Cornerstone Community Church
Grand Marais, Minnesota
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CONSTITUTION
[DRAFT]

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Cornerstone Community Church
Grand Marais, MN

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I: NAME AND ORGANIZATION

A. Name - The name of this organization shall be Cornerstone Community Church.

B. Organization - The organization took place December 26, 1924.

C. Incorporation - This organization was incorporated in the State of Minnesota on May 6, 1925.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

Cornerstone Community Church exists by the will of God to fully participate through worship and witness in God's mission to fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD. **Habakkuk 2:14**; **Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; Psa 96:3**

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

A. Criteria for Membership

The Membership of this church shall consist of such persons who confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior and, as believers, have been baptized by immersion, who give evidence of regeneration by living consistent with their profession of faith, who take the Bible as their rule of faith and practice, and who agree to be governed by this constitution and its by-laws.

B. Procedure for Membership

1. Anyone who meets the constitutional criteria for membership may request membership at any time provided:
   a. They have attended Cornerstone regularly for six months or more;
   b. They have attended at least one called congregational meeting;
   c. They have interviewed at least once with two or more of the elders at one time about the privileges and responsibilities of church membership;
   d. They are prepared to share their testimony of faith with the congregation.

2. Upon recommendation of the elders, member candidates may be presented to the congregation for affirmation by voice vote at any regular business meeting or service of the church.

C. Membership Status Maintenance

Members who have not participated in public worship or ministry and who have not actively supported the church via attendance, giving, or other means for a period of two years will be removed from membership until such time as they renew participation or

consistent contact with the church.

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH DISCIPLINE[1]

A. Nature and Purpose of Discipline

1. Discipline as discipleship is prescribed by Christ for the church and is necessary for the spiritual health and unity of the church and its people and is a ministry to be applied within the congregation with sobriety, clarity, compassion, and a genuine desire for both holiness and repentance.

2. The purpose of discipline
   a. To encourage, support, and nurture growing maturity among the believers as required by Scripture. **Ephesians 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17**
   b. To deal scripturally with sin and disunity. **Matthew 18:15-18; Romans 15:1-3; 1 Corinthians 4:19-21**
   c. To restore fellowship. **II Corinthians 2:5-8; Galatians 6:1**
   d. To keep Satan from gaining advantage over the church. **I Corinthians 5:1-11; II Corinthians 2:11**

B. Means of Discipline

1. The discipline of members shall be conducted by the Pastor and the Elders in accordance with Scripture, this constitution, and the by-laws.

2. If the matter cannot be resolved it will then be submitted to the membership for action in accordance with and for the purposes stated in Scripture.

3. All such procedures shall be guided by a spirit of prayer mingling Christian kindness, forbearance, and holy firmness under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE V: LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

A. The Nature of Authority in the Church

1. All authority for ministry and function in the church comes from God through Christ.

2. The authority of Jesus Christ is expressed to the church in the word of God and manifest by the Holy Spirit in leaders called and commissioned by Christ and affirmed by the membership.

3. Under the authority of Jesus Christ, the word of God, and the duly identified and affirmed elders of the church through whom the authority of Christ is humbly

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[1]Discipline - though often associated with punishment, the term here means "bringing into alignment that which is wandering, going astray, or at risk of falling away."

and thoughtfully expressed in the church, the membership has these organizational privileges and responsibilities:

a. Affirm new members into the Church,
b. Affirm the calling of elder candidates,
c. Approve annual budgets of the Church;
d. Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the Church by the elders or raised by motion at a congregational meeting.
e. Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution or By-laws of this church;
f. Approve the call, job description and initial salary of vocational ministers[2] and pastors and other staff positions.

B. Elders, Offices, Ministries, and Congregational Committees

1. Elders

a. Qualifications of Elders

(1) The function of all elders of the church shall be to lovingly govern, and/or care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry. **Ephesians 4:11-13; Hebrews 13:5; 1 Peter 5:1-11**

(2) All elders must be members of this Church.

(3) All elders must show evidence of growing conformity to the New Testament prerequisites as follows:

(a) The fruit of the Spirit as stated in **Galatians 5:22-23** shall be evident in the life of the elder**;**

(b) The character and lifestyle of an elder shall be as described in **Acts 6:1-4, I Tim. 3:1-13, Titus 1:6-9**.

(c) Any elder must be one in whom the spiritual gifts for leadership and/or service have been recognized by fellow believers. **Rom. 12:1-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11**

(4) In fulfilling their ministries, elders must recognize the priority of love in motive and method as described in **I Corinthians 13:1-8**; **Romans 12:3, 9-10, 13:8-11, 14:1-15:1**

b. Elders/Shepherds

(1) The Elder/Shepherds' Ministry shall:

(a) Devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word

(b) Give spiritual direction and leadership to the church, including setting vision, direction, and in general guiding the overall spiritual development and outreach of Cornerstone Community Church.

(c) Exercise church discipline

[2]Vocational ministers are those individuals appropriately called and assigned to perform particular ministry as all or part of their livelihood.

(d) Oversee all ministries at this church, including (but not limited to):
i) the call and dismissal of pastoral staff members (except the Senior Pastor),
ii) the ordination of men to the gospel ministry,
iii) the development of each annual ministry budget,
iv) an annual audit of all funds pertaining to this church's ministries.

(2) Composition
The Elder/Shepherd Ministry shall be made up of the Pastor and any other men called by God and deemed biblically qualified, tested by the elders, and affirmed and recognized by the congregation for the ministry of elder/shepherd.
(a) Pastor
i) The Pastor (or senior pastor in the case of multiple pastoral staff) shall be, in partnership with the elder/shepherds, the principal spiritual leader of the Church, and shall preach and teach the Word, lead the public church services, administer the ordinances, and lead its members in a practical Christian life.
ii) The Pastor shall perform all the Scriptural duties of his office and, under guidance of the Holy Spirit, have freedom of the pulpit

(b) Elder/Shepherds Ministry Chairman
i) Is chosen by the Elder/Shepherd Ministry
ii) Serves as Chairman of the Church
iii) Signs legally binding documents as approved by the elders (and congregation, when appropriate).

(3) Duration of Service
(a) The New Testament records no "term limit" for the ministry of elder/shepherds.
(b) Recognizing the demands of shepherding ministry to oneself, to family, and the church, and the biblical command for sabbath, elder/shepherds may take a sabbatical every seventh year from shepherding duties to focus on spiritual renewal, self-development, and godly rest.

2. Offices
a. Permanent Congregational Offices
(1) General

Anyone serving in a church office must be a member and demonstrate growing spiritual maturity as appropriate for God-centered, Christ-exalting, Spirit-filled, Bible-saturated believers in general and leaders specifically.

(2) Selection/Affirmation Procedure
  (a) The elder/shepherds shall receive recommendations from the congregation for any vacant office.
  (b) The elder/shepherds will review all recommendations and return their final recommendation to the congregation
  (c) The congregation may affirm or decline the recommendation
  (d) If the congregation declines a recommendation made by the elders the procedure repeats until a mutually affirmable candidate is found.

(3) Permanent Congregational Offices
  (a) Specific responsibilities and job descriptions for all congregational offices are maintained in the bylaws of Cornerstone Community Church
  (b) Specific Offices
    i) Treasurer
    ii) Financial Secretary
    iii) Church Clerk
    iv) Trustee
    v) Annual Meeting Moderator

b. Other Congregational Offices
Other congregational offices may be devised and filled as the congregation is led by the Holy Spirit and as recognized by the elders.

c. Term Limits
(1) All offices, except that of the Pastor/elders, treasurer, financial secretary, and church clerk, shall have terms of three years.
(2) Officers other than the Pastor, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and Church Clerk shall be limited to six consecutive years, regardless of a change in office.
  (a) Six months or more of serving during an elective church year constitutes one year for purposes of this restriction.
  (b) After two consecutive terms there will be a lapse of one year before the member can again serve as an officer.
(3) The treasurer, financial secretary, and church clerk shall be voted on annually and shall be limited to ten consecutive terms.

3. Ministries
    a. Scripturally Mandated Ministries of the Church
        (1) Scripture requires certain ministries be characteristic of all churches in accomplishing God's mission to fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord and that need and calling may present other ministry opportunities.
        (2) Scripturally mandated ministries acknowledged by Cornerstone include (but are not limited to):
            (a) Worship in Spirit and in Truth
            (b) Fellowship
            (c) Local and Global Mission

    b. Ministry Calling and Procedures
        (1) It is the desire of this congregation that individual members have the freedom to respond to the Holy Spirit in regards to calling, ministry opportunity, and presented needs.
        (2) Procedures for establishing ministries are in the by-laws.

4. Congregational Committees
    a. The congregation may appoint such committees, both short term and standing, as it deems necessary to fulfill its mission.
    b. There shall be Search/Calling Committees, when necessary upon departure of the senior pastor, directly chosen by and responsible to the congregation.

5. Congregational Meetings
    a. An annual meeting will be held in the month following the close of the fiscal year.
    b. The elders may call other non-regular meetings of the congregation upon two weeks notice to the congregation.

C. Congregational Documents
1. The Bible is the foundation and the rule for all faith and practice of this congregation, meaning that all questions of procedure regarding our life together as a Christian congregation must ultimately be resolved in accordance to the revelation in His word of God's will for Christians and the church.
2. As a means of mutual understanding and access to guiding biblical principles as interpreted by this congregation, Cornerstone will maintain certain public documents.
    a. A fixed **Affirmation of Faith** which summarizes the basic core theology cherished and maintained by this congregation to which all members subscribe.
        (1) The Affirmation provides a basic overview but not an extensive or exhaustive expansion of all possible interpretations or

understandings of the topics it covers. Nor is it inclusive in covering all the topics pertinent to the Christian life that the Bible embraces.

(2) The Affirmation of Faith may only be revised (beyond slight editorial corrections for typographical errors) by a 2/3 majority vote of active members after no less that three months following any public motion for change, those months including at least two discussion meetings open to the entire congregation.

b. A **constitution** that serves the legal, interpretive, relational, and biblical needs of the congregation for clarity of procedure in their lives together as a Christian congregation.

(1) The constitution does not replace the Bible in terms of congregational authority.

(2) Constitutional amendments

(a) The constitution should be reviewed every five to seven years to assure continued functional relevance.

(b) Amendments to the constitution may be proposed at any church business meeting but must undergo substantial review by a congregational committee assembled for the purpose and may not be affirmed before the next annual meeting at least 6 months from the date the amendment is proposed.

(c) Amendments require an affirmation vote of 2/3 all active members present at the meeting set to finally discuss and affirm the amendment.

c. A **by-laws** document that describes the details of ministry procedure and protocol which can be revised by the elders, ministry leaders and congregation as necessary to accommodate congregational demographic development or change in ministry function or practice.

(1) The by-laws will include descriptions of ministries and job descriptions of ministry leaders whenever appropriate.

(2) The by-laws may be revised by the congregation at any annual meeting provided there is informed consensus for the change.

d. Cornerstone may also develop and maintain a **Members Covenant** outlining the officially understood commitments individuals make to one another and to the congregation (and which congregation makes to individuals) upon attaining membership in the congregation.

(1) The development of any such Covenant will be overseen by the elders and final acceptance must be by all members present at the meeting called to finalize and affirm such a Covenant.

(2) All members of Cornerstone should understand the purpose and content of such a Covenant before signing it as a step toward membership, should Cornerstone develop such a document.

ARTICLE VI: AFFILIATIONS

A. State Conference. This Church may be affiliated with Converge North Central, 1901 West County Road E-2, St. Paul, Minnesota 55112.

B. General Conference. This Church may be affiliated with Converge Worldwide, 2002 South Arlington Heights Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois 60005.

C. The street addresses and cities are not binding in legal matters.