

Regeneration

We believe that all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. (John 1:12-13, John 3:3, 16-17, Acts 20:21, Ephesians 2:1-9, Titus 3:5)

The Church

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible confession of faith, and associated for worship, work and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. (Matthew 16:16-18, Acts 2:38-41, Ephesians 2:19-22, Ephesians 5:25-27)

Christian Conduct

We believe that Christians should live for the glory of God and the well-being of others; that their conduct should be blameless before the world; that they should be faithful stewards of their possessions; and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. (II Corinthians 9:6-8, Ephesians 4:11-16, Philippians 2:14-16, Colossians 3:17-23, I Thessalonians 5:17-18)

The Ordinances

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is immersion of a believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:41-42, Romans 6:3-5, I Corinthians 11:23-32)

Religious Liberty

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other.

Church Cooperation

We believe that the local church can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise cooperate with inter-denominational fellowships on a voluntary basis.

The Last Things

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked. (John 5:28-29, Revelation 20:1-15, II Corinthians 5:10, Matthew 25:31-46)

Article 4 – Ministry Partnership (Membership)

I. Procedure for Ministry Partnership / Membership

In the New Testament, we find that once a person became a follower of Christ, they identified themselves with, and committed themselves to a particular local body of believers. In this manner, the first-century Christians held each other accountable and spurred one another on to spiritual formation (Hebrews 10:24-25).

In keeping with this model, Terra Nova Community Church recognizes the value of formally becoming a “ministry partner” (member) and the important role it can play in challenging people to take another step in their spiritual journey with God.

A person may seek to become an official ministry partner (member) of Terra Nova Community Church after they have been a part of the community of believers for an adequate time to understand salvation and Terra Nova’s philosophy and style of ministry and therefore determine if they would be able to support the leadership and direction of the church. A seminar or some other learning experience will be offered on a regular basis to instruct those seeking to become official ministry partners on the basic tenets of beliefs at Terra Nova as well as instruction on the structure and philosophy of ministry.

II. The Ministry Partner Covenant

The Ministry Partner Covenant at Terra Nova Community Church provides opportunity for prospective partners to express their desire to unite with the Terra Nova community. Each ministry partner will covenant before God and the other partners to live as an authentic Christ follower and an active participant in the church, the bride of Christ.

Section A: Ministry Partner Requirements:

A Terra Nova Community Church Ministry Partner is a...

1. Follower of Christ

- a. Has made the decision to trust Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and baptized by immersion (Romans 6:3-4)
- b. Is seeking to become an imitator of Christ by loving people, developing character, and building Christ’s Church by making their community a better place because they, a follower of Christ, live there.

2. Connector

- a. Intentionally building relationships of love and trust with those outside the family of God (Philemon 6)

- b. Welcoming guest at all Terra Nova gatherings
- c. Being committed to a small group of friends (“Life Group”) who are doing life together

5. *Unity-Protector*

- a. Seeking to Resolve conflicts Biblically, refusing to gossip (Matt. 18:15-17)
- b. Following the leadership of the church (Hebrews 13:17)
- c. Abiding by and supporting the Terra Nova Vision and Statement of Faith (Phil. 2:1-2)

Some specific duties of the Elder Board are:

1. **Shepherd the flock of God.** The Elder Board will serve the needs of people

C. Elder Qualifications

An Elder at Terra Nova church must...

1. Be a formal ministry partner of Terra Nova Community Church (see partnership requirements) and an active participant in the life of the Terra Nova community
2. Meet Biblical standards of conduct and character for elders/overseers (as established in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and I Peter 5:1-4.)

D. Elder Term of Service

Members of the Elder Board shall be affirmed by the congregation at its annual membership meeting. Each elder at the start shall be asked to make a one-year commitment, subject to review, re-commitment, and re-affirmation by the church membership each subsequent year.

During the period of annual review, both the individual and the other elders shall evaluate each Elder's continued service as an Elder, again considering Biblical qualifications, ministry effectiveness, and any personal factors that might affect their service. An individual's service as an elder may be discontinued by his own decision or by the unanimous decision of the other elders.

Elders who renew their commitment to serve for another year would then be presented before the membership at the annual meeting for affirmation and dedication for another year of service.

E. Elder Selection Process

4. Elder Selections

After prayerfully considering each nominee, the existing elders will make final selections.

III. The Senior Pastor

A. Senior Pastor Role and Purpose

The Senior Pastor shall perform all the Scriptural duties of his office, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, have freedom from the pulpit. He shall be a member of the Elder Board and the Finance Team.

Along with the Elders, the Senior Pastor is responsible to lead, shepherd, and direct the church, as well as to seek and discern God's leading for the church and provide leadership and Biblical

A. Checks, Drafts, etc...

All checks, drafts, or other orders for the payment of money, notes, or other evidences issued in the name of Terra Nova Community Church shall be signed by any signatories approved by the Elder Board.

B. Gifts

The Elder Board may empower the LFAT to accept on behalf of the church any contribution, gift, bequest, or device for the general purposes of the church or for any special purpose of the Terra Nova Church body.

C. Property Rights

Terra Nova Community Church shall have the power to buy, own, and sell real and personal property in its own name. The Elder Board shall be the church's representatives in signing legal documents that are consistent with the church's budget and constitution. This includes the authority to borrow money, and to acquire, encumber, and sell real and personal property.

D. Employee Policies

The LFAT shall establish appropriate policies, guidelines, and expectations pertinent to all members of the Terra Nova Church staff.

E. Annual Audit

To ensure integrity and the highest level of responsible stewardship, the LFAT shall appoint a qualified outside accountant to audit the financial books for Terra Nova on an annual basis.

VI. Ministry Leaders

Article 6 - Congregational Meetings

An annual congregational (business) meeting of the church shall be held within six weeks of the new fiscal year. The agenda of the annual meeting shall include ratification of new elders and the affirmation of existing elders, notification of objectives for the current year, and other matters determined by the Elders. In preparation for the meeting, the Elders shall supply church members with a financial report and a written report from the Senior Pastor. A quorum must be present or able to vote in abstention. A quorum is defined as all members who attend a congregational meeting officially called by the Elders with due notice of at least 2 weeks of public announcements and notification. A 75% majority of that quorum will be required to approve any action. (Members must be at least 16 years old to cast a vote at a congregational meeting.)

Special congregational meetings, in addition to the Annual Meeting, may be convened by the Elder Board as it deems necessary. A congregational meeting may also be convened by written petition signed by 10% of all members or 10 members, whichever is greater.

Article 7 - Books and Records

The church shall keep correct and complete books and records of accounts and shall also keep minutes of the proceedings of its Elder Board, Legal and Financial Affairs Team, and any committees having any of the authority of the Elder Board, and shall keep at the registered or principle office a record giving the names and addresses of the members entitled to vote. All books and records of the church may be inspected by any members of the Elder Board or Legal and Financial Affairs Team member. To ensure integrity and the highest level of responsible stewardship, a qualified outside accountant shall audit the financial books for Terra Nova Community Church on an annual basis.

Article 8 - Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the corporation shall begin on the first day of January and end on the last day of December each year.

Article 9 - Limitations of Liability and Indemnification

Terra Nova Community Church will indemnify any and all persons who may serve or who have served at any time as a Pastor, Associate Pastor, or in another executive level staff position in the church, as a church officer or member of a church board or committee, as a youth leader for a church youth organization, or as a teacher or counselor of the church elected or appointed by the church of any board or committee of the church, against any and all expenses, including amounts paid in judgments, counsel fees, and amounts paid in settlements (before or after suit is commenced) actually and necessarily incurred by such persons in connection with the defense or settlement of any claim, action, suit or proceeding in which they, or any of them are made parties, or are persons which may be sued against an

Article 10 – Dissolution, Division, and Dis-Affiliation

Dissolution. The church is affiliated with Converge MidAtlantic, a region of Converge Worldwide. Should this church cease to exist as a corporate body, then all of its property, appurtenances, and effects then owned or held by it shall inure to the benefit of and become the property of the district corporation of Converge MidAtlantic within which jurisdiction this church is located and with which it is affiliated by law.

Division. In case of organic division of the church membership, the church property shall belong to those members who abide by this constitution. Should any controversy arise as to who is abiding by this constitution, the question shall be submitted to the Executive Board of Converge