

*By-Laws of
NorthRidge Community Church of Rockford
Winnebago County, Illinois*

We, the Board of Deacons/Elders of NorthRidge Community Church of Rockford, having sought the direction through Biblical Scripture and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and acting in accordance with the requirements of the Illinois Religious Corporation Act, 805 ILCS 110, do adopt the following By-laws as NorthRidge Community Church of Rockford's articles of governance effective as of 10/1/2021

Article One - Name, Organization, and affiliation

1.1 Name. The name of the Church is Northridge Community Church of Rockford and will hereafter be referred to as “this Church” or “NRCC”.

1.2 Organization.

1.2.1 Date of Organization. This Church was organized on November 1, 2005.

1.2.2 Basis of Organization. This Church was organized under the Illinois “Religious Corporation Act, 805 ILCS 110.

Article Two - Statement of Purpose

2.1 Purpose. The purpose of this Church is to be a religious entity in accord with the Illinois Religious Corporation Act, 805 ILCS 110, (the “Act”). Furthermore, our purpose is to help people discover a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ and to build committed believers in Him.

2.2 Vision. The vision of this Church reads, “We desire to be a fellowship of followers of Jesus Christ committed to live by faith in Him, to be known by our love for others, and to be a voice of hope in our community to our world.”

Article Three - Statement of Faith

3.1 Word of God. We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We believe that the 66 books of the Old and New Testament found in the Holy Bible are God's complete and sufficient revelation and, for that reason, hold God's supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct for the total well-being of mankind. (Psa. 119:97-112, Isa. 40:8, Matt. 5:18, 2 Tim. 3:16-17)

3.2 The Trinity. We believe that there is one living and true God who eternally exists in three Persons, namely, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, that these three are equal in every attribute, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption. (Matt. 12:18, John 16:13-15, Titus 3:4-7, 1 Peter 1:1-12)

3.3 God the Father. We believe in God, the Father, an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men and women, and that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and eternal death all who come to Him in personal repentance and faith through His Son, Jesus Christ. (Gen. 1:26-27, Mark 12:29-30, John 1:1-4)

3.4 Jesus Christ. We believe that Jesus Christ, God's only Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life on earth and voluntarily paid for our sins by dying on the cross as our substitute. This accomplishes salvation for all who receive God's grace by trusting in Him alone. We believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day and that He is now seated at the right hand of the Father in Heaven and is the only mediator between God and mankind. We believe that He will return to earth in bodily form to consummate history. (John 1:14&18, 14:6-9, Col. 1:13-20)

3.5 The Holy Spirit. We believe that the Holy Spirit was sent from God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment and to draw sinners to Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells, illuminates, and empowers every believer at the point of salvation, and that He abides in us as both our Counselor and Comforter. We believe that the Holy Spirit equips every believer with spiritual gifts for the purpose of serving both the church and those outside the Church. (John 14:26, 16:7-15, Rom 8:1-17)

3.6 Mankind. We believe that God created mankind in His own image and because of that, all human life is sacred and of inestimable worth, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. We believe that mankind voluntarily disobeyed God, thus forfeiting their innocence and falling from their sinless state. Subsequently, all men and women are sinful, both by inheritance but also by their own choice, and therefore, under God's just condemnation without defense or excuse. We believe that, without exception, all men and women are totally depraved and that they are unable to save themselves. We believe that all people need a Savior, and that Person is Jesus Christ, the only Person able to save people from eternal judgment. (Gen 1:27, 3:1-24, Ps 139:13-16, Jer 1:4-5, Luke 1:15, Rom 1:18,3:10-23)

3.7 Salvation. We believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins on the cross as a representative and substitute sacrifice, and that we must individually receive Christ as our Savior by faith in order to be freely given forgiveness from our sin and the promise of eternal life. Therefore, each individual that receives Jesus Christ as their Savior is born again by the Holy Spirit who abides and lives in the believer from the moment they receive Christ. (John 3: 16-17, Rom 5:6-8, 10:8-10, 1 John 5,10-12)

3.8 Resurrection. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ, His ascension into heaven and his present life as our High Priest and our Advocate before God, the Father. We believe that His resurrection from the dead is our only hope that we, too, will someday be resurrected from our physical death and will be brought to heaven to live with Christ forever with our new, transformed heavenly bodies. (Luke 24:1-12, 1 Cor. 15:12-20, 1 Pet. 1:3)

3.9 The Church. We believe that upon salvation, the new believer becomes part of the body of Christ on earth, which is the Church, with Jesus Christ as the Head. There is one universal church composed of all believers throughout the world who acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. In addition, the Scriptures command all followers of Christ to become part of a local fellowship of believers (the local church) in order to devote themselves to worship, prayer, the teaching of the Word of God, observation of the ordinances (baptism and communion), fellowship, service to the body through the development and use of talents and spiritual gifts, and outreach to the world to fulfill Christ's great commission by attempting to draw all people to Jesus Christ and make disciples of all nations. Whenever God's people meet regularly, there is the local expression of the church, under the oversight of the deacons/elders. The church Partners are called to work together in love and unity, intent on corporately fulfilling their ultimate purpose of glorifying Jesus Christ. (Matt. 28:18-20, Acts 2:42-47, Eph 4:11-16)

3.10 Marriage. We believe that God has established marriage as a lifelong, exclusive relationship between one man and one woman and that all intimate sexual activity outside the marriage relationship, whether heterosexual, homosexual, or otherwise, is immoral and therefore sin (Gen. 2:24,

Ex. 20:14, 17, 22:19; Lev. 18:22-23, 20:13, 15-16; Matt. 19:4-6, 9; Rom. 1:18-31; I Cor. 6:9-10, 15-20, 1 Tim. 1:8-11; Jude 7).

3.11 Gender. We believe that God created the human race male and female and that all conduct with the intent to adopt a gender other than one's birth gender is immoral and therefore sin (Gen. 1:27; Deut. 22:5).

3.12 The New Life. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. We believe that as children of God, we are overcomers of the world system and more than conquerors over trials and temptations through our eternal relationship with Jesus Christ. We believe that God's intent for every follower of Christ is to experience the abundant life that Jesus makes available to each of us and then to share that Good News with everyone with whom we come into contact! (Psa 51:12, Acts 1:8, Rom. 8:31-39, Eph. 1:7, 2 Cor. 5:17-20)

3.13 Christian Conduct. We believe that every follower of Christ should live for the glory of God and in service to others, and that his or her conduct should be blameless before the world and as shining stars to draw people toward Jesus Christ. We believe that every follower of Jesus Christ should be in a growing relationship with Him by obeying God's Word, yielding to the Holy Spirit, and being conformed to the image of Christ. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of this Church. (Matt. 5:13-16, 1 Cor. 10:31, Phil. 2:14-16, 1 Pet 2:17, Jude 1:23)

3.14 Christian Liberty and Church Cooperation. We believe that each follower of Christ has a direct relationship with God and is both responsible to God and accountable to Church leaders in all matters of faith and conduct. We also believe that each local church body is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority. With this in mind, we believe that local churches can be most effective by cooperating with other Christian churches and other interdenominational associations and fellowships. Cooperation with these organizations must be voluntary and must be able to be terminated at any time. (Isa. 6:1-8, 1 Pet. 2:5, Rev. 1:5-6)

3.15 The Consummation of Human History – Heaven, Hell, and the Reign of Jesus Christ. We believe in the personal, visible return of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ, to earth, and the establishment of his kingdom forever, preceded by His gathering together to Him, both the dead in Christ and those who are alive who are instantly changed to an incorruptible body. Following His millennial reign and Satan's final banishment, we believe that both the unsaved and all others who are saved will be bodily resurrected for the Final Judgment. The saved will be raised to eternal, conscious

bliss with Jesus Christ in the new Heaven and earth and the unsaved will suffer eternal torment in Hell, along with Satan in conscious separation from God. (Eze. 39:17-24, Matt. 24:24-31, 1 Thes. 4:16-17, Rev. 19:20-21)

Article Four - Limitations on Corporate Authority

4.1 Distributions. This Church, being organized exclusively for religious purposes, may make distributions to (a) organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code, (b) missionaries furthering the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or (c) the needy. These distributions shall be given out after a super-majority vote of the Board of Deacons/Elders.

4.2 No Distributions to Private Persons. No part of the net earnings of this Church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributed to, any private person, except that this Church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered.

4.3 Prohibited Activities. Notwithstanding any other provisions of these By-Laws, this Church shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by: (a) a corporate entity exempt from federal income tax under 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code, or (b) a corporate entity, contributions to which are deductible under 170(c)(2) of the Code.

Article Five - Board of Deacons/Elders

5.1 Philosophy of Board of Deacons/Elders. We believe that the most effective and Christ-like method of leadership follows a servant-leader model. In contrast to a hierarchical or top-down approach, Servant-Leaders (hereafter called Deacons/Elders) will aim to both enable and empower others to advance the services, activities, and ministries of this Church and to oversee and minister to the spiritual and physical needs of its Members.

5.2 Existence and Appointments of Deacons/Elders. This Church at all times shall have Deacons/Elders, and the responsibilities and privileges of them shall be as set forth in this Article 6.

5.3 Responsibilities of Deacons/Elders. The Deacons/Elders shall be responsible for guiding and facilitating the ministries, resources and activities of this Church. They shall provide spiritual oversight and leadership to its Members. They shall guard the unity of spirit within the Church and

recommend establishment of policies concerning the interest of this Church. They shall be the sole authoritative interpreter of Scripture.

5.4 Appointment of Deacons/Elders. Any male Member of this church (21 or older) may be elected to become a Deacon/Elder, subject to the quality of their character (1 Tim. 3:8-13). A person shall become a Deacon/Elder if: (a) such person is nominated by one or more of the Deacons/Elders, (b) the Board has determined by a super-majority vote that said person has met the guidelines and qualifications of a Deacon/Elder, and (c) the Board, by super-majority vote, and congregation, by simple-majority vote, appoint such person to be a Deacon/Elder. The senior and Associate Pastor are automatically considered to be a Deacon/Elder.

5.5 Meetings of the Board of Deacons/Elders. The Board of Deacons/Elders, (hereafter called the Board), shall conduct scheduled meetings as determined by the Deacons/Elders, but all must attend no fewer than (4) times a year. A virtual appearance shall be considered as being present.

5.6 Quorum at Board Meetings. The Board may conduct a Board meeting if more than fifty (50) percent of the Deacons/Elders are present at the meeting. Quorum does not apply should the Board decide to remove a Deacon/Elder or Senior or Associate Pastor; in this situation all Deacons/Elders, other than the one being reviewed, must be in attendance.

5.7 Voting at Board Meetings. All voting at Board meetings shall be by Super-Majority Vote, unless otherwise provided in this Article 6. A Super-Majority Vote shall require an affirmative vote of sixty-six (66) percent or more of the Deacons/Elders present at a meeting. Under extreme and justifiable reasons only, as approved by the rest of the Board, proxy or absentee voting is permitted.

5.8 Removal of Deacons/Elders. A Deacon/Elder may be removed from the Board if the person (a) requests to be taken off the Board, (b) ceases to be a Member of this Church, or (c) is terminated due to (1) the physical or mental incapacity of the Deacon/Elder, or (2) disqualification through discipline on grounds of doctrine, morality, or continued neglect of duty. This disqualification requires a super-majority vote of the Board (as Art. 6.6) and a simple-majority vote of the congregation.

5.9 No Compensation of Deacons/Elders. No Deacon/Elder shall be compensated for serving as a Deacon/Elder.

Article Six - Members

6.1 Philosophy of Membership. We believe that Membership in this church is an intentional spiritual friendship and relationship. Members should thus (a) align themselves with this Church with the intent to advance both the Gospel of Jesus Christ and purpose of His local Church; (b) enter into a spiritual relationship with this Church made evident by (1) fellowship and encouragement with other Church-attendees, both Members and others, (2) encouragement and support of Church leadership, and (3) accepting counsel, guidance, and admonishment by Church leaders; and (c) provide service and/or financial support with the intent of furthering the ministries of this Church.

6.2 Becoming a Member. Based on (a) an individual's desire to become a Member, (b) recognition of said potential Member's commitment to the Philosophy of Membership by the Board, and (c) recognition that said potential Member has a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and has accepted Him as their Lord and Savior, a potential Member shall be recognized as a Member by a super majority vote of the Board.

6.3 Voting Member. In order to vote, a member must have reached the age of 18 unless approved by the Board with a super-majority vote.

6.4 Termination of Membership. Membership shall be terminated in the following ways: (a) the death of the Member, (b) the Member informing the Board of his or her desire to terminate Membership with this Church, either written or orally, (c) release to another church, or (d) if the Board, by super-majority vote, terminate said Membership, because of a violation of Church doctrine or policies. Since the attitude toward Members shall be guided by redemption rather than punishment, this should be reserved for the most serious violation and in which there is no other action left after following the steps laid out in Matt. 18:15-17. (1 Cor. 5:1-13) Any member terminated in this manner may be restored to Membership after showing repentance and approval of the Board of Deacons/Elders by a super-majority vote.

Article Seven -Officers

7.1 Acting Officers. In the event that other officers are needed, other than noted below, the Board, with a simple-majority vote, will appoint persons to serve in said capacities.

7.2 Financial Officer. A Treasurer shall be elected as such as the Board, from time-to-time, may do so by super-majority vote. The Treasurer shall maintain complete and accurate records of all Church purchases, expenditures, accounts payable and accounts receivable. The Treasurer shall

maintain the ability to write and sign Church checks, and shall assist the Senior Pastor and Board in administering the financial resources of this Church.

7.3 Finances.

7.3.1 Budget. The Board shall be responsible for preparing the Church Budget and approved by super-majority vote prior to the beginning of the fiscal year. The approved and confirmed Budget shall be available for viewing to any of this Church's Members and approved by a simple-majority vote by its Members.

7.3.2 Checks. Besides the Treasurer, other people can be approved to sign checks with the simple-majority of the Board.

Article Eight - Church Staff

8.1 Senior Pastor. This church may employ a Senior Pastor with a super-majority vote of confirmation from the Board, and a simple-majority vote from the congregation. The Senior Pastor automatically is a Deacon/Elder and along with the Board, shall be responsible for overseeing the ministries and resources of this Church. The Senior Pastor is primarily responsible for (a) teaching the Word of God; (b) directing the day-to-day operations of this Church; and (c) hiring and overseeing the other members of the Church staff. The Senior Pastor will serve in such capacity until either (a) the Board receives confirmation of a resignation by the Senior Pastor; or (b) the Senior Pastor is removed from duties, which after a super-majority vote of all Deacon/Elders (excluding the Senior Pastor), is effective at a time that the Board determines to be appropriate, so long that the time between an affirmative vote and termination date is not to exceed (3) three months. Should the Senior Pastor resign or be removed from duties, the Board shall direct all operations of this church by super-majority vote.

8.2 Associate Pastor. This Church may employ one Associate Pastor with a super-majority vote of confirmation from the Board, and a simple-majority vote from the congregation. The Associate Pastor is automatically a Deacon/Edler. The Associate Pastor shall assist the Senior Pastor in guiding the activities of this Church, and shall assume such specific responsibilities as the Senior Pastor deems necessary. An Associate Pastor will serve in such capacity until either (a) the Board receives confirmation of a resignation by the Associate Pastor; or (b) the Associate Pastor is removed from their duties with a super-majority vote by the Board.

8.3 Other Staff. This Church may employ additional staff or assistant pastors as the Senior Pastor, with advice from the Board, from time-to-time may determine to be needed. Any member of the Staff shall aid the Senior Pastor in whatever responsibilities are deemed necessary by the Senior Pastor. Any Church Staff member shall serve in such capacity until either (a) the Senior Pastor receives confirmation of a resignation by the Staff member, or (b) the Staff member is removed from their duties by the Senior Pastor.

8.4 Children Volunteers. This Church shall do due diligence when selecting staff and volunteers to work with children. This may include conducting background checks and requesting references.

Article Nine - Membership Voting

9.1 Membership Voting. The voting Members of this Church maintain the authority of confirmation by simple majority vote on the following matters: (a) the hiring of a Senior Pastor and an Associate Pastor, (b) the appointment or removal of any Deacon/Elder, (c) the annual budget, and (d) a change of Church name, change of location, and/or a potential merger.

9.2 Voting requirements. Besides being a voting Member, one needs to be physically present in order to vote w/ the exception of unforeseen circumstances where a vote by proxy would be approved with a simple-majority of the Board.

Article Ten - Books and Records

10.1 Books and Records. This Church shall keep correct and complete books and records of accounts. The Board shall conduct an annual review of such books and records toward the end of the fiscal year, and keep a record of its proceedings.

Article Eleven - Fiscal Year

11.1 Fiscal Year. The Fiscal Year of this Church shall run from January 1 to December 31.

11.2 Annual Business Meeting. An annual business meeting shall be held on or near Jan 15 of each year depending on circumstances.

Article Twelve - Dissolution

12.1 Right to Dissolve. The Board, by super-majority vote may dissolve this Church.

12.2 Disposition of Property upon Dissolution. In the event that property is owned by this Church at the time of dissolution, the Board, by simple-majority vote, may select a qualifying organization, recognized as in compliance with 501(c)(3). This organization shall be donated all or part, as the Board may determine, of this Church's property.

12.3 Merger. This Church may decide to merge with another church with a super-majority vote of the Board and a simple-majority vote of its Members.

Article Thirteen - Amendment

13.1 Right to Amend. The Board, by super-majority vote, may amend these By-Laws at any time. All amendments must contain an effective date when which they will be placed into effect.