



INTRODUCTION

To God, the body is very important—both the physical and the spiritual body. God has designed every physical body to begin as a baby's body. And whenever each toddler stretches forth to take their first steps, God launches them on life's never-ending journey of exploration, adventure, and discovery. That journey continues until the final day arrives when the new spiritual body takes over and lives forever. The Scriptures also describe another spiritual body—the church—the Body of Christ which is made up of many parts.

According to God's plan, the Body of Christ is made of many people lending strength and providing leadership to His church! Younger and older, richer and poorer, married and single, male and female all come together. Each one is spiritually gifted and called by God. Each one a gift from God!

This constitution describes how this local body of believers works and walks together the spiritual journey upon which the Lord is leading us. It describes how we "do church." It declares clearly our church's purpose and vision and why we are—*"asking God to transform us so that He can use us!"*

As you read through it, you may notice that it was written with spiritual transformation, spiritual journey, in mind.

Our Leaders Transformational Approach to Ministry and Authority

Our church has chosen to approach ministry by focusing on spiritual transformation. Spiritual transformation begins with salvation and continues daily as a spiritual walk; a never-ending spiritual journey with God.

We believe individuals can realize their greatest spiritual potential and our church family as a whole realizes its greatest regional impact, when we choose to allow the living Jesus Christ to transform us to become like him from the inside out!

Christ's earthly image (Luke 13) was servant-hood—holding all power and authority—yet leading people by serving them. And so our own leaders' spiritual transformation is especially critical when we ask them to exercise spiritual gifts and authority—among God's people.

Our leaders lead by declaring, *"We are asking God to transform us, so He can use us!"* Our church chooses leaders who are committed to allowing Christ to transform them into his image so that they might become more useful in His service.

Those we select seek to demonstrate God's grace in two ways: **leadership**—exercising a God-given ability to encourage people to follow them, and **servant-hood**—exercising a God-given ability to humble themselves among those who are being led. In our church, leadership and spiritual authority are not offered to those who are seeking power or control, but only to those who desire to serve one another through God's grace.

That is a transformational way to “do church.” For many, it is a new spiritual journey.

A Transformed Leadership Structure

A transformed view of ministry and authority leads to transformed leadership structures. Most church constitutions provide detailed step-by-step instructions for the unchanging operation of the church. The reader will notice that this constitution has details, but it also includes principles, guidelines—“fuzzy” boundaries for teams of people who are empowered to work together in ministry as the Spirit of God leads them. The consequence—spiritual unity, freedom and relational health experienced by the entire body of believers.

Some people might describe our structure as “under-structure” rather than “hierarchy.” Instead of moving “upward” as one enters “leadership,” one journeys “downward” by supporting, encouraging and empowering others!

Our church designates several leadership groups—Shepherds, Ministry Teams, Officers, and Staff. Each leadership group views, and works with, the other groups as peers, serving one another, and the congregation as a whole. Our leaders look to discover what can be shared, rather than what must be protected!

Our Shared Biblical Values

Understanding our shared VALUES can help us understand ourselves better and help newcomers determine whether they want to partner with us. We have committed ourselves to giving these shared VALUES prominence as we make decisions for ourselves and our church.

SPIRITUAL POWER 1 Corinthians 6:19; Galatians 5:25

Christians are the dwelling place of the living God. **Without Him, we have no spiritual power, and there is no true transformation!** Therefore, as a church, we will choose intimacy with and submission to the Spirit who dwells within us because with Him nothing is impossible!

SPIRITUAL GROWTH 1 Pet 3:18; John 10

Christians are called to growth, abundance and harvest to go where we have not been to produce what we do not have. Individually, we are called to “grow in the knowledge and grace of the living Jesus Christ” who loves the people in this world who died for the people of this world and who wants them to know Him personally. Christ has employed the church to harvest work—no one else. Therefore, we value spiritual growth because without it there can be no abundant harvest.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS 1 Corinthians 12:7

Christians are called to manifest the Spirit of God for the common good—not for personal experience or benefit. These spiritual gifts strengthen us to serve God, and equip us to serve others. Therefore, as a church, we choose to study, understand and apply the spiritual gifts God gives among us so the Body can exercise His strength in fulfilling its mission.

SPIRITUAL UNITY JOHN 13:35; Luke 11:17

Christians are called to "Love one another." Not only because "A house divided against itself cannot stand," but also because authentic Holy Spirit-inspired unity—**the sweetness of the Spirit who binds us together in love—IS the testimony of Christ's reality in this world!** The true church is not simply a cordial community among friends. But rather it is a spiritually transformed community of sinners loving each other nonetheless and remembering that the "lost" are dependent upon us. Therefore, we choose, above all things, to love one another deeply as Christ has loved us.

EACH PERSON IS ESSENTIAL 1 Corinthians 12:22; Matthew 18:14

Christians are called to recognize "Each member is necessary." A church functions as the Body of Christ, when it truly values each person He sends. These include people already known to a congregation as well as those who are not yet known to them. "God is not willing that any of these little ones be lost." Therefore, as a church, we choose to actively care for one another as well as to reach out beyond ourselves to others for their salvation.

RELATIONSHIPS

BETWEEN BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST Matthew 18:15-19; 1 Corinthians 5; Hebrews 10:25

As Christ followers we believe in healthy, Biblical confrontation for the sake of seeing our brother or sister in Christ focus their affections towards Christ.

We believe in the regular, physical gathering of the local body of believers for the mutual benefit of spiritual edification and accountability.

ROMANTIC INTIMACY Genesis 2, Matthew 19:1-12; Hebrews 13:4; Romans 1:27

We believe in committed, monogamous, heterosexual (biologically male and female—the chromosomal make-up at birth) husband and wife marital relationships as being the biblical idea and only framework for marriage. We recognize marriage as a covenant that happens before God and a witnessing community in a wedding ceremony. This wedding ceremony is an act of worship to God, the creator and designer of marriage.

Any sexual intimacy is reserved for this committed husband and wife marriage relationship. Sexual intimacy outside of the boundaries of a committed, monogamous, heterosexual (biologically male and female—the chromosomal make-up at birth) husband and wife marital relationship falls outside of God's design and is sinful.

While grace and forgiveness must always be present in the church, relationships must always be seen through this scriptural lens.

EXCELLENCE IN OUR EFFORTS 1 Corinthians 10:31

Christians are called to "Do all to the glory of God" in whatever we do! Someone once said, "God is the enemy of great!" Therefore, as a church, we choose to honor Him by excellence in our efforts in whatever He provides for us to do, rather than settling for an easier mediocrity or simply things we might prefer.

ENDURANCE IN OUR TRUST PHILIPPIANS 4:19; Psalm 100:6 "My God shall supply all your needs," and "Your Father knows what you need before you ask." "He is faithful to all generations."

Christians are called to profound trust in an invisible God even while we are in the midst of life's visible challenges and trials. Therefore, as a church we choose to expect God's provision in God's time. For those things we believe He desires for us, we will first ask God then trust He will provide what He knows we need when He knows we need it.

EXUBERANCE IN OUR MINISTRY Psalm 118:24; Exodus 20: *"This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it."* And *"Remember the Sabbath."*

Christians are called to proclaim God's presence and power each day and to rejoice in what He brings for us to do. Serving the Lord faithfully yields great satisfaction and joy in legitimate weariness. In response to God's call, we choose to encourage ourselves, and our fellow servants, to take regular times for sabbatical rest, refreshment, and jubilee from the weight of ministry so that we may return with joy!

The Constitution

Article I – Our Shared Biblical Beliefs

- 1. The 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, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
- 2. The Trinity** We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.
- 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 people, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.
- 4. Jesus Christ** We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people and personal visible return to the earth.
- 5. The Holy Spirit** We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and the Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, and to regenerate sanctify and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide.
- 6. Regeneration** We believe that all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.
- 7. The Church** We believe in the universal Church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Christ Jesus, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.

8. Christian Conduct We believe that a Christians should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellowmen; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions, and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full measure of maturity in Christ.

9. The Ordinances We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

10. Religious Liberty We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation of patronage of the other.

11. Church Cooperation We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference exists and functions by will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise cooperate with interdenominational fellowships on a voluntary basis.

12. The Last Things We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked.

Article II -- AMENDMENTS

Proposed amendments must be submitted in writing, conspicuously posted at the church, and announced from the pulpit at least thirty days before a vote.

For the purpose of amending this constitution, a quorum shall be defined as 51% of the active membership, and a 75% majority vote shall be necessary for passage.

The ByLaws

Article I -- Our Shared Name

The name of this organization shall be "New Journey Church." Its location is in Fosston, MN. This church is a non-profit corporation registered in the State of Minnesota.

Article II – Our Shared Vision

A New Journey—moving out into our region and beyond. We believe God is calling this congregation to remain moving forward--to be transformed--and to transform others--to significantly expand His kingdom's spiritual impact across our region by seeking to become a church family of ~ 350 "fishers of men." This is why, "*We are asking God to transform us, so He can use us!*" There are three places we are seeking God to transform us missionally for His Kingdom: that we would desire God, seek first His Kingdom, and that we would choose to be discipled and to disciple others.

Article III -- Our Shared Experience

"We are asking God to transform us"

"God, help me recognize my own continuing transformation." We are asking God to help us recognize how He is still changing us today not simply recounting the stories of how He may have changed us in the past.

"God, help me rejoice in how You are changing me!" We are asking God to help us openly rejoice about who we are becoming in Christ. We want God to help us recognize those special moments of opportunity when we can graciously tell others our own transforming stories. We also want to encourage each other to tell their stories of God's transformational power.

"God, help me reflect our shared Biblical values!" We share these values, not to put on a shelf but to live out with others! We are asking God to help us reflect Him to our world—spiritual power, spiritual growth, spiritual gifts and spiritual unity, along with each person is essential, excellence in our efforts, endurance in our trust and finally exuberance in our ministry!

Article IV – Our Shared Membership

Membership in New Journey Church is viewed as a serious individual commitment to personally participate in the spiritual health of this body of believers, and to actively support our missional purpose across our region.

Active membership is required for all church pastors, corporate officers, and shepherds. Active membership is encouraged for everyone in the congregation.

There are three steps to becoming a member of New Journey Church. 1) Applicants attend a church introduction seminar such as, "Discover Your New Journey." 2) A Shepherd interviews the applicants to confirm their personal faith in Jesus Christ and to confirm their testimony of faith through baptism by immersion. And 3) upon the recommendation by the Shepherds, and completion of the church introduction seminar, applicants are accepted by a majority vote at any meeting of the church.

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP shall begin upon placement of one's signature on the church membership registry. Active membership shall be maintained through annual renewal of signature. Regular dates for annual renewal will be published by the Shepherds. However, in response to unusual circumstances, the Shepherds may exercise discretionary authority to extend an exception to an active member who misses the published annual renewal dates.

The status of **INACTIVE** shall result when a signature is not renewed on the church membership registry at the annual date(s).

RETURN TO ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP may be recommended by the Shepherds following an individual's request to meet with the Shepherds to clarify their original reasons for leaving active membership, and to affirm their spiritual readiness to recommit to active membership.

VOTING PRIVILEGE shall be the responsibility of active members, eighteen years of age, or older.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP shall be provided for students, or other temporary residents, who wish to establish a church "home away from home." Upon expression of their desire to become associate members, they may do so by testimony of personal faith in Jesus Christ.

DISMISSAL Individuals may seek to dismiss themselves from active membership by letter to the Shepherds. If efforts to bring spiritual reconciliation/restoration are not effective, an individual may be dismissed from active membership by majority vote of the Shepherds' Council. After two years on the inactive role, Shepherds will administratively remove names from the inactive role, and report such changes at a regular business meeting.

Article V – The Way We Do Shared Ministry

We do ministry as a body. We work together to strengthen spiritual life in all of us.

Our structure includes ministry teams, a coordinating council, a shepherds' council, pastor(s) and staff. We elect individuals to leadership based upon servant-hearted leadership spiritual gifts.

A. MINISTRY TEAMS

Every ministry team exists for the sole purpose of supporting the church's overall purpose and vision. Each team will be led by an elected Servant Leader. It is expected that each team will engage the spiritual gifts within both members and nonmembers alike. Each ministry team will regularly inform the congregation regarding the results of their efforts at fulfilling the church's purpose and vision. Every volunteer is expected to honor and respect the church's faith statement and shared biblical values.

BEACON/EVANGELISM TEAM -- The purpose of the Beacon Team is to "shine the light" of Jesus for this church family across the region.

In seeking to evangelize our communities, they will propose a team budget for promotion, advertising, evangelistic outreach and events, welcoming visitors, and keeping record of those who respond.

WORSHIP TEAM -- The purpose of the Worship Team is to provide a vibrant personal encounter with God through creative worship and praise services.

In seeking to bring people to worship of God, they will propose a budget for creating and scheduling worship services, including music, drama, the ordinances and other worship-oriented materiel.

NETWORK TEAM -- The purpose of the Network Team is to help newcomers connect socially and spiritually to the entire body of believers—first by helping newcomers identify their spiritual gifts, then by helping them discover a place of meaningful service in the body of believers.

In seeking to help newcomers “connect,” the team will propose a budget for creating and scheduling social events, as well as for study materials, e.g., “Discover New Life,” and Biblical studies on spiritual gifts.

ADVANCE TEAM -- For those who have been trained in basic discipleship and know their spiritual gifts, the purpose of the Advance Team is to connect people to small groups in the body of Christ, which may be focused on many diverse common-interests and ministries.

In seeking to strengthen the spiritual life of individuals, the team will propose a budget for creating or facilitating small group Bible studies, as well as a wide variety of other adult ministries, interest groups, or community impact events or ministries.

CHILDREN'S TEAM -- The purpose of the Children's Team is to evangelize and minister to each of the children God provides for our spiritual care.

In seeking to "bring the little ones unto me," the team will propose a budget that provides for and strengthens the children's Sunday school, as well as a wide variety of other ministries such as children's church, vacation Bible school, after-school clubs, day care, and other children's needs or events.

YOUTH TEAM -- The purpose of the Youth Team is to minister to each of the Junior High School and High School students that God provides for our spiritual care.

In seeking to “train them up in the way they should go,” this team will propose a budget that provides for and strengthens the Sunday school, mid-week meetings, outings, retreats, and other youth related needs or events.

CARE TEAM -- The purpose of the Care Team is to touch people, seeking to meet their mental, emotional and spiritual needs with gentle power and grace.

In seeking to "represent the hands of Christ in the community", the team will propose a budget that will empower acts of hospitality, benevolence and mercy -- such as, but not limited to, visitation, meals, flowers, cards, books, scriptures, etc.

MISSIONS TEAM -- The purpose of the Missions Team is to expand the interest, concern, and vision in the congregation for our “Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of our earth.”

In seeking to “lift our eyes to the harvest,” the team will propose a budget that educates, encourages, and sponsors missionaries, mission trips and other such mission related events that will strengthen the regional impact of our church.

HOSPITALITY TEAM – The purpose of the Hospitality Team is to lend support to the ministries of other teams by providing hospitality and physical food in a manner that nourishes healthy, growing spiritual life in the entire church family.

In seeking to “nourish the Body of Christ,” the team will propose a budget that supports its vibrant “kitchen-centered” life and “family-oriented” ministry.

BUSINESS AFFAIRS TEAM -- The purpose of the Business Affairs Team is to provide healthy vision-driven financial support for the entire church and all its ministry teams.

In seeking to support the regional vision and spiritual impact of our church, the team shall create its own operational budget, as well as propose an overall budget to the church that provides the monetary and material provisions necessary for a healthy and fruitful spiritual harvest through the other teams.

Their membership shall include, but not be limited to, the elected corporate officers.

OTHER MINISTRY TEAMS—Definitions and purposes for other ministry teams may be established as desired.

OPERATIONS MANUAL—Each Ministry Team shall use an Operations Manual to help provide effective communication and facilitate the periodic transfer of responsibilities.

Operations Manuals may include information such as: VISION statements, the Church Constitution and Membership List, job descriptions (including qualifications, terms of employment, responsibilities and authority {if any}), policies and procedures, plans, goals, scheduled events, meeting minutes, etc.

B. THE COORDINATING COUNCIL

The purpose of the Coordinating Council is to serve the vision of the whole church body through regular gatherings for scheduling and coordinating the various ministries of the church. The council may also serve as a “sounding board” when a ministry team desires to seek counsel or a broader perspective.

The council includes: the corporate officers, the servant leaders, the shepherd’s council, the staff and the pastor(s).

1. CORPORATE OFFICERS

- The corporate offices as required by Minnesota statutes. Additional offices may be created.
- The corporate president serves as moderator of the coordinating council and church business meetings.
- The corporate treasurer pays properly submitted church bills, and maintains records of all church expenditures.
- The corporate secretary records minutes of church meeting
- The financial secretary records the church income, makes bank deposits, maintains records of individual giving, and provides receipts at the end of the calendar year.
- The church may elect assistants to the treasurer and financial secretary. Any assistants elected shall help the appropriate officer as requested, and serve the church during the temporary absence of the officer.

2. SERVANT LEADERS

- The servant leaders provide vision and leadership to the various ministry teams.
- At the coordinating council, they share ministry team progress, plans and prayer requests.
- They also serve as counsel to the pastor(s), as well as role models and encouragers to the congregation.

3. SHEPHERDS' COUNCIL

- The Shepherd's Council provides the central spiritual leadership of the church; guiding by oversight its spiritual direction, serving as spiritual eyes and ears for the congregation, assisting the pastor in watch care over the spiritual welfare of the flock, and providing him with their counsel.
- Since the ministry of this group is spiritual in nature, rather than administrative, individuals elected to this council must meet the Biblical qualifications of elders.

4. CHURCH STAFF MEMBERS

- Church staff positions (full or part time) may be established at the will of the congregation for the purpose of adding spiritual strength and focus toward fulfilling a particular aspect of the church vision. The Biblical roles prophet, evangelist and/or pastor/teacher may be considered in any contemplated staff additions.
- Church staff members may be called upon to work with specific ministry teams.

5. THE PASTOR

- In *"Asking God to transform, us, so He can use us,"* the pastor is responsible to fulfill the leadership role of a shepherd to a flock. As such, the pastor is to "stand taller, look farther, and step out first."
- As leader, the pastor is responsible to provide spiritual order, unity, and clarity of focus among the believers through the teaching of the Word.
- The pastor's ministry shall be "equipping the saints (the church family) for the work of service" and shall include the ministry of the Word and prayer.
- The pastor shall serve as vice-moderator of the Coordinating Council, and of the church business meetings.

Article VI -- MEETINGS

- The church shall meet for services and business.

- Nothing in this constitution shall remove from the church the right to act on any matter of its choosing.

SERVICES

- The church shall meet at a variety of times and places to hold services of worship, praise, prayer, education, outreach and fellowship.

BUSINESS

- **FISCAL YEAR:** The fiscal year is January 1 to December 31.
- **TERM-OF-SERVICE YEAR:** The term of service for all elected positions is June 1 to May 31.
- **QUORUM:** Unless otherwise noted, a quorum is defined as 20% of the active membership. A 51% majority vote carries an item of business. (The Shepherd council may choose to advise delaying any voted action until a greater sense of spiritual unity is present.)
- **QUARTERLY BUSINESS MEETINGS:** The church meets quarterly (January, April, July, and October) to receive financial and ministry team reports, as well as to consider church business.
 - January – Starts the new fiscal year, and reviews the previous year’s annual fiscal report.
 - May – Includes year-to-date fiscal reports, end-of-term servant leader reports, and the church membership elects the leaders for the new term of service year.
 - July – Includes the mid-year fiscal report.
 - October – The church membership votes on the approaching fiscal year’s budget.
- **SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS:** Special business meetings may be called by the pastor, or shepherds; in addition, any servant leader may call for a special business meeting upon the written request of five active members representing five different families.

Article VII -- ELECTIONS

NOMINATIONS

(See **Article VIII** -- SPECIAL COMMITTEES)

TERMS

- The pastor's call is based upon a church vote. The terms of his service are established by a contract.
- The term of service for each corporate officer, servant leader and shepherd are one year.
- Any leader may be re-elected. The church values the whole body of spiritually gifted members in ministry, so that everyone has appropriate opportunities to serve.

VOTING

Church elections are non-competitive. Church elections involve an affirmation or denial for each nominee presented. To be elected, a nominee must receive a majority of “affirmative” votes.

Article VIII -- SPECIAL COMMITTEES

PULPIT COMMITTEE

In the absence of a pastor, a pulpit committee is established in consultation with Converge North Central (formerly the Minnesota-Iowa Baptist Conference), and affirmed by vote of the church. The committee works with the conference representative in seeking and presenting a prospective candidate for the church.

AUDITING COMMITTEE

The coordinating council annually arranges for an independent audit of the church's financial records and a written report is presented to the church.

NOMINATING COMMITTEES

Three nominating committees are utilized—1) the church officers, 2) the servant leaders, and 3) the shepherds. These committees work in consultation with the pastor to present nominations for their respective groups. As part of their process, the committees request suggestions from the congregation at large. The nominating committees present one nominee for each position on which the church votes.

Article IX – AFFILIATIONS, DIVISION & DISSOLUTION

AFFILIATION

New Journey Church is affiliated with Converge Northcentral and Converge Worldwide (formerly Baptist General Conference). Since these affiliations are voluntary, the church retains autonomous ownership of its property and governance of the church.

DIVISION

In the case of division among the church membership, the church property shall belong to those members who abide by this constitution. Should any controversy arise as to who is abiding by this constitution, the question shall be submitted to the Board of Overseers of Converge Northcentral and their decision shall be final.

DISSOLUTION

Should conditions arise when, for any reason, the church work cannot continue, it is anticipated that the remaining assets shall be transferred to Converge Northcentral.

Article X -- AMENDMENTS

Proposed amendments to these bylaws must be submitted in writing, printed and posted at the church, as well as communicated electronically, or by print, to the active membership list at least thirty days before a vote.

These bylaws may be amended at any business meeting by a simple majority vote of the active membership.