use,
 - 2. recommending policies regarding use of properties, and
 - 3. consulting with the personnel committee (or designated groups in the absence of a personnel committee) and the church staff regarding the needs for, and the employment of maintenance personnel, and regarding the assignment of supervisory responsibility to appropriate personnel.
- f. The Stewardship Committee develops and recommends an overall stewardship development plan, a unified church budget, and budget subscription plans.
 - i. The Stewardship Committee shall be composed of the deacons, the trustees, the Pastor, the treasurer and three members at large elected from the general membership.
 - ii. The Stewardship Committee shall:
 - 1. Advise and recommend in the administration of the gifts of church members and others, using sound principles of financial management;
 - 2. Work with the treasurer in the preparation and presentation to the church of the budget and required reports regarding the financial affairs of the church;
 - 3. Monitor the administration of the budget;
 - 4. Promote stewardship education;
 - 5. Review and approve any proposed expense that is not covered by that committee or organization's budget;
 - a. If the expense is deemed legitimate, the Stewardship Committee shall make a recommendation through the Church Council for an increase to the overall church budget; and

- b. Any expense that exceeds the church budget would require approval at the next business meeting.
- g. The Missions Committee is to serve as the church coordinator of church mission activities.
 - i. The committee shall normally consist of the following regular members: Pastor, Deacon Chairman, Sunday School Director, Ministers of Youth and Children, and at least three (3) additional persons known to be active in church missions, one of whom will be proposed by the Nominating Committee to serve as Chairperson.

Article III. Church Program Organizations

- 1. General.** The church shall maintain programs for the furtherance of its mission appropriate to its size and its mission.
 - a. The number and purposes of programs shall be determined by the church and should accomplish the functions of Bible teaching: church member training, church leader training, new member orientation, mission education, action and support; and music education, training and performance.
 - b. All organizations related to the church programs shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church, and all program activities subject to church coordination and approval.
 - c. The church shall provide the human resources, the physical resources, and the financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.
- 2. The Sunday School.**
 - a. Sunday School shall be the basic reaching and teaching organization for the church.
 - b. Its primary responsibility is the Bible teaching program, but in the absence of other program organizations may assume some or all of the duties of those organizations.
 - c. Its primary tasks shall be to teach the biblical revelation, reach persons for Christ and church membership, perform the functions of the church within its constituency, provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.
 - d. The Sunday School shall be organized by departments and/or classes, as appropriate for all ages, and shall be conducted under the direction of the Sunday School director elected by the church.

3. The Church Training organization.

- a. The Church Training organization (when active) shall serve as the training unit of the church;
- b. Its tasks shall be to train church members to perform the functions of the church: train church leaders, orient new church members: teach Christian theology, Christian ethics, Christian history, and church polity and organization and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.
- c. Church training shall be organized by departments for all ages and conducted under the direction of the Sunday School Director or other elected general director.

4. The Missions Program.

- a. The Missions Program shall be the mission education, action and support organization for the church body.
- b. Its tasks shall be to teach missions; engage in mission action; lead the church in support to worldwide missions through participation and giving; and collect and interpret for the church information and opportunities regarding the work of Christ throughout the Kingdom of God.
- c. The Missions Program shall have such officers and organizations as the Program requires.

5. The Church Music organization.

- a. The Church Music organization under the direction of the Church's music director or Minister of Music, shall be the music education, training and performance organization of the church.
- b. Its tasks shall be to teach music; train persons to lead, sing, and play music; provide music in the church and community; and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.
- c. The Church Music program shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires.

Article IV. Church Council.

1. The primary functions of the church council shall be to recommend to the church suggested objectives and church goals; to review and coordinate ministry and program plans recommended by the Deacons and other church officers, organizations, and committees; to recommend to the church the use of the leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate achievements in terms of church objectives and goals.
2. Regular members of the church council shall be the Pastor, who serves as chairman, other church staff members, directors of church program

organizations, and chairman of deacons, church officers, and chairmen of church committees.

3. All matters agreed upon by the church council which call for action not already approved by the Deacons or prior church vote shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval in either a regular or special business meeting, as appropriate.

Article V. Church Ordinances.

1. Baptism

- a. 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.
- b. Baptism shall be by immersion in water. (See Bylaws Article I, 2(a)(4) for procedure where baptism by immersion is impossible).
- c. The Pastor, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall administer baptism. The deacons shall assist in the preparation for, and the observance of, baptism.
- d. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship in conjunction with any worship service of the church.
- e. A person who professes Christ and is not baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the Pastor and/or staff or deacons. If negative interest is ascertained on the part of the candidate, he shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism and shall not become a member of the church.

2. The Lord's Supper.

- a. The church shall observe the Lord's Supper at least quarterly, normally on the first Sunday of the quarter, unless otherwise scheduled.
- b. The Pastor and Deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper.
- c. The communion committee shall be responsible for the physical preparations. In the absence of a communion committee, the Deacons shall be responsible for this function.

Article VI. Church Meetings

1. Worship Services

- a. The church shall schedule regular services for the worship of Almighty God to meet its needs.

- b. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services.
 - c. The Pastor shall direct the services for all the church members and for all others who may choose to attend.
- 2. **Special Services.** Revival services and any other church meetings essential to the advancement of the church's objectives shall be placed on the church calendar.
- 3. **Regular Business Meetings.** The church shall hold regular business meetings at a designated time.
- 4. **Special Business Meetings.**
 - a. The church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance.
 - b. A one-week public notice of the membership must be given for the specially called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical.
 - c. The notice shall include the subject, the date and the time and place and it must be given in such a manner that all active members have reasonable opportunity to know of the meeting, i.e., a pulpit announcement and/or notice in the church bulletin and/or other means as appropriate.
- 5. **Parliamentary Rules.** Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

Article VII. Church Finances

1. Budget.

- a. The church Stewardship Committee (See Article II, 3(f)(i) for composition) shall prepare and submit an inclusive budget through the Church Council and then to the church for approval, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and other expenses.
- b. Thirty (30) days in advance of the Stewardship Budget Meeting, the Stewardship Committee shall call for written recommendations for budgetary items from church officers, committee chairpersons, ministry team leaders, and others charged with the administration of various classifications or sub-classifications of the budget. Persons submitting recommendations should be prepared to present and explain their recommendations at the Stewardship Budget Meeting.
- c. It is understood that membership in this church involves obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate

gifts. Annually, there shall be opportunity provided to secure worthy commitments of financial support from the church members. Offering envelopes will be provided for members' and non-members' use.

2. Accounting Procedures.

- a. All funds received for any and all purposes (except the Deacons' Benevolence Fund) shall pass through the hands of the church treasurer and be properly recorded on the books of the church.
- b. Those who have the responsibility that involves actual handling of funds shall do so at the direction of the treasurer and/or in accordance with the purchasing and disbursement procedures in Article VII, 3.
- c. A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the accountability of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Stewardship Committee.

3. Purchasing and Disbursing Procedures.

- a. Primary authority for each disbursement comes from the budget as adopted by the church.
- b. The Treasurer is authorized to issue purchase orders upon request of the authorized committee person or leader charged with the administration of the various classifications or sub-classifications of the budget; provided that the request is covered by the adopted budget. Exceptions must go through the Stewardship Committee.

4. Fiscal Year. The church fiscal year shall run concurrently with the calendar year beginning on January 1 and ending on December 31.

Article VIII. Amendments.

Changes in the constitution and bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment shall have been furnished to each member eligible to vote. Amendments to the constitution shall be by two thirds of church members present. Amendments to the bylaws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.