NewSong Church

HARRISON, OHIO

GOVERNING DOCUMENT

Bylaws

How NewSong Church is ordered and governed.

Affirmed by member vote on October 15, 2026.

GOVERNING DOCUMENT

Bylaws

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Article I: Purpose Statement

The purpose of NewSong Church is to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ. We seek to fulfill this purpose through the faithful preaching of God's Word, the public worship of God, the administration of the ordinances, mutual edification through community, personal holiness, and gospel proclamation to our neighbors and the nations.

In particular, we exist:

- To proclaim the gospel of salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ;
- To equip and send gospel workers, including the licensing and ordaining of ministers and missionaries;
- To fulfill Christ's Great Commission by making disciples and baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
- To bear witness to Christ through holy living, love for one another, and corporate witness to the truth;
- To glorify the Triune God in all we do: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This purpose governs all the teaching, ministries, and practices of NewSong Church and reflects our ultimate aim: that Christ might be magnified in us and through us until He returns.

Article II: Statement of Faith

We accept the Bible, comprised of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, as the inspired, inerrant, infallible, all sufficient, and authoritative Word of God. Scripture is not only true and trustworthy in everything it affirms but also sufficient to instruct the believer in all things necessary for salvation, godly living, and faithful service. Through the Word, God reveals Himself, guides His people, and equips them for every good work. It is the final rule for all matters of faith, doctrine, and life. (John 16:12-13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

Accordingly, we subscribe to the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 as a faithful summary of the system of doctrine taught in Holy Scripture. The Confession is subordinate to Scripture, derives its authority from Scripture alone, and serves as the doctrinal standard of NewSong Church.

1. The Triune God

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who are equal in essence and glory, yet distinct in role and relationship. God is sovereign, holy, just, and full of steadfast love, and He created all things for His glory. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

2. God the Father

We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, who orders and governs all things according to His own purpose and grace. He is the source of all that is good and the author of our salvation. (Genesis 1:1; Matthew 6:9, Ephesians 1:3-6)

3. Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, and perfectly fulfilled the law. He died on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice for our sins, was buried, rose bodily from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven, and now reigns at the right hand of God as our High Priest, Advocate, and King. He will return personally, visibly, and gloriously to judge the living and the dead. (Luke 1:35; Galatians 4:4-5; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22)

4. The Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is God and active in the world today. He convicts the world of sin, regenerates sinners, unites believers to Christ, indwells and empowers them for godly living and service, illuminates the Scriptures, and equips the church for mission. (John 16:7-14; Acts 5:3-4; Romans 8:9; 26-29; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

5. Humanity and Sin

We believe that God created mankind, male and female, in His image, for His glory and fellowship. Through Adam's sin, all humanity fell and became subject to both physical and spiritual death. Every person is now born with a sinful nature, stands guilty before a holy God, and is in need of salvation. Apart from the saving work of Jesus Christ, all people remain under God's righteous judgment. (Genesis 2:7; 3:1-19; Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:10-23; 5:12; 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8)

6. Salvation

We believe that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone for the glory of God alone. It is not the result of human effort or merit. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus secured the justification, redemption, and reconciliation of all who believe. Those who trust in Christ are born again by the Holy Spirit and adopted as children of God. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; Romans 3:24-25; John 1:12-13; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; 1 Peter 1:3-5)

7. Justification and Sanctification

We believe that sinners are justified by faith alone, declared righteous before God on the basis of Christ's righteousness imputed to them. Sanctification is the ongoing work of God whereby believers are conformed into the image of Christ through the Holy Spirit's power, the Word of God, and the fellowship of the church. (Romans 3:28; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 5:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Romans 6:19; John 17:17)

8. The Church

We believe in one universal Church, composed of all true believers, and expressed in local congregations. The Church exists to glorify God by worshiping Him, building up the body, administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and making disciples. Christ alone is the head of the Church. Elders of local congregations are to lead, teach, and shepherd the flock; deacons are to serve the practical needs of the body. (Ephesians 1:22-23; Acts 14:23; Hebrews 10:24-25; Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Acts 6:1-4)

9. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that baptism is the public sign of a believer's union with Christ and should be administered to those who profess faith in Jesus. The Lord's Supper is a covenant meal given to believers to remember Christ's death, proclaim His return, and experience communion with Him and His body. (Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

10. Gender, Marriage, and Human Life

A. Gender and Human Dignity

We believe God created humanity in His image as male and female, equal in value, dignity, and worth. Both men and women are created to glorify God and reflect His character. (Genesis 1:27)

B. Roles in the Home and Church

While equal in value, men and women have been given distinct and complementary roles. God has ordained that men bear the unique responsibility of servant leadership in the home and the church. The office of elder is reserved for qualified men, in accordance with Scripture. (Ephesians 5:22-25; 1 Timothy 2:12-14; 1 Corinthians 11:3)

C. Marriage

We believe that marriage is a covenantal, lifelong union between one man and one woman. It is a sacred institution designed by God to reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church and to promote human flourishing. (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6)

D. The Sanctity of Human Life

We affirm that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. From conception to natural death, every human being possesses inherent dignity and worth and must be protected, valued, and cared for. (Psalm 139:13-16; Genesis 9:6; Mark 12:31; Exodus 20:13)

11. The Return of Christ and Final Judgment

We believe in the personal, visible, and imminent return of Jesus Christ to judge the living and the dead. The righteous in Christ will be raised to eternal life, and the unrepentant will face eternal conscious punishment in hell. God will make all things new, and His people will dwell with Him in a new heaven and new earth forever. (Acts 1:11; Revelation 22:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15; Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46; John 5:28-29; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 21:1-4; Isaiah 65:17)

12. The Gospel

We believe that the gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for sinners and rose again, so that all who repent and believe in Him are forgiven, reconciled to God, and granted eternal life. This message is the power of God for salvation and the foundation of our life and mission as a church. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 1:16; 5:8; Mark 1:15; Ephesians 2:4-5)

Article III: Affiliation

NewSong Church is an independent, self governing evangelical church. We are not formally affiliated with any denomination or ecclesiastical hierarchy but may voluntarily cooperate with like minded churches, networks, or associations for the purposes of fellowship, mission, training, or accountability, so long as such relationships do not infringe upon the local autonomy or doctrinal integrity of the church.

Article IV: Membership

Section 1: Nature of Membership

Membership in NewSong Church is a covenantal commitment to a local expression of Christ's body. It is both a privilege and responsibility, entailing mutual accountability, participation in the church's mission, and submission to the church's leadership as it follows Christ.

Section 2: Qualifications for Membership

An individual may be admitted into membership if he or she:

1. Professes faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ;
2. Has been baptized as a believer;
3. Affirms the church's Statement of Faith and Membership Covenant;
4. Completes the church's membership process;
5. Is appointed by the board of elders;
6. Is affirmed by a congregational vote.

Section 3: Responsibilities of Members

Members are expected to:

- Gather regularly with the church in worship;
- Walk in personal holiness, with a heart of repentance and faith;
- Serve the body through love, encouragement, and use of spiritual gifts;
- Support the church through prayer, finances, and active involvement;
- Submit to the oversight of church elders, so long as they (the elders) are faithfully leading according to Scripture.

Section 4: Congregational Role in Membership

Because membership is a matter vital to the nature, integrity, and mission of the church:

- Members shall vote to receive new members into fellowship;
- Members shall vote on matters of church discipline at their final stage (Matthew 18:15-17).

Section 5: Transferring Membership

Membership in a local church is a covenant commitment and should not be entered into or ended lightly. When circumstances such as relocation make it appropriate for a member to unite with another biblically faithful, gospel-preaching church, NewSong Church desires to bless that transition. Upon the member's request, the elders will commend the member to the receiving church and assist in the orderly transfer of membership, with the desire that the member continue to worship, serve, and grow under the care of another gospel-preaching church.

Article V: Church Leadership

Section 1: Biblical Overview

Jesus Christ is the head of the Church (Colossians 1:18). Under His authority, NewSong Church is shepherded and overseen by a plurality of biblically qualified elders who are entrusted with the spiritual leadership, teaching, oversight, and protection of the church.

Deacons and deaconesses serve under the oversight of the elders, assisting the church by caring for practical needs and carrying out ministries of service and mercy.

While elders are entrusted with the spiritual oversight and governance of the church, deacons and deaconesses serve the body without exercising the authority of the elder office. All who serve the church are to do so with humility, faithfulness, and a commitment to sound doctrine.

Section 2: Elders

A. Qualifications

The New Testament model for church leadership is a plurality of qualified elders who, together, shepherd the congregation under the authority of Christ. This shared leadership provides accountability, wisdom, and balance in decision making. While circumstances may at times necessitate a temporary season with fewer elders, the goal shall always be to establish and maintain a biblically faithful plurality.

Elders must be men who meet the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. They shall be spiritually mature, able to teach, sound in doctrine, above reproach in character, and committed to shepherding the flock with love and humility.

B. Role and Responsibilities

Elders are responsible to:

- Teach and preach the Word of God;
- Pray for and spiritually shepherd the members of the church;
- Guard the church's doctrine and unity;
- Oversee the ordinances and membership matters;
- Equip the saints for ministry;
- Lead by example and govern with plurality and accountability.

C. Selection and Term

Elder candidates shall be examined for biblical qualification and nominated by a unanimous vote of the existing elder body. Final affirmation shall be made by congregational vote. Lay Elders will serve a three-year renewable term. Renewal of a Lay Elder's term requires a unanimous vote of the existing elder body and reaffirmation by the congregation.

The Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor(s) shall serve as elders and shall be selected and affirmed by the congregation in accordance with the process established by these bylaws in Article VI, section 3. Unlike Lay Elders, the Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor(s) shall not serve a fixed term and shall not be subject to a three-year reaffirmation vote. Their continued service shall be based upon their ongoing biblical qualifications, faithful ministry, and the confidence of the elders and congregation.

The Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor(s) shall meet all the qualifications and hold all the rights and responsibilities of an elder. In matters of formal authority, there shall be no distinction between a Lay Elder and a pastoral elder. The Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor(s) shall not possess authority above the other elders but shall serve alongside them in the shepherding and oversight of the church.

D. Removal

An elder may be removed from office by a unanimous vote of the elder body (excluding the elder in question) with final approval by the congregation, for disqualifying sin, doctrinal error, failure to fulfill duties. He may also step down by his own volition without requiring congregational approval or an elder's vote.

Section 3: Deacons / Deaconesses

A. Qualifications

Deacons and deaconesses must meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8-13. They shall be spiritually mature, faithful in service, and devoted to the unity and practical needs of the church.

B. Role and Responsibilities

Deacons and deaconesses assist the elders by:

- Administering practical matters related to: benevolence, facilities, corporate gatherings;
- Coordinating acts of service within the body;
- Supporting the church's ministry through logistical care;
- Guarding the unity of the church through humble service.

This office does not exercise authority; rather, it oversees and facilitates the service of the church.

C. Selection and Term

Deacons and deaconesses shall be nominated by the elders and affirmed by the congregation. Deacons and deaconesses will serve a three year renewable term. Renewal of a deacon's or deaconess's term requires a unanimous vote of the existing elder body and reaffirmation by the congregation.

D. Removal

Deacons and deaconesses may be removed from office by a unanimous vote of the elder body, with final approval by the congregation, for disqualifying sin, doctrinal error, or failure to fulfill duties. They may also step down by their own volition without requiring congregational approval or an elder's vote.

Article VI: Congregational Meetings

Section 1: Purpose and Authority

Congregational meetings are a vital expression of the church's shared responsibility under the headship of Christ. The congregation exercises its authority on matters essential to the church's nature, integrity, and mission, including: the affirmation of members, the discipline of members, and the affirmation of qualified elders and deacons / deaconesses.

Section 2: Types of Meetings

- **Regular Meetings:** The church shall hold three regular member meetings each year, one each in January, May, and September. These meetings shall include ministry updates, affirmation of officers and members, and other necessary matters. The January meeting shall also include the presentation and congregational vote on the annual budget.
- **Special Meetings:** Special meetings may be called by the elders to address matters requiring timely congregational input or action.

Section 3: Quorum and Voting

- **Quorum:** A quorum for any congregational meeting shall consist of not less than two thirds of the church's members.
- **Voting Rights:** Only members of NewSong Church may vote on matters brought before the congregation.
- **Voting Thresholds:** Motions shall be approved by an affirmative vote of at least 75% of the members present and voting at a duly called congregational meeting where a quorum has been established.

Section 4: Eligible Matters for Congregational Vote

The congregation may vote on:

1. Affirmation and removal of members.
2. Final stages of church discipline.
3. Affirmation and reaffirmation of elders and deacons / deaconesses.
4. Removal of elders and deacons / deaconesses.
5. Approval of the annual budget.
6. Amendments to the church's Statement of Faith, Membership Covenant, or Bylaws.
7. Any other matter the elders deem necessary to bring before the congregation.

Section 5: Conduct of Meetings

Meetings shall be led by the elders, with minutes recorded. Meetings shall be conducted in a spirit of unity, prayer, and mutual submission to the Word of God.

Article VII: Church Discipline

Section 1: Biblical Foundation

Church discipline is a loving and biblical process instituted by Christ for the purity of the church, the restoration of the sinner, and the honor of God's name. It is carried out in accordance with relevant Scripture (Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5, Galatians 6:1).

Section 2: Grounds for Discipline

Members may be subject to discipline for persistent unrepentant sin, divisiveness, heresy, or conduct that brings disrepute to the name of Christ and His church. The goal of discipline is never punitive, but always seeks to restore the individual and protect the church.

Section 3: Process of Discipline

1. **Private Correction:** Any member aware of a fellow member's sin should first pursue personal (one-on-one), prayerful, and loving correction (Matthew 18:15).
2. **Witnesses:** If the member does not repent, two or three others should be brought in as witnesses (Matthew 18:16).
3. **Final Stage - Congregational Action:** If there is no repentance, the elders shall recommend removal from membership. The congregation shall vote to remove the individual's membership and ability to partake in the Lord's Supper. This requires a 75% vote of members present and voting, excluding the member in question (Matthew 18:17).

Section 4: Restoration

If a disciplined member demonstrates genuine repentance, restoration to membership may occur through elder recommendation and a congregational vote. Restoration shall be marked by public joy, grace, and affirmation of God's mercy in Christ.

Section 5: Confidentiality and Care

All discipline matters shall be handled with discretion, confidentiality amongst members, and a redemptive spirit. The church shall seek to care for all involved parties through prayer, counsel, and gospel encouragement.

Article VIII: Church Officers and Staff

Section 1: Overview

In addition to elders and deacons, the church may appoint other officers and staff as needed to support the ministry and administration of the church. These individuals shall serve under the oversight of the elders.

Section 2: Administrative Roles

The elders may establish administrative roles, such as treasurer or clerk, as needed for the orderly administration of the church. The responsibilities of these roles shall be defined by the elders. Individuals serving in administrative roles shall be appointed by and serve under the oversight of the elders. Such roles do not, by themselves, constitute a biblical office with any spiritual authority within the church.

Section 3: Staff Roles

The elders may hire or appoint staff as needed to support the ministry and administration of the church. All staff shall:

- Meet character qualifications consistent with their role.
- Agree to the church's Statement of Faith and Membership Covenant.
- Serve under the supervision and direction of the elders.

Staff positions may include administrative assistants, interns, and other positions established by the elders. Job descriptions, responsibilities, and evaluations shall be maintained as appropriate by the elders.

Section 4: Ministry Leadership Roles

The elders may establish and appoint individuals to ministry leadership roles for the purpose of coordinating or directing particular ministries of the church. Such roles may include, but are not limited to, worship director, children's ministry director, ministry coordinator, or other similar positions.

These leadership positions shall serve under the spiritual oversight and direction of the elders. Appointment to a ministry leadership role does not, by itself, possess spiritual authority or governance over the church.

Section 5: Removal and Termination

Individuals serving in administrative, staff, or ministry leadership roles may be removed from their position by the elders for reasons including, but not limited to, moral failure, doctrinal deviation, failure to fulfill assigned responsibilities, performance concerns, or ministry restructuring.

Article IX: Finances

Section 1: Stewardship

The church recognizes that all financial resources ultimately belong to God. Members are expected to give generously, cheerfully, and regularly as an act of worship and stewardship (2 Corinthians 9:6-7; Proverbs 3:9).

Section 2: Budget

An annual budget shall be prepared by the elders and treasurer and presented to the congregation for approval at the January members meeting.

Section 3: Financial Oversight

The elders and treasurer shall ensure proper accountability and transparency in financial matters. Financial records shall be maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. An internal review or audit shall be conducted annually, and a financial report shall be made available to members.

Section 4: Use of Funds

Church funds shall be used to support the mission, ministries, personnel, and facilities of the church. Discretionary funds shall also be made available to the deacons / deaconesses for the purposes of carrying out mercy ministries and caring for the body. To preserve confidentiality and protect the dignity of those receiving care, specific details regarding the use of discretionary funds will not be disclosed to the congregation, though general accountability shall be maintained by the elders.

Section 5: Indebtedness

The church shall not incur indebtedness without congregational approval by a 75% vote of members present and voting.

Section 6: Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of the church, the elders shall designate one or more like-minded, gospel centered churches or ministries to receive the church's remaining assets. Such designation shall require affirmation by a vote of the congregation.

Article X: Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by a vote of at least 75% of members present and voting at a duly called congregational meeting, provided that written notice of the proposed amendment(s) has been made available to the congregation at least two Sundays prior to the vote. Any proposed changes must be reviewed and recommended by the elders prior to presentation to the congregation.