

CONSTITUTION

AND STATEMENT OF FAITH



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NIEMONDS INDEPENDENT CHURCH

STATEMENT OF FAITH AND CONSTITUTION

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**NIEMONDS INDEPENDENT CHURCH
STATEMENT OF FAITH AND CONSTITUTION**

Revised and Approved February 10, 2019

ARTICLE I NAME

The name of this church shall be Niemonds Independent Church

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

1. To worship God. (Psalm 100:1-5; John 4:23, Acts 2:42)
2. To win the lost and make disciples of Jesus Christ locally and globally. (Matthew 28:18-20)
3. To build up believers in the faith, equipping them to glorify and serve God and become mature in their faith. (Jude 20-21; Ephesians 4:11-12)

ARTICLE III DOCTRINAL BELIEF

1. We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the original text of the Old and New Testaments; a divine, inerrant revelation given by the Holy Spirit to holy men of God; it is the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and in practice. (Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21)
2. We believe in the one Eternal Triune God, who is the creator and sustainer of all things, existing in three co-equal, co-eternal persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:1, 26; John 1:1, Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)
3. We believe that God the Father is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and of all those who receive Christ as Savior. (John 1:1-2; 1:12, 3:16)
4. We believe that Jesus Christ, who is fully God, was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, fully man yet without sin; that He, the sinless One, vicariously suffered and died for our sins, was buried and rose again to reconcile us to God. We believe that He lives forever in the presence of the Father to make intercession for believers. We also believe in the imminent, personal, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His own, and the glorious fulfillment of all God's promises including His kingdom and final judgment, and an eternally perfect new heaven and earth. (Matthew 1:18-25; John 1:1-14; 2 Cor 5:17; Hebrews 2:9-17; 4:14-15; 7:24-25; Titus 2:13; 1 John 1:1-2; 2:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Peter 3:8-13; Revelation 19-22.)

ARTICLE III DOCTRINAL BELIEF continued

5. We believe in the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit and that His present ministry is to reveal Christ to sinners, convicting them of sin, enabling them to repent and believe (regeneration, conversion). We further believe that the Holy Spirit takes up residence in every believer (indwelling), empowering them to live lives pleasing to the Father; placing them in Christ (baptism of the Holy Spirit), securing their salvation (sealing), and adopting them as children of God. We further believe that the Holy Spirit gifts every believer enabling them to make many and more mature disciples. (Gen 1:2; John 15:26, 16:7-15; Acts 5:3-4; Eph 2:1-5; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph 4:30; Romans 8:15-30; 1 Corinthians 12:4-13)
6. We believe that man was created in the image of God on the sixth day of creation, and fell from his sinless state through disobedience and thus brought upon the whole human race the penalty of death. Man has no ability within himself to remedy or escape this condition, therefore making necessary the need for the gift of eternal life through Christ's sacrifice and the miracle of the new birth. (Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 3:1-24; Ephesians 2:1-10; Romans 1:18-22; 5:12-18; 6:23; 8:28-31; 1 John 1:8; John 8:44; Titus 2:11-14; 3:3-6)

7. We believe that Jesus, through His incarnation, took on Himself the nature of man. Having lived a sinless life, He then took our sins and the just wrath of God that we deserve (atonement). He physically rose from the dead, ascended to heaven and stands as mediator before the Father for us (intercession). We believe that a restored relationship with God is accomplished only by God's grace when He declares us righteous through the blood of His Son (justification). This requires our admission of our sinful and lost condition (total depravity) and our trusting in Christ (repenting and believing). (John 1:14; Heb 4:15; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 5:9-21; 1 John 2:1-2; 1 Tim 2:5; Hebrews 7:25; Romans 3:22-23, 5:1, 10:9; Ephesians 2:8-9; Mark 1:15, 10:45; John 1:29; Ephesians 5:2)
8. We believe that God created spirit beings called angels. According to His Word, some rebelled (demons) and are led by Satan. They oppose God's purposes, but their final doom in the Lake of Fire is certain. The elect, faithful angels serve God's plan. (Psalm 148:2-5; Mark 13:27; Colossians 1:15-16; Hebrews 1:14; Isaiah 14:12-15; Revelation 12:3-4; Matthew 25:41; Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 20:10)
9. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all individuals; those who have believed on Christ to everlasting joy in God's presence, and those who have not believed on Christ to everlasting conscious punishment. (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15; Revelation 20:4-6)
10. We believe that those who have been born again are called with a holy calling to walk soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world, and to maintain a godly witness so as not to be ashamed before Christ at His coming. (Acts 2:42-46; Ephesians 4:12-13; 2 Peter 3:11-14; 1 John 2:28-29; Titus 2:11-14; Romans 6:1-19)
11. We believe that the church is an elect company of believers, baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body of which Christ is the head; and that its responsibility is to preach and teach the gospel and make disciples among all nations. (1 Peter 2:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 1:3-14; 4:1-16; Matthew 28:18-20)
12. Marriage and Sexuality
We believe that marriage is a God ordained institution to be governed by God's Word. It is a permanent lifetime covenant between a man and a woman. We believe the Biblical position that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged outside of marriage; defined as between one naturally born man and one naturally born woman. We believe that any form of adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, incest, bestiality, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Gen. 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 1 Thess. 4:1-8)

13. Family Roles

We believe God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God. We also believe that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the spiritual leader in the home and men are to be the spiritual leaders (Pastor / Elder) within the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; I Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5)

14. Abortion

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of a life; thus, abortion is murder; including abortions due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, population control or the physical well-being of the mother. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Luke 1:44)

15. End of Life

We believe that the direct taking of an innocent human life, one's own or another's, is a moral evil, regardless of intention or justification, including the desire to eliminate aging or suffering. This constitutes murder in the eyes of God and is contrary to His revealed will in the scriptures. (Ex. 20:13, 23:7; Matt. 5:21; Acts 17:28)

16. Lawsuits Between Believers

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the Church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. (I Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32; Matt. 18:15-17)

ARTICLE IV ORDINANCES

We believe that the Lord's Table (communion) and baptism are commands of Jesus Christ for the church and are testimonies of the obedient believer.

Section One

The Lord's Table shall be observed quarterly or more often as directed by the Pastor and Elders, and according to 1 Corinthians 11. All in right fellowship with the Lord may partake. (Acts 2:38-41; 1 Corinthians 11:20-34)

Section Two

Baptism shall be for those who give evidence of faith in Christ. The method of baptism at Niemonsd shall be immersion since the biblical Greek word for baptism ("baptizō") means "to dip or immerse." (Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:3-5).

ARTICLE V - LEADERSHIP

We believe that Jesus Christ is the sovereign authority over this body of believers. The members of this congregation depend upon Him for all that is necessary to fulfill His purposes for the mission of His church (Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:11-16). This fellowship shall practice a form of congregational government that entrusts the general spiritual oversight and leadership of the congregation to the pastor (s) and elected elders.

Section 1 – Officers

a. General Council

An elected general council comprised of the pastor (s), elders, deacons and deaconesses will be responsible for the general oversight of the church's finances, facilities, and various ministries of help to the congregation. With this trust, the pastor (s) and council are responsible to regularly inform the congregation of non-confidential council business (Acts 14:23; Hebrews 13:17).

A pastor or the elders can call a special council meeting when needed. The general council will meet monthly. Deacons and deaconesses may have separate meetings to work on their individual ministries and present the general council with their decisions in written form thereafter.

b. Pastors, Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses

Pastor: A minimum of 1 in number; male* (Acts 20:17-28; Titus 1:5-7)

Elder: A minimum of 2 qualified men*, in addition to any pastoral staff (1 Timothy 3:1-7)

Deacon: Any number, as needed, men that are biblically qualified* (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:8-13)

Deaconess: Normally half the number of deacons; women that are biblically qualified* (Romans 16:1)

*As Christ provides qualified servants (deacons, deaconesses) 1 Timothy 3:8-13; Romans 16:1-2), each shall strive to carry out the appointed duties. When there are no persons biblically qualified, a lesser number or none will be permitted. We believe that qualification is more important than number.

Section 2 – Responsibilities of Officers

a. Work of the Pastor

To preach the gospel and the whole counsel of God from His word; to administer the ordinances of the church; and to perform the duties of his office. He shall be the spiritual leader of this assembly, and shall provide leadership and training to the elders, general council and congregation. He can be, by virtue of his office, a member of all boards, ministries and organizations within the body.

The pastor's relationship to the church will begin with a calling and mutual consent of the congregation and Pastor by a 66% majority vote of the membership present and voting at a duly called meeting provided announcement of the purpose of the meeting has been made from the pulpit on two successive Sundays prior to the meeting. The union may be dissolved by the pastor's resignation, or by a 66% majority vote of the membership present and voting at a duly called meeting provided announcement of the purpose of the meeting has been made from the pulpit on two successive Sundays prior to the meeting. A 90-day notice is required, for either method of dissolution, unless shortened by mutual consent.

b. Work of the Pastor and Elders

As Christ provides godly and gifted men, the congregation will elect elders to serve with the pastor in spiritual oversight of the congregation and leadership of the ministry. They will assist and support the pastor in the spiritual oversight of the assembly; watch faithfully over the spiritual interests of the congregation; maintain order in the church; aid in visiting the sick; aid in ministering according to their ability for the edification and comfort of all the members. They shall tenderly watch over the congregation, seeking to resolve any conflicts in a biblical manner, applying the principles of Matthew 18.

They shall be responsible for the pulpit ministry along with the pastor and make provision for the supply of the pulpit in the absence of a pastor and shall be responsible for the yearly review of membership with the help of the general council. The pastor(s) and elders will have meetings as needed.

c. Work of The General Council

As Christ provides godly and gifted servants, the congregation will elect Deacons and Deaconesses, who along with the Pastor (s) and Elders will serve as the General Council. The duties of this council will be to serve the church body, and to care for the facilities. They will assist in the administration of all real and personal property of the church. They shall also maintain responsibility and accountability (along with the treasurer) of the finances of the church. They will, in addition to the elders, approve all financial policies and procedures for church finances and regularly evaluate these policies and procedures to assure the highest standards of honesty and accountability. The congregation must approve any expenditures that exceed \$5,000 unless previously included and approved in the annual budget.

The general council will be responsible for approving the use of our facilities by any outside organization. In all usage, the council shall communicate that no gambling, smoking, or consumption of alcohol will be permitted.

Section 3 - Appointment of Committees

The general council may appoint committees and participants annually or temporarily as needed to fulfill ministry needs. Such committees may include but are not limited to Finance, Education, Outreach, Missions, Pastoral Search and Building Committees. Pastoral Search and Building Committees shall require congregational approval for appointment of members.

ARTICLE VI - MEMBERSHIP

Section One - Qualifications

- A. Members of this church shall consist of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, who take the Bible as their only rule of faith and practice, are in agreement with our stated doctrine and agree to be governed by this constitution.
- B. Those seeking membership will be required to attend a pre-membership class led by a pastor or elder, which will include a survey of our Purpose, Statement of Faith and Constitution and the responsibilities of membership. They will submit an application including their testimony of salvation, be interviewed by at least two members of the Council, and then recommended by the elders for membership. The congregation decides by majority vote to receive members.

Members will be added in compliance with the following conditions:

1. After baptism (immersion) thru this local church following a profession of faith as a believer. Membership may be considered for those physically unable to be baptized but who have a clear testimony of salvation and are ready and willing to be baptized should their physical limitations be overcome.
2. By testimony if already immersed after salvation.
3. By restoration, if having been removed from this or another fellowship of like faith, providing the person has shown satisfactory evidence of repentance before the elders.
4. The elder council may consider recommending membership for those physically unable to be baptized by immersion but who have a clear testimony of salvation and are ready and willing to be baptized should their physical limitations be overcome; *or for those who have been baptized by another method as confessing believers (not infant baptism) who for matter of conscience object to a second baptism as a believer. (addendum May 5, 2019)*

Section Two - Maintaining Membership

Membership in the local church is a privilege, not a right. To maintain membership in this local church, members understand it is their responsibility to actively participate in the life of the church, including attending its worship and study services, fervent prayer for the welfare of the church, investing time, gifts, finances and other resources in its ministry, and maintaining a godly witness in the community. All members are encouraged to take an active part in as many functions of the church as possible, for the glory of God, and the encouragement of believers. Family and personal devotions are strongly encouraged, with careful attention to training children in God's Word. Members should show zeal in their desire to bring the unsaved into a relationship with Jesus Christ, and exhibit a spirit of Christian love and kindness to all.

Absenteeism can be an indication of a problem in the relationship between an individual and the church. The elders will attempt to personally contact those who have been absent to reassure them of our love and concern for them and to inquire if there are any issues that should be addressed. Because of the quorum rules of Niemons Independent Church (Article VII, Section 4b), those with unreported absence from services for four (4) consecutive weeks will be placed on the inactive list; exceptions to this include illness, college or military service, or legitimate responsibilities prohibiting attendance. The Elders will also contact those on the inactive list at the end of each year to determine the cause for their lack of participation. If absence is not according to exceptions, or remedied by renewed attendance, they will be recommended for removal at the annual meeting in January. Anyone so removed without disciplinary action may reapply for membership at any time following Article 6, Section 1 B.

Section Three - Discipline

The purpose and goal of church discipline is the restoration of the sinning member. Its motivation is love. Its desire is repentance. It's pursuit is with patience and grace. Members guilty of misconduct which brings reproach upon our Lord Jesus Christ and the church will be disciplined by the pastor(s) and elders according to New Testament standards. Members may be dismissed for misconduct unbecoming a Christian by congregational vote, upon the recommendation of the elders and pastor (s). These individuals may be reinstated to membership through congregational vote, upon the recommendation of the elders and pastor (s) following disciplinary proceedings to be directed biblically, and confidentially if necessary, by the pastor (s) and elders (Galatians 6:1; Matthew 7:1-5; 18:15-19; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 2:5-8;).

Section Four – Age & Voting

There is no age restriction on membership, having exhibited a saving faith and following the membership guidelines in Article 6, Section 1 B , but a member must be at least sixteen (16) in order to be counted as part of a quorum and be able to vote. (Minimum age of 18 required to vote on sale or purchase of real estate and incurring debt.)

Section Five - Rights and Ownership

Membership in this church fellowship does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based upon the principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the church's worship services and events, the property remains private. As a result, the elders have a responsibility to revoke the right of any person to enter or remain on church property due to actions unsuitable to our foundational beliefs, a distraction from our purpose, or doing harm to those in attendance.

ARTICLE VII – CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Section One – Protocol and Nominations

Throughout September, the congregation will be faithfully given the biblical qualifications of all elected officers of the church body. They will be provided with the means to make nominations for those offices. At the regular October meeting of the general council (acting as the nominating committee), the number of needed elders, deacons and deaconesses will be decided. All nominations from the congregation will be reviewed as to their spiritual qualifications by the full council. Each nominee must receive a 100% confidence vote by the council for final nomination. Nominees will be contacted as to their willingness to serve. Based on their consent to serve, the official list of nominees will be presented to the congregation at least two Sundays prior to the December Annual Budget and Election of Officers Meeting. A majority vote of members 16 and older will be needed for a two-year term. It shall be so arranged that a percentage of the council shall be elected each year, allowing a balance of incumbent and newly elected servant-leaders. No elected official in either council may serve more than two consecutive terms without a one-year sabbatical.

Section Two – Expectations of Nominees

All persons elected to Niemons Independent Church as an elder, deacon, or deaconess shall be faithful members of this assembly and demonstrate ongoing evidence of the biblical qualifications for the position. They will refuse the office or remove themselves from office should they not be biblically qualified according to 1 Timothy 3:8-13; Titus 1; and Romans 16:1-2.

Section Three – Constitutional Changes

This document may be revised or amended by a majority vote of the members present and voting at any properly called meeting, provided that said revision or amendment has been submitted in writing and announced from the pulpit for at least four consecutive Sundays with the opportunity for question and answer times before the vote. Proposals for change will be made available beginning four Sundays prior to the vote.

Section Four – Congregational Meetings

a. Regular and Special Meetings

All congregational meetings (except for emergency meetings called by the pastor or unanimous consent of the elders) will be announced two concurrent Sundays from the pulpit prior to the meeting date. Special meetings may be called by the pastor (s) or by a unanimous consent of the elders.

b. Quorum & Voting

A quorum of 20% of active, eligible members (16 and older) shall constitute a quorum. This quorum is necessary to conduct any business as a congregation and may not be waived. All votes will be carried by a majority of those present and voting unless otherwise specified.

c. Annual Election of Officers & Budget Approval

An Annual Election of Officers and Budget Approval Congregational meeting will be held the second week of December. (See Article VII Section 1)

d. Annual Review

An Annual Congregational Report and Review Meeting will be held the fourth week of January to report on the ministries and finances of the previous year and present for vote any other matters as needed.

e. Absentee Ballots

Absentee ballots shall be made available to active members in good standing who are unable to attend a meeting due to extenuating circumstances. Requests for absentee ballots should be made in writing to the secretary at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting.

***This Constitution was updated and approved by the Nimonds Independent Church at their Annual Review Meeting on Sunday, February 10th, held at East Juniata High School.**

Policy regarding IRS Requirements

The Internal Revenue Service of the United States exempts from federal income taxation organizations that are primarily religious, charitable, or educational in their primary purpose. Nimonds Independent Church was organized and maintains its organization exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes; including, but not limited to, religious worship, proclaiming the Gospel and providing Christian education.

No part of the net earnings of Nimonds Independent church shall be to the financial benefit of, or be distributable to its members, officers or other private persons, unless those persons are used for services rendered or for periodic benevolence needs.

No substantial part of the activities of this church shall be for the carrying on of propaganda or any influence towards any political campaign or the influence of legislation. The IRS considers 'substantial' to be more than 5% of time, expense or revenue.

In the case of dissolution of the church, the corporation will dispose of all remaining assets to similar organizations formed and operated exclusively for the same purposes.

