

The Official Procedures and Practices of New Life Christian Church Douglasville, GA

This document outlines the procedures and practices New Life Christian Church (NLCC) employs in selecting key leadership and managing ongoing systems and procedures. In addition, the procedures and practices provide accountability for ministry leaders and key information for the church body. While impossible to anticipate all future contingencies, the intent of this document is to provide flexibility to meet long-term changing needs.

Statement of Faith

We believe the entire Bible is the inspired Word of God and that men were moved by the Spirit to write the words of Scripture. Therefore, the Bible is without error.

We believe in one God who exists in three distinct persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). We believe that Jesus Christ is the second member of the Trinity (the Son of God) who became flesh to reveal God to man and to become the Savior of the lost world.

We believe that man was created in the image of God to have fellowship with Him, but became alienated from that relationship through sinful disobedience. As a result, man is totally incapable of coming back into a right relationship with God by his own effort.

We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross provides the sole basis for the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, salvation only occurs when a person places his faith in the death and resurrection of Christ as the sufficient payment for his sin.

We believe all believers should follow the example of Christ in the sacrament of baptism. New Life practices baptism by immersion.

We believe that every Christian should live for Christ and not for himself. By obedience to the Word and daily yielding to the Spirit, every believer will mature and become conformed to the image of Christ.

We believe that the church is the body of Christ of which Jesus Christ is the Head. The members are those who have trusted by faith the finished work of Christ. The purpose of the church is to glorify God by loving Him and by making Him known to a lost world.

This document is for the members of NLCC. Members are those who have signed the membership covenant (see Addendum "A") and are regularly practicing the expressions of Christian faith contained in the covenant.

The NLCC government is built around four teams of people:

1. The Elders
2. The Staff
3. The Stewardship Team
4. The Ministry Team Representatives

Elders

The board of elders is intended to be comprised of no fewer than five and no more than seven men, including the lead pastor. The lead pastor is a permanent member of the board of elders. A staff member, other than the lead pastor, may not serve as an elder.

The Purpose of Elders

Elders function primarily as *discerners* and *guardians* of the organization. Although they have the option, they are not expected to oversee specific projects or ministry areas in their capacity as elders. They function as overseers for the entire organization. The elders evaluate the effectiveness and direction of New Life according to three criteria:

1. The organization's mission: To lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. The organization's resources.
3. The organization's doctrine.

The elders will meet on a monthly basis, not less than ten times per year, to discuss ministry effectiveness and direction of the NLCC.

Elders do not determine programming. This responsibility falls to the staff under the direction of the Lead Pastor. However, the elders are responsible for evaluating programming based on its appropriateness and effectiveness in furthering the overall mission of NLCC.

The Qualifications of an Elder

A candidate for elder should have been a member of NLCC for at least two years prior to his election to office, and have been actively involved in ministry at NLCC for at least two years. Furthermore, all elders are required to meet the qualifications for elder/overseer as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-11, Titus 1:5-9 (NIV).

It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?) and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. - 1 Timothy 3:1-11

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. - Titus 1:5-9

The Authority of an Elder

The elders have final say in any and all matters concerning the overall direction of the organization. Unless otherwise specified in this document, anything voted on by the elders requires a three-fourths majority of the elder board in order to pass. A majority represents a quorum and must be present and voting at the time any vote is taken.

There are four decisions that the elders may not make without congregational affirmation:

1. Elders may not appoint a new lead pastor.
2. Elders may not approve debt or ongoing liability for the organization in excess of one-twelfth of the previous year's annual income; this includes hiring of any new staff member.
3. Elders cannot change or establish the denominational affiliation of NLCC.
4. Elders may not change the Articles of Incorporation, or bylaws in the Articles of Incorporation.

The Dismissal of an Elder

If it becomes apparent that an elder should not serve in the office of elder, he may resign, or by three-fourths vote of the elders, excluding the elder under consideration, be immediately retired from the office. His position will remain vacant until the next regularly scheduled election or until the current elders choose a suitable replacement.

Elders have the authority to dismiss the lead pastor without organizational approval by a three-fourths vote of all elders. In addition, any complaints or concerns regarding the lead pastor should be directed to and handled by the elders.

The Selection of Elders

At a time set by the elders, but no less frequently than annually, each member of the organization will be given the opportunity to nominate any man from the church who is a member of the church as a candidate for elder. All nominations will be gathered and evaluated by the elder selection team. The evaluation will include an application, interview, and background check. At least annually the elders will review the application and interview process.

Newly appointed elders will be presented and confirmed by the laying on of hands by current elders and pastors.

Elders serve one three-year term. Elders are required to rotate off for one year before becoming eligible for another term.

Staff

The lead pastor selects the staff and hires them subject to the approval of the elders. The purpose of this group is to determine programming and function, give vision to the various ministries of the organization, and oversee the day-to-day operations. The staff is accountable to the lead pastor and will meet annually with the elders to determine and review ministry objectives. All staff members are required to meet the character qualifications as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

Stewardship Team

The stewardship team oversees all financial matters related to NLCC. The lead pastor is to consult with the stewardship team in all matters relating to finances. The organizational business administrator and/or lead pastor may attend stewardship team meetings, but would not have voting privileges. The stewardship team's primary function is to ensure the financial health of the organization.

The staff salaries may not exceed the approved salary budget without approval from the elders.

The stewardship team is ultimately accountable to the elders of the organization. The elders have the authority to override any decision made by the stewardship team. However, if such an occasion should arise, it will be necessary for the elders to meet with the stewardship team and discuss the matter fully.

The stewardship team consists of five members, one of which will be the treasurer of the church. The treasurer will serve as the liaison between the stewardship team and the elders. The existing members of the stewardship team recommend new team members. New members need the approval of the elders annually. The initial team will be selected and approved by the elders.

Stewardship team members are required to have been members of NLCC for a minimum of one year and to have the professional skills necessary to perform their assigned tasks. Members serve one three-year term. Former members are eligible to serve again after being inactive for one year.

Ministry Team Leaders

A ministry team leader is an individual chosen from the particular ministry team to represent that group. An MTL serves as a channel of communication to and from the various ministries. MTL meetings are a time for an open exchange of ideas and information.

An MTL is required to have been a member of NLCC for a minimum of one year, commits to serve a one-year term, and may be approved for an additional term by the lead pastor and/or elders.

Organizational Business Meetings

The elders and/or the lead pastor have the authority to call special business meetings. The elders will schedule the meeting and publish the agenda at least one week in advance.

Selecting A New Lead Pastor

When the position of lead pastor is vacated, the elders will take appropriate action to secure a qualified candidate to serve as lead pastor. The elders will select a Pastor Search Team (PST) from key ministry leaders, staff, and/or other qualified members of NLCC, and will provide assistance and oversight throughout the search process. The PST will be responsible for developing a search profile with input from the congregation, developing a search plan to identify candidates against that profile, and communicating status throughout the process. Prospective candidates will be evaluated and interviewed by the PST to narrow the list to those

who may be asked to visit NLCC and preach. Members of NLCC will be provided an opportunity to provide feedback to the PST on the visiting candidates. The elders, with agreement from the PST, will then recommend a candidate to the congregation. Affirmation by the membership requires a minimum participation of 25 percent of the total membership of NLCC, which constitutes a quorum, and a two-thirds affirmative vote of those participating.

Amending the Practices and Procedures

Amendments to the Practices and Procedures require a three-fourths majority vote by the elders before they can be presented to the congregation. Additionally, amending the Practices and Procedures requires a minimum participation of 25 percent of the total membership of NLCC. This will constitute a quorum. All amendments require a two-thirds affirmative vote of those participating to pass.

Parliamentary Procedure

All organizational business meetings will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order, except as this constitution conflicts.

Budget

The staff, in conjunction with the stewardship team, will develop the budget annually. The stewardship team will present the budget to the elders by November 30 for approval.

Ordination, Licensing and Commissioning

NLCC reserves the right to ordain, license, or commission individuals as ministers of the gospel to perform the ordinances and ceremonies of the church including, but not limited to, marriage, baptism, communion, and funerals.

Dissolution and Liquidation of the Church

Dissolution

The elders may determine to cease corporate activities of NLCC and dissolve and liquidate the corporation by a three-fourths vote. Upon dissolution of the corporation, elders in conjunction with the stewardship team shall pay or make provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the corporation, and shall thereafter dispose of all of the assets of the corporation. Dissolution and Liquidation of the Church requires a minimum participation of 25 percent of the total membership of NLCC, which constitutes a quorum, and requires a two-thirds affirmative vote of those participating to pass.