

NEWBRANCH COMMUNITY CHURCH CONSTITUTION

(Revision 2, 2/25/2024)

ARTICLE I: NAME OF CHURCH

This religious nonprofit corporation is organized under the laws of the State of Georgia in the name NewBranch Community Church, Inc. It is commonly known as NewBranch Community Church and is also referred to by the abbreviation NBCC.

ARTICLE II: MISSION

The mission of NewBranch Community Church is to glorify God by making disciples of all nations.

ARTICLE III: STATEMENT OF FAITH

A. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. We believe that the Bible, consisting only of the Old and New Testaments and inspired by the Holy Spirit, is inerrant in the original manuscripts. It alone is the infallible and authoritative Word of God for all matters of faith, conduct and doctrine. (II Peter 1:20,21; II Timothy 3:16,17)

B. GOD. We believe in the triune God, Creator and Sovereign Lord of all that exists. He is infinite in His knowledge, presence, power and wisdom; perfect in love, holiness and justice. God is truly one, yet eternally self-existing in three distinct persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each person of the Godhead is equal in being, nature and power. (Matthew 28:19; Romans 11:33-36)

C. THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the promised Messiah of the Old Testament, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary at the appointed time. He is fully God and fully man without sin. He was crucified, died, buried, and on the third day He rose bodily. The shedding of His blood is sufficient for the salvation of all who believe, and only such as those who receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become children of God. Now He is seated at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for His people, and one day He will return bodily in power and great glory. (Matthew 1:18; Romans 8:33,34)

D. THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. We believe that the Holy Spirit is Himself God, the third person of the Trinity. He was sent into the world to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. At the moment of conversion, the Spirit regenerates believers, indwells them and baptizes them into the body of Christ. He is given as a guarantee of their full inheritance. He imparts gifts to each Christian, as He chooses, for the edification of the Church. He fills and empowers believers as they submit to Him. (John 16:8-11; I Corinthians 12:1-13)

E. HUMAN NATURE. We believe Adam and Eve were created by a direct act of God in His own image. When they disobeyed God, they were judged and punished with physical and spiritual death.

As descendants of Adam, all human beings inherit this sinful condition and its consequences, are guilty before God and are totally unable to approach God or to be reconciled to Him on their own merit. (Genesis 1:27; Romans 5:12)

F. SALVATION. We believe that salvation, found in Christ alone, provides forgiveness of sin and reconciliation to God. It was purchased by the sufficient, substitutionary atonement of Christ on the cross. Salvation is the gift of God's grace, freely bestowed upon all who put their faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ at Calvary apart from human meritorious work. Through salvation, all believers receive the righteousness of Christ and eternal life. True believers persevere and their lives are to be characterized by spiritual growth. (John 3:16-21; Ephesians 2:8-10)

G. THE CHURCH. We believe that the Church is divinely ordained of God to fulfill His mission in the world. This Church, consisting of regenerated believers in Jesus Christ, under the headship of Christ, is expressed in local congregations of fellowshiping believers committed to making disciples who Biblically worship, fellowship, give, grow, serve, pray, and evangelize. The Church is called by God to make disciples of all nations and peoples and to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. (Acts 2:41-47; Hebrews 10:24,25)

H. FUTURE EVENTS. We believe in the visible and personal return of Jesus Christ in order to fulfill Biblical prophecy regarding future events. At death, the souls of those who have trusted Christ for salvation pass immediately into His presence and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the body at His coming for the Church, when soul and body of each believer will be reunited and shall remain in constant, conscious worship of Him and communion with Him and one another forever in glory. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain in conscious misery after death until the final judgment, at which time those souls and bodies reunited shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be eternally tormented in conscious punishment with no hope of God's redeeming grace. (Luke 16:19-26; II Corinthians 5:3; Philippians 1:23; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 14:10, 20:11-15).

I. ORDINANCES. We believe in a believer's baptism by immersion as a symbol of entrance into the body of Christ. It is a public declaration of one's faith and an act of obedience to Jesus Christ. We believe that Communion is a symbolic celebration and remembrance of our Lord's work of salvation. It is an act of worship and obedience that encourages the faith of believers. (Romans 6:1-6; I Corinthians 11:23-26)

J. MARRIAGE, GENDER & SEXUALITY. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. We believe that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality is sinful and offensive to God. (Genesis 2:18-25, Matthew 15:18-20; I Corinthians 6:9-10, 18, Hebrews 13:4)

ARTICLE IV: SUPPLEMENTAL AFFIRMATIONS

A. While the "Statement of Faith" found in Article III defines those foundational beliefs that we consider to be of primary importance, the following statements in this article define beliefs that are of secondary importance. While members of the church are not required to agree with these statements,

all those aspiring to the office of elder must affirm each of them. Additionally, in an effort to maintain unity among our leadership and consistency in our teaching environments, all those desiring to serve as a Bible teacher or ministry leader must either affirm each of these statements, or inform the Elder Board in writing as to which statements they cannot affirm. Upon Elder Board approval, teachers who cannot affirm all of these statements may still serve in this role but will refrain from teaching in opposition to the positions outlined in the following statements.

1. **GENDER ROLES IN THE CHURCH.** We believe that each person is an image bearer of God, and that the two distinct, complementary genders together best reflect the image and nature of God. Therefore, men and women have equal value, dignity, and access to God while enjoying distinct roles within the church. We believe these distinctions in masculine and feminine roles were ordained by God as part of the created order and should find an echo in every human heart. Within the church, the only office that is not available to women is the office of elder (pastor), as defined in Article X below. (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:18, 21-24; 1 Corinthians 11:7-9; 1 Timothy 2:12-14, Ephesians 5:22-33, 1 Peter 3:1-2).

2. **REFORMED SOTERIOLOGY.** We believe that election is God's eternal choice of some persons unto everlasting life—not because of foreseen merit in them, but of His mere mercy in Christ—in consequence of which choice they are called, justified and glorified. We also affirm that regeneration is a change of heart, wrought by the Holy Spirit, who quickeneth the dead in trespasses and sins enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the Word of God, and renewing their whole nature, so that they love and practice holiness. It is a work of God's free and special grace alone. (Romans 8:29-30, 9:6-23, Ephesians 1:3-6, 2:1-5, John 1:11-13, 1 Peter 1:3) – adapted from “Abstract of Principles”.

ARTICLE V: MAJOR AFFILIATIONS

NewBranch Community Church is an autonomous congregation that is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Georgia Baptist Mission Board, and the Greater Atlanta Baptist Network. The church may withdraw from such affiliations upon congregational vote according to Article VIII Section C.1.b. In the spirit of Christian unity, NewBranch Community Church supports cooperation between like-minded, Christ-centered churches and organizations to accomplish His purposes in our area and throughout the world.

ARTICLE VI: MEMBERSHIP

A. The membership of NewBranch Community Church shall consist of regenerated and baptized believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who have completed the membership training process, have signed the membership covenant, and have been approved for membership by the Elder Board and the congregation.

B. The membership training process shall be established by the Elder Board, and may include classes, seminars, membership questionnaires, membership interviews, or any other training process that the Elder Board deems appropriate and helpful to providing adequate training to the prospective member as well as adequate evaluation by the Elder Board to help determine whether or not an individual shall be approved for membership.

C. The final authority for acceptance and removal of members lies with the congregation with the Elder Board providing oversight of this process.

D. It is the responsibility of covenant members of the church to make every reasonable effort at loving correction and reconciliation (according to Matthew 18:15-19) toward members whose conduct and/or doctrine is opposed to the conduct and/or doctrine of this church. The Elder Board will oversee these matters of church discipline. The Elder Board will oversee the dismissal or restoration of members with respect to church discipline in accordance with Section C of this Article. Members removed from church membership by an act of church discipline shall be notified in writing of their removal and the reason for their removal. (Matthew 18:15-19, Galatians 6:1, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, Matthew 5:21-26)

E. Staff Pastors and their spouses, upon acceptance of a call to minister at NewBranch Community Church and signing a Membership Covenant, will be accepted as church members.

F. Any exception to the above membership process requires the approval of the Elder Board and the congregation.

ARTICLE VII: MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Having been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to surrender our lives to Him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His grace, solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another to glorify God by making disciples of all nations. ¹

Unity - We will strive and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and will stand together against division in the church.²

One Anotherness - We will walk together in brotherly love, exercising mutual care as members one of another; being faithful to pray for and encourage one another; rejoicing at each other's happiness and endeavoring with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows. ³

Mutually Admonishing – We will keep watch over each other's souls and will not neglect to admonish and exhort one another as occasion may require.⁴

Disciple One Another – We accept the responsibility of discipling one another in the faith; encouraging gospel growth, missional faithfulness and a growing love for Jesus in fellow covenant members of all ages.⁵

Gospel Community – We understand and accept that the primary means of pursuing this one-anotherness, mutual admonishment, and discipling of one another at NewBranch is through active participation in a Base Group.⁶

Corporate Worship - We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and will make our corporate worship gatherings a priority. Together we will joyfully draw near to God under His Word, delighting in His glory. ⁷

Pursuit of Holiness - We will seek, by Divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation now to lead a new and holy life.⁸

Missions & Evangelistic Faithfulness – We will partner together to make disciples of Jesus, beginning with our spheres of influence, and extending to the nations. We endeavor with God’s gracious help to both declare and display the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our homes, neighborhoods, and community, while also praying for, engaging in, and giving towards missions efforts around the world.⁹

Support the Church - We will work together to support the ministry of the church by upholding its mission, submitting to our elders (pastors), using our gifts for the edification of one other, and praying for its health. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the needy, and the spread of the gospel to all nations.¹⁰

Church Discipline – We recognize church discipline as the loving responsibility of the church to restore a fallen brother or sister and agree to participate in and submit ourselves to this process.¹¹

Upon Departure - We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God’s Word.¹²

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

1 Matt. 16:13-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Eph. 1:3-14

2 Eph 4:3; Ro. 12:5; 1 Cor. 1:10; 1 Peter 3:8; Phil. 2:2

3 John 13:34-35; Matt. 22:39; Js. 5:16; Rom 12:10; 1 Thess. 5:11

4 Col. 3:16; Heb. 3:13; 2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 3:12-14

5 Matt. 4:19, 16:24; Rom. 12:1; Eph. 4:1

6 Acts 2:42-47

7 1 Cor. 11:17-34; Heb. 10:24-25; Is. 43:7

8 1 Pet. 2:12; Lev. 19:2; Rom. 6:1-4, 12:1-2,

9 Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8

10 Acts 2:45; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; 2 Cor. 8, 9:6-15; 2 Tim. 2:2; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-5

11 Matt. 18:15-20, 1 Cor 5:1-5

12 Heb. 10:24-25; John 13:34-35; 1 Cor. 3:5-17

ARTICLE VIII: GENERAL GOVERNING PROCEDURES

A. CORPORATE OFFICERS. In accordance with Georgia state law, NewBranch Community Church, Inc. will have corporate officers, and their names will be registered with the state annually or whenever they change. The Elder Board will annually elect its own officers, and the officers of the Elder Board shall serve as the officers of the corporation as follows:

- Elder Board Chairman = Corporate President
- Elder Board Treasurer = Corporate Treasurer
- Elder Board Secretary = Corporate Secretary

B. MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS. The Elders shall call and lead periodic member meetings for the purpose of informing and involving members in deciding actions to continue the church's mission. One of the periodic member meetings shall occur during the fourth quarter of the year and shall include an agenda item of approving the church budget for the subsequent year.

1. Notice of membership meetings with a proposed agenda will be given two weeks prior to the meeting date by at least two of the following methods (announced during Sunday morning Worship services, Newsletter, and/or Email.). In emergency situations where action needs to be taken by the members in a timeframe which does not allow for a two week notice to be given the Elder Board may call an emergency member meeting by the above methods giving as much notice as possible. To conduct business a quorum of 20% of the church membership eligible to vote will be required. The Elder Board Secretary is responsible for determining the then-current church membership roll and therefore the presence of a quorum for any particular meeting.
2. Special member meetings may be called for stated purposes as needed by the Elder Board or by a written request addressed to the Elder Board by 30% of the church membership.

C. CHURCH VOTES.

1. The church membership will formally vote by ballot on the following:
 - a. Hiring of the Teaching Pastor, Staff Pastor, or acceptance of new Elders – 90% affirmative vote required.
 - b. Amendments to the constitution (proposed changes shall be communicated in writing at least two weeks prior to vote) – 75% affirmative vote required.
 - c. Un-budgeted expenditures exceeding 10% of the operating budget – 51% affirmative vote required.
 - d. Removal of Teaching Pastor, Staff Pastors, or any active Elder – 75% affirmative vote required.
 - e. Acceptance of new deacons – 75% affirmative vote required.
 - f. Building and land acquisitions or sales; loans; new construction - 75% affirmative vote required.
 - g. Church Merger or Dissolution - 75% affirmative vote required.
 - h. Ordination to Gospel Ministry - 75% affirmative vote required.

The percentages listed above refer to the percentage of votes cast by eligible members present at the time of voting. Matters not specifically listed here do not require a written ballot, unless it is requested by one or more members and approved by the Elder Board. In these cases passage of the motion will be by simple majority of eligible members present at the time of voting. In all cases (ballot votes and voice votes) the eligible members present must constitute a quorum as defined in Article VIII Section B.1.

2. The membership will have the opportunity to approve (through a clear majority voice vote, unless a written ballot is requested and approved), the following:
 - annual budget
 - extension of terms for active elders and deacons
 - pastoral ordinations
 - receiving and dismissing of members

The membership present on the day of the vote must constitute a quorum in accordance with Article VIII Section B.1.

3. All other matters than those specifically reserved in this Constitution to the members are to be decided by the Elder Board, unless the Elder Board determines on a case-by-case basis to bring a matter forth for decision by the members.

D. Legal transactions (excluding budget expenditures) carried out on behalf of NewBranch Community Church shall require the signatures of at least two (2) Elders, or one (1) Elder and another individual as delegated in writing by the Elder Board.

E. Corporate officers acting in good faith within the normal scope of their positions are not personally responsible or liable for church debts.

ARTICLE IX: CHURCH LEADERSHIP

A. Positions of Leadership

1. Elder Board: The Elder Board of NewBranch Community Church will be responsible for the overall leadership and spiritual oversight of the church and will be the visible means of biblical authority within the church. The Elder Board is described in detail in Article X.

2. Teaching Pastor: The Teaching Pastor shall provide supervisory leadership for the staff and lay leaders. He will provide ministerial functions in the congregation and fulfill the primary preaching role within the church. The Teaching Pastor shall be an ordained minister and will serve as an Elder at NewBranch Community Church.

a. The office of Teaching Pastor may be considered vacant if he dies, resigns, or is removed by a vote in accordance with Article VIII, Section C.1.d.

b. In the event that the office of Teaching Pastor becomes vacant, it is the responsibility of the Elder Board to conduct the search for a new Teaching Pastor. The Elder Board shall recommend a new Teaching Pastor to the church, upon which the church must vote in accordance with Article VIII, Section C.1.a.

3. **Other Staff Pastors:** Other Staff Pastors shall give overall leadership to specific areas of responsibility through staff and lay leaders and will provide ministerial functions in the congregation. The title of Pastor for a staff position indicates someone who is an ordained

minister and will serve as an Elder at NewBranch Community Church. (as stated in Article X Section H). Staff Pastors must be members of NewBranch Community Church.

4. Ministry Directors: Ministry Directors are church members (either staff or lay persons) who shall be responsible for ministry leadership under the direction of the Elder Board.

5. Deacons: The office of deacon shall be responsible for serving in ministry areas such as: Facilities maintenance and repair; Grounds maintenance; Building cleaning; collecting, counting, and depositing weekly offerings; administering the Lord's Supper; helping to ensure financial integrity and oversight; and any other practical needs that arise within the body at the discretion of the Elder Board. Deacons shall be committed members of NewBranch Community Church who meet the Biblical qualifications of Deacons stated in 1 Timothy 3. A full term of office for deacons is three years. No individual may serve more than one consecutive term unless given an extension by the Elder Board and approved by congregational vote. Reductions in the term of the office of deacon shall be at the discretion of the Elder Board.

B. Ministry Leadership Definitions

1. Ordination to Ministry: Ordination is recognition of a vocational call by God to Gospel Ministry. It recognizes the spiritual maturity, experience, and knowledge befitting of a pastor. Those ordained by NewBranch Community Church shall meet the biblical qualifications of an elder as stated in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Ordination at NewBranch Community Church will require congregational approval in accordance with Article VIII, Section C.1.h.

2. License to Ministry: This is a preliminary step to ordination but not a prerequisite. All those who are licensed are expected to pursue ordination. Licensing by the Elder Board recognizes a vocational call by God to ministry and affirms a time for further spiritual maturity, experience, and education before ordination.

3. Commission to Ministry: Recognition by the Elder Board of a vocational call by God to ministry. It recognizes a person's spiritual maturity, experience and/or education. It affirms those leaders who do not pursue ordination or may pursue ordination in the more distant future.

C. Policy Statements:

The Elder Board shall be responsible for creating and maintaining various policy and procedure statements as needed (e.g. financial, church discipline, church planting, etc.).

ARTICLE X: THE ELDER BOARD

A. The Elder Board shall provide spiritual oversight and overall leadership to the church body.

B. The Teaching Pastor will have a permanent seat on the Elder Board for as long as he serves as Teaching Pastor.

C. All staff and lay leadership shall fall under the authority of the Elder Board. The members of the Elder Board shall be committed members of NewBranch Community Church who meet the Biblical qualifications of Elders stated in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. They shall all be accountable to one another and to the congregation as a whole.

D. While the Elder Board will diligently pursue consensus, ultimately all decision-making shall be by simple majority. Decisions by the Elder Board that will subsequently require a church vote in accordance with Article VIII, Section C must pass by a 75% majority of the Elder Board. When voting on removal of the Teaching Pastor or an Elder, the Teaching Pastor or Elder in question shall not be allowed to vote.

E. The Elder Board Chairman will facilitate meetings of the Elder Board. The Elder Board Chairman shall appoint another board member to facilitate meetings of the Elder Board in the absence of the Chairman. The Elder Board Secretary shall be responsible for documenting the actions of the Board. The Elder Board Treasurer shall provide oversight to the church financial records and procedures.

F. The Elder Board will determine and elect from among its members corporate officers as listed in Article VIII, Section A.

G. Ad hoc committees may be established by the Elder Board to handle special projects (e.g., Stewardship Committee, Pastoral Search Committee, etc.).

H. A full term of office for members of the Elder Board (except Staff Pastors who automatically serve as Elders) is three years. No individual may serve more than one consecutive term (except Staff Pastors who automatically serve as Elders) unless given an extension by the Elder Board and approved by congregational vote.

I. The Elder board shall be composed of both staff and lay elders. A majority of lay elders is desired but not required.

J. All Elders must be members of NewBranch Community Church.

K. Elder candidates may be submitted for consideration and qualification by the church membership. Qualifications are as stated in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The Elder Board will examine nominees and select qualified candidates to be recommended to the church membership for a time of evaluation. During this time, members will be encouraged to report any concerns to the Elder Board in writing. At the end of this time of evaluation, Elder candidates will be approved by church vote in accordance with Article VIII, Section C.1.a, and then ordained as new Elders.

L. Removal of an Elder must be by 75% majority vote in accordance with Article VIII, Section C.1.d.

ARTICLE XI: RULES OF ORDER

The Spirit of Christ shall be observed in all discussions and sessions of the church. Parliamentary rules and procedures as expressed in Robert's Rules of Order: Newly Revised, 11th edition, pub.

2011 shall govern questions of procedure not covered by this Constitution as deemed necessary by the Elders.