

CONSTITUTION  
NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION  
NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST CONFERENCE  
Adopted June 11, 2005

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this Association shall be: The North Central Association of the North American Baptist Conference (hereafter referred to as “Association” and “Conference” in this Constitution and By-laws).

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The Association exists to provide member churches the opportunity to carry out the mission of our North American Baptist Conference “to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ at home and internationally” by:

1. Resourcing our churches, lay leaders and pastors to be spiritually healthy in obeying the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and the Second Great Commandment (Matthew 22:39).
2. Promoting and facilitating leadership for and support of ministries within the Association and Conference.
3. Creating opportunities for fellowship and community where we can worship together through celebration, inspiration and mutual encouragement in obedience to the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37).

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

The membership shall be composed of all organized and recognized North American Baptist Churches in the northern part of South Dakota, all of North Dakota and eastern Montana.

ARTICLE IV – REPRESENTATION

The representation shall consist of delegates of the Association member churches.

ARTICLE V – SESSIONS

The Association shall meet at least once a year.

## ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS

The officers of the Association shall be:

1. Moderator
2. First Vice-Moderator
3. Second Vice-Moderator
4. Recording Secretary
5. Treasurer
5. General Council Representative
6. Northern Plains Leadership Movement Advisory Team Chair

## ARTICLE VII – CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at the annual meeting of the Association by a two-thirds vote of the registered delegates, provided that a notice of the change is submitted to the Association churches sixty days before the annual meeting. The churches are responsible to distribute it to their Association delegates.

BYLAWS TO THE CONSTITUTION  
OF THE  
NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION  
NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST CONFERENCE

ARTICLE I – QUORUM AND VOTING PROCEDURES

A quorum shall consist of representatives of not less than one-half of the Association churches, with a minimum of fifty delegates voting. Decisions other than those which regard election of officers, purchase or sale of property, or constitutional change may, at the discretion of the Executive Committee, be voted on by mail ballot with the same quorum stipulations as above.

ARTICLE II – RULES OF ORDER

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the Association when applicable and consistent with the Bylaws of this Constitution.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

- A. A Baptist church that wishes to unite with the Association shall make application in writing to the Recording Secretary, with written reports of its origin, development, organization and statement of faith. The Executive Committee, acting as the Credentials Committee (Article VII), shall review the application and then make its recommendation to the Association. The application for membership shall be approved by a (simple) majority of the delegates present and voting.

The application for membership shall be presented by delegates from that church, if possible. Membership in the Association shall constitute membership in the Conference.

The ongoing membership of each church within the Association shall include representation by delegates at official Association meetings and contributions to the Association budget.

- B. The Association shall have the right to withdraw the hand of fellowship from a church charged with departing from Scriptural teachings and commonly accepted Baptist beliefs. Such action shall be taken only after all attempts at reconciliation have taken place. Following the recommendation of the Credentials Committee, a two-thirds majority vote of delegates present and voting shall be required for the withdrawal of the hand of fellowship.

The Executive Committee shall communicate with those churches failing to send representatives to official Association meetings and failing to contribute to the Association budget for three consecutive years so as to encourage renewed representation at and contributions to the Association, and/or to help churches address their need of ongoing responsibility to the Association and its ministry.

#### ARTICLE IV – REPRESENTATION

- A. Each member church shall have five delegates for the first 200 members of the church and one additional delegate for each additional 100 members as specified below. Each church may also select an alternate for each delegate to serve in his or her absence. The delegates and their alternates from each church shall be active members of that church and shall include at least one member from each of the three following categories:
1. The senior pastor or pastoral designee. The pastoral designee may be:
    - An Associate Pastor
    - A lay leader when the pastor serves multiple churches.
    - A Lay leader when the church is without a pastor.
  2. A member of the governing lay leadership board of that church.
  3. Members at large of that church.

The delegates and their alternates shall be registered at the Association meeting. The term of each delegate shall begin on the day after the annual Association meeting and will conclude at the following year's Association meeting. Consecutive terms for each delegate shall be determined by the local church.

- B. North Central Association officers and the Regional Minister are to be recognized as ex-officio delegates (with vote) and are considered to be in addition to all other delegates.

#### ARTICLE V – SESSIONS

The Executive Committee shall determine the date and place of the annual Association meeting, taking into consideration the invitations received from the churches. They shall bring their recommendation to the Association sessions for approval.

#### ARTICLE VI – TERM AND DUTIES FOR OFFICERS

- A. Duties of Officers:
1. The Moderator shall:

- a. Preside at all sessions and conduct the business of the Association according to parliamentary procedure.
  - b. Appoint committees and other positions under Article VII of the Bylaws.
  - c. Chair the Executive committee.
  - d. Sit ex-officio on all committees.
  - e. Serve as an alternate representative to the General Council of the Conference.
  - f. Sign checks and expend funds in the event the treasurer is unable to serve.
2. The First Vice-Moderator shall:
- a. Perform the duties of the Moderator in the absence of the Moderator.
  - b. Become the Moderator when the position becomes vacant.
  - c. Chair the Program Committee.
  - d. Serve as the second alternate representative to the General Council of the Conference.
3. The Second Vice-Moderator shall:
- a. Chair the Nominating Committee.
  - b. Perform any other duties as designated by the Moderator.
4. The Recording Secretary shall:
- a. Keep accurate minutes of all business transactions.
  - b. Submit minutes to the executive committee for examination.
  - c. Forward annual Association minutes to Association churches, Executive Committee members and the Conference office within thirty days of their approval by the Executive Committee.
  - d. Forward the minutes or an approved synopsis of minutes of each Executive Committee meeting to the Association member churches. Association churches are responsible to distribute all copies of minutes to their Association delegates.
  - e. Keep a record of the Association and speakers' themes.
  - f. Write such letters as the Executive Committee or the Association may designate.
  - g. Tally any mail ballots.
5. The Treasurer shall:
- a. Keep all financial records.
  - b. Make an annual financial report to the association.
    - c. Pay bills and transfer funds as directed by the Association and/or the Executive committee.
    - d. Receive the offerings taken during the Association sessions and reimburse the host church for its expenses as itemized in writing.
    - e. Submit the official accounting records to the Auditing committee for the annual audit, before each annual association meeting.

6. North American Baptist General Council Representative:
  - a. The Association shall send one delegate to the NAB General Council for each session. This shall be done on an alternate basis, pastor representative one term, lay person the next term.
  - b. The General Council Representative shall:
    - Attend General Council meetings of the Conference.
    - Convey to the General Council the concerns of the Association.
    - Communicate the actions of the General Council to the Association.
  - c. The Moderator shall serve as the alternate representative to the General Council. The First Vice Moderator shall serve as the alternate representative to the General Council if the Moderator is unable to do so.
7. The Northern Plains Leadership Movement Advisory Team Chair shall represent the NPLM on the Executive Committee.

#### B. Terms of Office

1. The Second Vice-Moderator shall be elected annually for a three year term. This officer shall serve the second year of the term as First Vice-Moderator and the third year as Moderator. This position will alternate each year between a pastor and a lay person.
2. The Recording Secretary, and Treasurer shall be elected every two years to a two-year term of office, and may serve unlimited consecutive terms.
3. The General Council Representative shall be elected for a three year term of office. This position will alternate each term between a pastor and a lay person.

### ARTICLE VII – COMMITTEES AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS

#### A. ELECTED COMMITTEES

1. The Executive committee shall:
  - a. Consist of the Moderator, first Vice-Moderator, Second Vice-Moderator, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, General Council Representative. Regional Minister and Northern Plains Leadership Movement advisory team chair are ex-officio (with vote).
  - b. Develop, for approval, all Association objectives and coordinate Association ministries and church extension advances.
  - c. Prepare the annual budget for the coming year and present it to the Association for approval.
  - d. Inform all churches of the needs and goals of the Association and encourage the churches to accept their share of the financial responsibility.

- e. Act on behalf of the Association in the interim between annual sessions.
  - f. Examine the minutes after each annual Association business meeting and include its findings in the minutes sent out to the churches.
  - g. Communicate following each Executive Committee meeting and at other times it deems necessary with Association churches who will distribute such communication to their Association delegates.
2. The Credentials Committee shall:
- a. Be composed of the Executive Committee and up to two appointed individuals as deemed necessary who will be appointed by the Executive Committee.
  - b. In cooperation with the Regional Minister:
    - i. Give guidelines to local churches regarding the ordination and credentialing of pastors.
    - ii. Be available for contact by the ordaining church and the candidate prior to the calling of a council of Ordination.
    - iii. Give guidance to the church and candidate in matters of ordination and credentialing. They are to review the candidate's credentials privately. If the candidate meets the requirements, the Committee shall aid the church and candidate in calling the Council and proceeding with the Ordination. If there are deficiencies, the Committee will privately inform the church and the candidate, and will make remedial suggestions.
    - iv. Instruct the church to proceed with Ordination and Credentialing as follows:
      - 1. The ordaining church is to contact the Credentials Committee, before any date is set for calling the Council of Ordination, which will meet to review the candidate's credentials in the following areas:
        - a. Christian experience
        - b. Call to the ministry
        - c. Moral character
        - d. Doctrinal statement
        - e. Academic preparation
        - f. Relationship to the Association and Conference
    - v. Provide a report of the Committee's findings, actions and recommendations to the church, candidate and Council in writing.
    - vi. Aid the church in calling the Council and in preparing for the ordination service. (See NAB Credentialing Guidelines at [nabconference.org](http://nabconference.org), pp. 6-7).
    - vii. Act regarding the recognition of the ordination of pastors ordained in non-Conference churches. The procedure and purpose for recognition are the same as outlined above.

## B. COMMITTEES AND POSITIONS APPOINTED BY THE MODERATOR

1. Special committees may be established or dissolved and members appointed by the Moderator as deemed necessary by the Executive Committee and shall report to the Executive Committee.
2. The Statistical Secretary shall:
  - a. Keep all the statistical records of all Association churches.
  - b. Make an annual report to the Association.
3. The Nominating Committee shall:
  - a. Consist of two members of which the Second Vice Moderator is the chairperson.
  - b. Prepare the ballot for the election, having received consent from all nominees presented. If possible there should be at least two nominees for each office.
  - c. Serve as head tellers for the election and be responsible to distribute, collect and count the ballots and present the reports of the election to the Moderator as quickly as possible. Additional tellers may be appointed by the Moderator to assist this committee at the business session of the annual Association meeting.
4. The Program Committee shall:
  - a. Be chaired by the First Vice Moderator, be comprised of host or appointed pastor and other church representatives, and shall coordinate programming with auxiliary organizations of the Association.
  - b. Plan the program for the annual Association meeting. The committee shall report to the Executive Committee concerning themes and speakers for final approval.
5. The Auditing Committee shall:
  - a. Examine all Association financial records.
  - b. Report its findings to the Association prior to the conclusion of the annual meeting.
6. The Parliamentarian shall:
  - a. Be appointed by the Moderator prior to the annual Association meeting.
  - b. Be prepared to make rulings on parliamentary procedures as requested by the Moderator.
7. The Constitution Change Committee shall:
  - a. Consist of three members appointed by the Moderator, one of which the moderator shall appoint as chairperson.

- b. Submit all recommended constitution changes to the association churches sixty days before the annual meeting. The churches are responsible to distribute the recommended changes to their Association delegates.

#### ARTICLE VIII – REGIONAL MINISTRIES

- A. The Regional Minister shall be charged with facilitating and promoting church health within the Northern Plains Region. His focus is to be specifically upon pastors, their families and church and Association leaders.
- B. Regional Leadership Team shall:
  1. Be established with a minimum of two members from each association of the Northern Plains Region, appointed by the Association Executive Committee.
  2. Join with those appointed by the other association(s) of the region to guide the activities of the Regional Minister and provide accountability for him, while partnering with him in specific projects as needed.
  3. Make regular reports to and make requests of the Executive Committee.
  4. Conduct an annual Regional Minister job review, providing a report to the Executive Committee of each association. The Regional Minister Job Description is to be reviewed regularly. Changes in the job description are to be recommended by the RLT and approved by the Executive Committee.
  5. Annually submit a recommendation to be approved by each cooperating Association for the salary and ministry expenses of the Regional Minister.

#### C. Church Clusters

It shall be the responsibility of the Regional Minister, in cooperation with the Regional Leadership Team, to form, maintain and resource church clusters. The design shall incorporate clusters of pastors, local church leadership teams and church congregations cooperating in fellowship, resources and common projects

#### ARTICLE IX – NORTHERN PLAINS LEADERSHP MOVEMENT ADVISORY TEAM

- A. The purpose of the Northern Plains Leadership Movement (NPLM) Advisory Team is to oversee and provide direction for each of the three phases of the movement: Emerging, Equipping, & Enriching.
- B. The NPLM Advisory Team is comprised of a maximum of seven members, including two pastors at large, two lay persons and three more members. The chair will be determined before appointment

- and will be one of the two pastors at large or the two lay persons and will be a member of the NCA Executive Committee. The chair must be a facilitator in the NPLM and must have completed the training for at least the Emerging Phase. The Regional Minister is an ex-officio member with vote.
- C. Members of the Advisory Team will be appointed by the existing Advisory Team members and ratified by the Executive Committee.
  - D. The term of service on the Advisory Team will be two years with no limit of reappointments. Upon the request of the Advisory Team, the Executive Committee may be asked to help in the appointment process in addition to its ratification duties.
  - E. The Advisory Team will be directly accountable to the Executive Committee. An annual report of the NPLM will be submitted to the annual Association meeting.
  - F. Financial support for the NPLM will be considered each year in the Association's annual budget planning and will be augmented when possible by grants and special gifts as is possible. Once the budget is set for the year, the NPLM Advisory Team will be responsible to manage any allotted funds.

## ARTICLE X – BUSINESS PROCEDURES

- A. A simple majority vote is required for election to office and passage of all motions unless otherwise stated in the Constitution or By-laws.
- B. Budgeting and Other Business items
  1. The proposed annual association budget shall be distributed to all churches by October 1<sup>st</sup> each year who are responsible to distribute it to their delegates. The delegates shall present the proposed budget to their church leaders and membership according to the polity of their church. Following deliberation by the church, the delegates shall communicate with the Association Executive concerning the response of their church to the support of the budget. The Executive Committee shall then determine the final proposed annual budget based on delegate responses.
  2. Association business agenda items shall be distributed to all churches no later than sixty days before the annual Association meeting. The churches shall review agenda items and inform the delegates of their opinions and the delegates shall vote accordingly at the annual Association meeting.

## ARTICLE XI – VACANCIES

The Executive Committee shall be empowered to fill the unexpired term of any officer or committee member. In the case of a vacancy in the position of Association officers, such appointment shall only be until the next meeting of the Association at which time an election shall be held to fill the vacancy.

#### ARTICLE XII – EXPENSES

- A. All Association operating expenses are to be paid by the Association.
- B. All officers, representatives and committee members shall be reimbursed for expenses related to planning and conducting Association business. Travel allowance shall be paid at the rate established by the Conference.

#### ARTICLE XIII – ELEGIBILITY

To be eligible for election or appointment to an office, an individual must be a member of an Association church and have attended at least one annual Association meeting.

#### ARTICLE XIV – EXHIBITS

All promotional exhibits and material displays must be approved by the Executive Committee.

Proposed Constitution – June 11, 2005