



**Congregational Bylaws
Northminster Presbyterian Church
6800 Tezel Road
San Antonio, TX 78250**



Approved September 15, 2017

I. Statement of Purpose or Mission

Northminster Presbyterian Church has been called by God and organized to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, to minister to the needs of members of the congregation and residents of the community, and to promote peace and justice in the world.

II. Relation to the Presbyterian Church Denominations

Northminster Presbyterian Church is a member church of the Presbytery of Mission in the Synod of the Sun of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Presbytery of Trinity of the Synod of Mission of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

III. Governance of the Church

This church shall be governed in accordance with the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* and the *Constitution of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church*. (Herein referred to as the Constitutions.) Consistent with the *Constitutions*, these bylaws shall provide specific guidance for this church. *Roberts Rules of Order* (Newly Revised) shall be used for parliamentary guidance.

IV. Meetings of the Church

A. Annual Meeting

There shall be an annual meeting of the congregation usually held on the first Sunday in December, at which at least the following business shall be presented: annual reports from organizations and the session (information only), financial report for the preceding year, budget for the upcoming year (information only), changes in the terms of call for the pastor(s), nominating committee report including the slate of nominees for ruling elders for session, deacons, and trustees. The committee will also present a slate of members to serve as members-at-large on the next year's nominating committee.

B. Special Meeting

Special meetings may be called by the session. Such calls shall state clearly the purpose of such special meetings, and business shall be restricted to that which is specified in the call.

C. General Rules

Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the General Rules of Judicatories adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the

Cumberland Presbyterian Church, so far as they apply, and when they do not apply, according to the usual legislative rules of order.

D. Opening and Closing of Meetings

All meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer

E. Notice of Meetings

Adequate public notice of all congregational meetings shall be given, including time, place, and purpose of the meeting. Notice shall be given at regular services of worship two Sundays prior to the meeting.

F. Moderator

The pastor shall moderate the congregational meetings. If there are co-pastors, they shall alternately preside over meetings. When the church is without a pastor, the moderator appointed by the presbytery shall preside. If it is impractical for the pastor or the moderator of the session appointed by the presbytery to preside, he or she shall invite, with the concurrence of the session, another minister of the presbytery to preside. When this is not expedient, and when the pastor/moderator concurs, a member of the session may be invited to preside.

G. Secretary

The clerk of session shall serve as secretary. If the clerk is not present or is unable to serve, the congregation shall elect a secretary.

H. Minutes of the Meeting

The minutes of the meeting recorded by the secretary shall be attested by the moderator and the secretary, recorded in the minute book of the session. Minutes are to be approved by the congregation prior to adjournment.

I. Quorum for the Meeting

Members of Northminster Presbyterian Church shall be active members as defined in the Constitutions. As required by the laws of the state of Texas, only members of legal age (**age 18 or above**) shall be eligible to vote on questions dealing with property and matters that are strictly the business of the corporation (as defined in section X). Otherwise, all active members of the church are eligible to vote at all stated and special meetings of the church. The quorum of a meeting of the congregation shall be the moderator, the secretary, and ten percent of the active membership. The secretary shall determine that a quorum is present. All active members of the congregation present at either annual or special meetings are entitled to vote. Voting by proxy is not allowed.

V. Incorporation

- A. In accordance with the laws of the state of Texas, the congregation shall cause a corporation to be formed. Consistent with the laws of this state, both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same meeting of the congregation. Since the pastor or moderator is not a member of the corporation, consistent with paragraph IV.F , a member of the session shall be invited to moderate the meeting when corporate matters appear on the agenda.
- B. The congregation shall elect three members to serve as trustees of the corporation. The trustees shall be elected for a three year term with one new trustee being elected each year. No trustee may serve consecutive terms.

VI. Congregational Nominating Committee

- A. The congregational nominating committee is a committee of the congregation, not a committee of the session. It is elected by the congregation, except for representatives designated by the Book of Order, and reports to the congregation. The congregation shall form a nominating committee in the following manner:
 - 1. Two outgoing elders designated by and from the session prior to the annual congregational meeting usually held in December. The session shall name one of these as the committee's chairperson.
 - 2. Four active members in good standing, by and from the congregation-at-large, none of whom currently are serving on the session or board of deacons.
 - 3. The moderator of the deacons shall serve on the committee.
 - 4. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the nominating committee and without vote.
- B. The Church Nominating Committee is chosen annually with a term of one year. No one person may serve more than 3 years consecutively.
- C. The committee is responsible for submitting a slate of nominees for session, the board of deacons, the trustees, and members at large to serve on the nominating committee for the next year. The committee may be called upon, by session action, to bring nominations to the congregation for a pastor nominating committee.
- D. All slated nominees' names should be submitted to the congregation two weeks prior to any congregational meeting. Unexpected vacancies will require that the committee

request the session to call a congregational meeting for election when the committee has a nominee(s) to present.

F. Full opportunity shall always be given to the congregation for nomination from the floor of the congregational meeting by any active member of the congregation.

G. A majority of all active members present and voting shall be required to elect someone to the congregational nominating committee.

V. Elders/Session

A. The session shall be composed of twelve elders, divided into three equal classes. Each class shall be elected to a three-year term at the annual congregational meeting usually held the first Sunday in December. No elder shall serve for consecutive terms aggregating more than five years. An elder having served a full term shall be ineligible for reelection to the session for a period of at least one year. Elders shall serve through the closing of the term for which elected and until their successors are ordained and installed.

B. Northminster can elect one youth as elder to serve for one year. Youth nominated for elder should be classified as a junior in high school and participate in church activities. The youth and their parent/guardian will be asked to sign a document signifying an understanding as to the responsibilities and duties of elder. If elected and installed, this youth will be rotated around the various committees to better understand the ministry of the church. If there is no one to serve, the seat will go vacant for that year. This youth elder is in addition to the twelve elders serving on session.

C. A majority of the elders with the moderator shall constitute a quorum at the meetings of the session except for the reception and dismissal of members which requires the moderator and a minimum of three elders.

D. The session shall ordinarily meet at least once a month.

E. The session shall annually elect an elder to serve as clerk. The clerk must be a ruling elder currently serving on the session or not. At that same meeting, the session shall annually elect a treasurer. This must be done at the first meeting after installation of new elders.

F. Special meetings of the session will be called at the request of any three elders on session.

G. A special meeting may be called by the pastor during or immediately after a regular worship service without other notice. Notice of any other special meeting shall be given

to each session member in person, by telephone, or by email at least two days before the date of such meeting,

- H. An elder who is absent for three or more consecutive session meetings shall be subject to dismissal from an active elder relationship with the session. Prior to such action, the pastor will discuss with the session member his/her absences and request that he/she reevaluates his/her participation on the session.
- I. An elder whose performance becomes unacceptable for non-disciplinary reasons (such as nonattendance or nonparticipation in the worship, study, witness, and service of the congregation) may be removed from office at a special meeting of the members called by the Session for that purpose. Before any vote to remove an elder from office, the elder shall have the opportunity to address the members. Removal of an elder for disciplinary reasons shall be in accordance with the *Rules of Discipline* for both denominations.
- J. Husbands and wives may not serve simultaneously on the session.
- K. No elder having just completed serving on the session may serve as a deacon until one year has elapsed.
- L. No member of the church who is a paid staff member may be elected as a ruling elder on the session.
- M. The session shall be organized into six ministries. Each ministry shall consist of two session members and members of this community of faith. Other special committees as may be appointed.
 - 1. These ministries shall work in close association and cooperation with the pastor and staff. They shall keep themselves informed as to the needs of the congregation in their area of ministry and be responsible for communicating their activities and events to the session and congregation. It shall be the duty of the ministries to implement the policies and programs of Northminster Presbyterian Church.
 - 2. These ministries shall ordinarily meet a minimum of once a month to coordinate and carry out their responsibilities.
 - 3. The chair of the ministry is responsible for submitting a written report of the ministry's activities, including action items, and budget items as needed to the session at its stated monthly meetings.

- N. The session shall evaluate all paid staff. The session shall have a personnel subcommittee of the finance/personnel ministry to make recommendations in regards to hiring, evaluation of performance, and counsel as to salary paid to employees who are church staff. The committee shall be comprised of one elder from each class representing different ministries of the church. One of the elders on the finance and personnel ministry will chair the personnel subcommittee. Other members may be co-opted.
1. The subcommittee will meet with church employed personnel a minimum of one time a year.
 2. The committee will submit a written report of these meetings to the session. The pastor shall serve in an ex-officio capacity. Any employee may request a meeting with the personnel committee.
- O. One ruling elder will be designated commissioner to Trinity Presbytery, and up to three ruling elder(s) will be designated commissioner(s) to Mission Presbytery prior to the meetings of either of these presbyteries.

VI. Deacons

- A. The board of deacons shall be composed of twelve deacons, divided into three classes of four. Each class shall be elected to a three-year term at the annual congregational meeting. No deacon shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years. A deacon having served a total of six years shall be ineligible for reelection to the session for a period of at least one year. Deacons shall ordinarily serve through the month of January after new deacons are ordained and/or installed.
- B. Northminster may elect one youth as a deacon to serve for one year. The youth deacon should be classified as a sophomore in high school or above. If there is no one to serve, the seat will go vacant for that year. This youth deacon is in addition to the twelve deacons serving on the board.
- C. A majority of the board of deacons including the moderator shall constitute a quorum for their meetings.
- D. The board of deacons, at the first meeting after installation of new deacons, shall elect a moderator and a secretary from among its members and shall form such committees as necessary to carry out its work. The secretary shall keep a record of the board's proceedings and submit a written report to the session at their stated monthly meeting.
- E. The pastor shall be an advisory member of the board of deacons.

- F. As the whole church is under the jurisdiction of the session, the board of deacons shall be under its supervision and authority. The session may void or amend any action of the board of deacons or direct the board to reconsider such action.
- G. No deacon having just completed serving on the board of deacons may serve as an elder on the session until one year has elapsed.
- H. The board of deacons shall ordinarily meet at least once a month.

VII. Vacancies

Vacancies on the session or the board of deacons may be filled at a special meeting of the congregation or at the annual meeting, as the session may determine.

VIII. Amendments

These bylaws may be amended subject to the Articles of Incorporation, the laws of the state of Texas and the *Constitutions* of the *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* the *Cumberland Presbyterian Church* by a two-thirds vote of the members present, providing that the proposed changes in printed form shall have been distributed at the same time as the call of the meeting at which the changes are voted upon.