

Northside Church

New Members Class
2nd Edition

Introduction

Welcome to Northside Church. We are honored that you have decided to take our 'New Members' class. We understand that some of you are going through this class because you are ready to partner with us in what God is doing here at Northside. We also understand that maybe there are some of you who are going through this class because you wish to know what Northside Church is all about before you decide whether to join with us or not. Whatever your purpose is for going through this class we are excited that you have decided to participate.

Our purpose for this class is for you to better understand the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of Northside. We have divided this class in three sessions. Session 1 will consist of taking a look at the philosophical make up of Northside. In other words what we are about here at Northside Church. The 2nd session will consist of understanding the organizational structure we operate under. And session 3 will consist of exploring the issue of membership, or what it means to belong at Northside as we work together to a common end. We will be covering a lot of material, and for the interest of time, we will not cover it all in detail. May God bless us as we whole-heartedly follow Him.

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Session 1

This first session of our New Member class will consist of taking a look at the philosophical nature of Northside Church. By this we mean that we are going to cover the make up of what drives this Church; what is our God given plan or mission; where do we intend to go (what is our goal); what are the key elements that will fuel such an endeavor; and the philosophy of ministry that clothes it all. As already mentioned in the introduction we will not cover them in detail, but we will take a brief look at their Biblical basis. In order to get a better grasp of what we are talking about we will be following a word picture or illustration which, we hope, will serve as tool to easily communicate what we are about.

Vision

Imagine Northside Church as a group of individuals traveling on a journey through the wilderness of life, sort of a long outdoor hike. Before embarking on such a journey it is always useful to have a final destination in mind. In other words, where are we headed? Let's take a quick look at some key passages of Scripture and briefly discuss some very basic questions which shed a light of understanding to what our 'final destination' looks like.

-2 Corinthians 2:14-17

Who is the one doing the leading? _____ . Where is He leading us to?

_____. What are we, as believers, described as being? _____ .

What does an aroma or fragrance do to its surrounding environment? _____

_____ .

-Acts 17:6

What are the Thessalonian believers being accused of? _____
_____.

-Ephesians 4:13

Paul presents us with several key elements which “The building up of the body of Christ” will attain or accomplish, what are they? _____
_____.

Without studying these passages in detail, the answer to these simple questions provide for us a description of our final destination. This journey or hike we have set course for has a very clear goal and destination. This final destination we will call our “Vision Statement” which reads as follows:

To follow the leadership of God through His word until He conforms us to the image of His Son.

You might be thinking that sounds good and fine, in fact that is a worthy and noble cause. You might be thinking to yourself; that is an amazing oasis of a final destination, but the question begs to be asked, how do we get there from here? How do we get to this beautiful landscape from this muddy and brush infested trail we are currently on? In other words, do we have a map to aid our journey? Are there any clearly designated mile markers along the way to let us know that we are indeed going in the right direction? Again let us turn to our Bibles and briefly discuss what this ‘map’ looks like.

-Colossians 1:28

The Apostle Paul uses several actions or verbs to describe what he and his ministry partners are about, what are they? _____

What is the intended outcome, what is their goal? _____

-Ephesians 4:11-12

What is the purpose by which Christ institutes ministers to the body, in other words what is their God-given task? _____

What is the intended outcome? _____

It is our desire here at Northside to provide an environment in which we all progress along our 'map' through four well marked stops along the way to our final destination.

1) Psalm 100:3

The first stop we will call the land of KNOW. It is our desire for every person who sets foot at Northside to know the Lord whose we are and whom we serve. This knowledge is not merely intellectual but it is personal and intimate. The land of KNOW certainly includes the initial meeting of Salvation but it extends to a life-time of getting to know who He is and what He is about.

2) Leviticus 19:2

The second stop along our journey logically follows the first. The second stop of our journey we will call the BE mountain range. It is a vast and majestic territory. It is logical for us to BE separate unto Him once we have tasted of His knowledge. It is our desire here at Northside that the natural outflow of knowing Him will be to BE transformed

through Grace into a Holy individual.

3) **Titus 2:11-12**

The third stop along the way through the wilderness of life is what we will call the LIVE River. It logically follows to LIVE a sensible and God-honoring life as Holy individuals set-aside for the One whom we now know. We therefore desire for all that set foot in Northside to glorify God through their everyday life within the culture and age we are a part of.

4) **Matthew 28:19**

The fourth major stop along the way we will call the cliff of GO. This fourth stop involves the planned impact such a life will inevitably have. Therefore it is our desire for all that are part of Northside to plunge into our world in Love and serve others reproducing and multiplying the ministry God has led us to be about.

It is from this ‘map’ and its clearly designated mile markers that we get our now famous KNOW, BE, LIVE, GO. This ‘map’ comes in the form of our mission statement and it reads as follows:

To equip people to Know Christ, Be Holy, Live sensibly, and Go preach the Gospel.

Purpose

We now have a clear picture of our final destination and of the map which will chart our progress of getting there, but that does not guarantee that we will never get lost. In the process of traveling from one mile-marker to the next the lay of the land can certainly become confusing. The overgrown brush of the everyday life and menial work of Church life can indeed cause such confusion that it derails us away from the projected

course and get us hopelessly lost going round and round in desperation. While a map is useful to keep us in the right track it is not enough, we need a compass which constantly points us in the right direction. A compass provides constant and consistent direction. A compass keeps us in line and it always points in the same direction. Let us take a quick look at some key passages of Scripture and briefly discuss what this compass looks like.

-John 12:28

What is Jesus asking the Father to do? _____.

What was the Father's response to Jesus request? _____

_____.

It is God's business to first and foremost glorify Himself. We will not, at this time, pursue this further other than to say that for God not to Glorify Himself would violate the first commandment He Himself instituted.

-Psalm 96:3-9

What is due Him? _____

_____.

What are we to ascribe or give Him? _____

_____.

What should our response be to who He is? _____

_____.

-I Corinthians 10:31

What is the Apostle Paul admonishing believers to do? _____

_____.

It is therefore an essential part of our being to glorify God. If God is in the

business of Glorifying Himself, how much more should that be our mandate as individuals and as a Church? This is indeed the core purpose of our very existence. This is the constant arrow that always points the same way. It is this very thing which becomes our compass and which will not allow us to stray away from the path set before us. This compass we present in the form of a Purpose Statement which reads as follows:

We at Northside Church exist for the express purpose of bringing Glory to God.

Core Values

The journey through the wilderness of life requires much more than knowing where you are going, how to get there, and how to stay in the right direction. For success to be achieved in this journey we must also possess several key elements which are essential for survival. These key elements of survival come in the form of our core values. Let's cover them briefly but not lightly. We will be looking at 5 key essentials that we intend never to sacrifice or compromise.

The first key element of survival is what we will call "the Master's ultimate wilderness survival guide". This core value will come in the form of: **The Instruction of God's revealed word (John 1:1; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)**. You can expect that the teaching of the Bible will always be of utmost importance. Why? Because it is 'the word Of God' and therefore it is powerful and useful for "teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). What does it practically mean? At Northside you can expect the Bible to be taught verse by verse or concept by concept. The Bible will always be the main text of all of our teaching and preaching. The exposition of the truth found in the Bible will also take the form of equipping believers in

two major areas of study: A) Practical Living= What the Bible has to say about money, parenting, marriage etc. and B) Educational and Academic= Courses in Apologetics, Theology, Eschatology, Hermeneutics, New Believer's classes, Biblical leadership etc.. The avenue by which these are taught will shape up into a variety of forms, starting from the pulpit and extending to conferences, small group studies, one-on-one discipleship; and eventually form a School of Ministry by which we equip and train those who will become our very own staff, as well as missionaries who will come from within our fold.

The second element of survival we will refer to as the "buddy system". While traveling through the wilderness it is essential to never travel alone. It is even more important to travel along with those you can trust your very life to in time of need. The "buddy system" requires a well-established relationship between traveling companions. This core value comes in the form of: **The building up of Christ-honoring, deep-seeded relationships. (Galatians 5:22-23; John 13:34-35; I Tim. 2:2; Titus 2:4).** It is our conviction that Northside needs to be a place where true and genuine community is experienced. Northside Church needs to be a place where relationships go beyond the mere acknowledgment of each other, but instead our relationships reach a heart-to-heart level of intimacy and trust which honors Christ. It is our commitment to always strive to create an environment where relationships flourish and set deep roots. This is where our "Life Groups" will lead the way in meeting this essential need.

The third element of survival we will call our "two way radio of communication" with the Master Himself. Imagine what it would be like to go for a hike through the Grand Canyon with the aide of an expert giving us advice from the complete view of the Good Year Blimp. As Christians we even have something better than that for God is not

only 'up there' with a complete view of the whole journey, but He is also here with us. Even better yet, He possess the ultimate knowledge of the wilderness for He is not only the author of 'The Master's ultimate guide of survival in the wilderness' but He is the creator of the wilderness. He has unlimited power and knowledge to direct our path, it would be flat out foolish not to take advantage of this privilege. The third core value comes in the form of: **The utter dependence on God manifested in prayer. (Philippians 4:6; Ephesians 6:16; Colossians 4:2).** For all practical purposes we will always emphasize Prayer bathing everything and anything we do, in a personal level as well as in a corporate and/or small group level.

The fourth element of survival we will call our "food and water supplies", which energizes us to continue in the journey. This core value comes in the form of: **The exaltation of God through Christ centered worship. (John 4:23-24; Psalm 29:1-2).** The Bible clearly states that God is seeking those who would worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. The style of worship is not our main concern (even though it is inevitable to shine forth our personality as a Church in a certain style of worship), but the content and the attitude of worship will definitely be our focus. It is important to note that worship is much more than music. We worship God also with our lives, our giving up of our time and resources, our prayer and much more.

The fifth and final element of survival is what we will refer to as our "Binoculars of outreach". A pair of binoculars enables us to search near and far for those who are lost and without direction traveling aimlessly through the wilderness of life. This core value comes in the form of: **The outflow of Grace personified in Christ-led evangelism and missions. (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19-20).** Our plan is to be about the business of

intentionally seeking out the lost locally and abroad. Our efforts will take the form of individual relational evangelism as well as through small group and corporate efforts. It is our desire to be a Church that plants new Churches both locally and abroad. It is our intention to take this effort far beyond the mere allocation of funds for such endeavors. We intend to set out frequently in mission projects and trips reproducing the Love of God and the ministry He has lead us to be about.

One final key ingredient in our journey through the wilderness of life is our attire. The attire of an outdoor adventurer can make him or break him when dealing with the weather and the terrain. A man traveling through the Grand Canyon in a three-piece suit, or a woman climbing the Everest in a dress and high heels is not likely to make it. We intend to clothe ourselves with the attire of Grace. This attire becomes our overall philosophy of ministry. All we do here at Northside goes by the Philippians 1:6 principle. Grace is much more than simply receiving once an unmerited favor or gift. Simply put Grace means to keep on receiving such unmerited favor or gift. What does that mean? For all practical purposes it means that our philosophy of ministry is governed by the fact that no ministry or endeavor we may embark on will ever succeed unless God Himself initiates it, sustains it, and brings it to completion. As Jesus clearly states in John 15:5, it is never what we can do for God but instead what He can and will do in us and through us when we willingly yield to Him. Ministry at Northside should never be looked at as something we accomplished but instead as something we were freely given.

With this we conclude our first session. I hope everything is clear and understandable for you. What we covered in this session is what we stand for and strive towards. Our overall philosophical make up will serve as the measuring stick by which

we evaluate every ministry and endeavor we undertake. Next we will cover our organizational structure.

Session 2

Every time a group of individuals join together for a common purpose or task, there always comes a point when an organized system of roles and functions emerges. This organizational structure may be fallen upon by accident or by design. In the context of our illustration, when a group of individuals join efforts to embark on a journey through the wilderness it is eventually a necessity to delegate roles and authority in a simple, yet clear and organized manner. The lack of organizational structure in such venture, letting the chips fall where they may in a manner of speaking, would inevitably lead to chaos. Many things would never get done. Some would want to set up camp for the night while others would venture into seeking a short cut through the thicket. Such lack of organization creates a multi-headed monster that accomplishes only frustration and ultimately failure. We believe in a clear and simple organizational structure set up by a thought through design. In this session we will answer the question of how we function here at Northside. We will briefly cover some of the Biblical background behind the way we function and are governed.

-What is your Church background? _____
_____.

-As far as you know, how does the Church(es) you come from function? Were they...

- a) Pastor led
- b) Deacon led
- c) Congregational/ committee led
- d) Other:

-Where they governed exclusively from within, or were they subject to an outside body of leadership? _____

Here at Northside we are affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention of New Mexico. Our affiliation with them is purely a partnership through the Cooperative program to support missionaries locally and abroad. That is the end of our partnership. We do not involve ourselves in their business, nor do they involve themselves in ours. The point is that they will never tell us what or how to do things. The question that is logically asked is why are we then affiliated with them? First we believe that we owe a debt of love to them in that they have invested richly in our lives through many avenues: the BSU, financial backing since we started, and very valuable training. We also believe that being affiliated with them gives a sense of belonging to a larger community by supporting Seminaries and Missionaries yet without the baggage. Being part of the Southern Baptist Convention allows us to partake in many of the good things happening there yet we have the freedom to exist and operate as we see God leading us without any interference or say on the Convention's part.

It is therefore our task to determine for ourselves how we operate organizationally. We feel that what you will find here at Northside is a very simple and practical governmental structure and operational organization. There are two basic areas of need covered in our structure: Physical needs and Spiritual needs. Two main areas of operation meet these needs: Offices and Functions. Let us quickly define what we mean by areas of need. When we talk about Spiritual needs we are referring to the ministries of the Church which involve: Instruction, exhortation, counseling, restoration, guidance, etc.

These needs consist of the Spiritual make up of each individual, as well as of the Church as a whole. When we talk about the physical needs we are referring to the ministries of the Church which involve: Facilities, Paper work, Distribution of goods and services, Care of the needy and the sick, etc. These needs pertain to the physical make up of each individual, as well as of the Church as a whole. We will talk about these in a little more detail as we cover how we meet them organizationally.

Offices

The Bible does not provide us with a detailed plan or organizational structure by which all Churches should abide. A careful reading of the Scriptures does yield a definite mention of a well-established form of Church government in the New Testament Church. We here at Northside believe that the Bible presents 2 bodies of clearly defined roles and title that function within the Church. They are: 1) Elders or Overseers as we have chosen to label them (more on that later), and 2) Deacons. We will cover both of them in this session.

Experience leads us to believe that many of you are not familiar with an Elder model of leadership, so let's start there. The plural term 'elders' comes from the Greek word *presbuteros* and it is found approximately 67 times in the Bible. The word in the original language literally means 'an elderly individual'. The word in the singular is used to describe a person advanced in age but it is also used to describe a position of leadership. The plural term as well as its model of leadership is seen all across the Bible. We first find its usage when speaking of the 72 heads or leaders of the tribes of Israel who assisted Moses (Numbers 11:16). It is also used in reference to the members of the Sanhedrin which was the ruling counsel of Chief Priests and Scribes considered as the

authorities of Jewish law (Matthew 16:21). Those who managed public affairs in the form of a city government were also referred to as ‘Elders’ (Luke 7:3). And lastly we find the same terminology used of the appointed leaders of the Church. The first mention of ‘Elders’ in the context of Church leadership is found in Acts 11:30. The term came to symbolize those of Spiritual maturity who were entrusted to lead and meet the spiritual needs of the Church.

Due to the possible confusion of the term we at Northside have chosen to use the term ‘Overseers’. The term Overseer is synonymous with the term Elder in the Bible. We find the term Overseer used first by Paul in Acts 20:28 when addressing the leaders of the Church in Ephesus. The term comes from the Greek word *episkopos*. This word is actually what is known as a compound word. Basically the word *episkopos* comes from two words: *epi* which means ‘at’ or ‘upon’ and *skopos* which means ‘a watcher’. The word *skopos* denotes a mark on which to set an eye on an aim or an object. The two words together mean ‘to watch upon’ to literally watch carefully and diligently over. The word *episkopos* is also translated as Bishop in Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7; 3:15 and in I Peter 2:25. We believe that the term Overseer best describe the role of the leadership here at Northside as those who carefully govern and diligently watch over the flock and the ministries we engage in. It is not the responsibility of the Overseers or Pastors to do all the works of the ministry but to equip, direct and release the flock to be about the business of the ministry. The Overseers act as God’s representatives to the people and not of the people. We do want to cover a few basic issues regarding Overseers or Elders as taught in the Bible.

-Acts 14:23; 20:28 and Titus 1:5

According to these verses, how are Elders set in place? _____
_____.

Who appoints them? _____
_____.

How many are appointed? _____.

There are two main truths that are clearly seen in these passages. First Elders or Overseers are always referred to in the plural form without any specific number assigned. And secondly, Overseers or Elders are appointed (not elected) by the Holy Spirit and by other Overseers or Elders.

-I Peter 5:1

How does the Apostle Peter refer to himself as, in this passage? _____
_____.

The Key point we want to zero in here is that the Apostle Peter did not hold his Apostleship over them as a means to demand, but instead he appeals to them as a peer. The principle we draw out from here is that the Body of Overseers here at Northside is not only a plurality of number but also a plurality of leadership. Each member of the Overseer body has equal value of leadership. What we mean is that there is no Pope or Senior over the others; all Overseers hold the same amount of authority. This provides a balance of practical accountability and a balance that is less likely to get corrupted.

The Overseers at Northside are (at the moment):

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

As the Lord leads us we intend to add more to this group. For the specific procedures followed in the appointment of an Overseer I refer you to our Constitution. For a description of how an Overseer is to lead turn to and read I Peter 5:2-4, and for a list of qualifications required of an Overseer also read Titus 1:6-9 and I Timothy 3:1-7.

Deacons

The second Biblical office we will have here at Northside is that of Deacons. We will not be covering them in detail but we will point out a couple of key factors concerning Deacons. When you hear the term 'Deacon', what is the first thought that pops into your mind? _____

The word translated Deacon in the Bible comes from the Greek word *diakoneo* or *diakonos*. This word literally means 'to wait upon' and when used as a title it refers to an attendant or a waiter. This word mainly focuses on the servant in his activity for the work and not his relation to a person. The best place to get a clear understanding of the role of a Deacon is to go to its foundation in the Book of Acts. The term Deacon is hardly ever mentioned in the Bible, and there is little said of them, but most scholars refer to Acts 6:1-7 as the place where the office of a Deacon was first established. Let's take a quick look at some specific principles regarding Deacons.

-Acts 6:1-7

What brought about the need for a Deacon body? _____

What was their stated role? _____

How did it differ from that of the Apostles? _____

How were they chosen or set in place? _____

In a nutshell the office of Deacons is the one in charge of the physical needs of the Church while the Overseers are in charge of meeting the spiritual needs of the Church. Here is an example of how this partnership could one day practically shape up here at Northside. The Overseers led by the Holy Spirit see fit to put together a conference. It is the Overseers responsibility to oversee the content of such conference (secure the speaker, topics to be covered, the finances etc..). The Deacons responsibility will consist of the physical needs of the conference (secure the place, the catering, sound system, chairs etc.). Both offices will be in the business of delegating their responsibilities and include the rest of the membership and staff in the endeavor. This does not mean that a Deacon could never function in the realm of meeting any spiritual need, but his office as a Deacon refers only to his role as a servant or attendant to the physical needs of the Church. For a mention of the Church with its official 'Offices' read Philippians 1:1. For the qualifications required of a Deacon read I Timothy 3:8-13. For the procedure by which such are set in place here at Northside please refer to our Constitution. Our Deacons are:

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Functions

As mentioned earlier, there are two areas by which Northside operates to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the Church: Offices and Functions. Functions merely refer to the specific action taken to meet a specific need. For example the Church has the spiritual need of being taught the word of God. The Teaching Pastor serves that specific function. It is important to distinguish at this moment between an office and a function. It is our desire here at Northside that all members, including the Overseers and Deacons, to serve a function. Going back to our previous example, the word Pastor is only used once in the Scriptures as a title (Eph. 4:11), all other occasions it refers to the function of an Elder. While it is most likely that a person will serve both; the office of an Overseer and the function of a Pastor, it does not mean it has to be that way. An Overseer may not be serving the function of a Pastor, and a Pastor may not necessarily be an Overseer. Because a person is serving the function of a Teaching Pastor, a Worship Pastor, Youth or otherwise and even though such person is paid a salary; that does not automatically make him an Overseer. If and when the need arises to fill the position of a Pastor in whatever capacity, it is our intent to first look from within. If such person is not found then we will search from outside our local body. Once that person is found, such person would still have to be appointed an Overseer by the Holy Spirit and by the board of Overseers in order for him to be an Overseer at this Church.

The Spiritual functions go beyond the pastoral staff. Other spiritual functions include, but are not limited to: teachers, small group leaders, Disciplers, Counselors, etc. As mentioned earlier such positions will be filled by the membership as they are trained

and released to minister. At the present moment our Pastoral staff consists of:

_____ as our _____

_____ as our _____

_____ as our _____

_____ as our _____

_____ as our _____

_____ as our _____

Our teachers are: _____

_____.

Our small group leaders are: _____

_____.

Other Spiritual functions are served by: _____

_____.

The physical functions of our Church include such things as administrative needs, facility needs, paper work, set up and tear down crews etc. The list can be endless. Some of these functions will require training, others will not. Some of these functions will have an official title and recognition and others will not. It is also worth noting that some of these functions will be paid positions. The requirements and responsibilities of such functions will be discussed in detail with the individuals interested in them. At the moment our administrative staff consists of: _____

Facilities crew: _____

Other physical functions are served by: _____

In essence the term function refers to the specific ministries people are in charge of here at Northside. These ministries will serve to meet specific spiritual and/or physical needs, which are in accord with our philosophical make up as stated in session 1. It is the Overseers responsibility to direct the equipping and delegating of members into their functions. Let us finish Session 2 with a simple diagram of what our organizational structure looks like. Picture this diagram as an organized group of hikers going through on a journey through the wilderness of life. As we travel along our journey with our final destination determined, our map in place, our compass always out, our 5 key elements of survival at our disposal and in full use, and our attire on, we have God the Father above us who we are to obey. We have Jesus Christ ahead of us who we are to follow. And we have the Holy Spirit in us whom we are to listen to. He serves the role of Illumination by shedding light and understanding to where Christ is leading us and what the Father is asking of us. That being said we set our diagram sideways because we all have the same value before God just different roles:

GOD The Father

Physical Needs

Spiritual Needs

Functions

Office

Functions

Office

Children's Director

Deacons

Pastors

Overseers

GOD

Administrative Assistant

Teachers

The Son

Facilities Crew

Small Group leaders

Etc.

Etc.

GOD The Holy Spirit

Session 3

Session 3 will consist of taking a look at membership here at Northside. You partaking of the New Members class are probably wondering what we mean by having a membership. In this session we will cover the Biblical background we stand on for membership, a definition of membership, the why of membership and the requirements of membership. We will also briefly discuss a couple of issues we believe you would like to know before you decide to join with us as a member. Let us begin.

Membership

The Bible does not speak of an official membership of the Church; in fact official membership to the Church did not take form until approximately 100 years after the establishment of the New Testament Church. Even though the ‘what’ and ‘why’ of official membership is not taught in the Scripture, there are definitely several principles we can draw from to establish such a thing as a formal membership. Let’s discuss them briefly.

-Acts 2:40-46

What was the response of the hearers who “gladly received” the words spoken by the Apostle Peter? _____
_____.

What were the elements they held on to? _____
_____.

Which core elements would each one of these represent in our ‘journey through the wilderness’ illustration? _____
_____.

What did the believers of the very first Christian church do? _____
_____.

In terms of their relationship with one another, how are they described as being? _____
_____.

The key element we wish to zero in on in this session is their togetherness. One of the very first steps towards our final destination of God “achieving in us” and “molding” us into a united group of mature believers (as stated in our vision statement) is indeed this togetherness or sense of belonging to one another. In our day and age when local assemblies abound in all shapes and sizes, not to mention an extremely wide variety of different philosophical and even doctrinal make ups; we believe that a formal membership is an essential tool to aide us in our journey. For our purposes we want to define the term membership as:

The willing act by which a professing believer aligns him/her self formally to a local Church. This act is done with the complete understanding of and agreement with the Church’s purpose, doctrine and mode of operation.

You might be wondering, what does that mean? It basically means that by joining Northside as a member you willingly commit your gifts, talents, time and resources to the common objectives and ideals we hold to. Furthermore it means that you understand and agree with our doctrinal statement, our organizational structure and with our overall direction. Does that mean that you have to be in complete 100% agreement with everything we say and do? NO!! It only means that you are willing to work with and abide by the overall structure of Northside. It may be that you hold a different understanding or opinion related to certain details of how things are done or to even any

non-essential doctrinal view point, but your disagreement does not prevent you from partnering up with us in our journey. In fact it means that you are willing to set your opinions aside if pursuing them further creates discord and/or division. In these matters of opinion and non-essential views the benefit of the unity of the whole body should always take priority.

The question is often asked, why have a formal Church membership? Aren't we all members of one body as believers? The answer is: Yes we are all members of one body. When we believe we are immediately put into the body of Christ and therefore members of one another. This is often referred to as the 'Universal Church of Christ. So if that is the case, why do we have a formal Church membership? Well, why not? We are not saying that your salvation depends on it, in fact we are asking anybody who wishes to join us to already be a part of the 'Universal' body of Christ before belonging to this local group of believers. It is for philosophical and practical reasons that we have decided to have a formal membership. We believe philosophically that a formal membership provides a better environment of accountability and togetherness than not having one, would. Practically, within the parameters of the law of the land we are not able to appropriately deal with internal problems without a formal membership. In other words, legally we cannot deal appropriately with a problematic person in a leadership or otherwise position, unless such person is a member (as in an official member) of this Church.

That being said and understood the logical question that follows is, how can anybody become a member of Northside Church? We here at Northside are requiring any individual who wishes to join with us as an official member, to comply with 3 basic

requirements:

- 1) Any person who wishes to become a member of Northside Church must already be a **born again believer in Christ**. We ask that such person be willing to sign a statement of faith provided here at the end of this booklet.
- 2) Any individual who wishes to become a member of Northside Church must have already been **Scripturally baptized**. We at Northside believe in baptism by immersion, not for the remission of sins but as a public statement of faith declaring an already existent inward reality. If such person finds him or herself realizing that has not happened in their lives, we would gladly baptize him or her here.
- 3) And lastly, any person who already complies with the 2 previous requirements must have **the commendation of the Overseers**. This commendation comes in the form of a formal interview and includes the signing of a statement of agreement. It is our desire that all who join Northside as members do clearly understand and agree with what we are about and how we function. This New Member's class is a tool by which such assessment is done. While this New Member's class is not a requirement, it is highly recommended since it provides anybody going through it a chance to have a more detailed understanding of how we operate and what we stand for. It is also an accelerated means by which we can know each other better in terms of understanding each other's background, faith and mode of operation when it comes to belonging to a local group of believers.

A couple of additional issues to consider

At this point we would like to take a quick look at a couple of specific issues we believe you would like to know before you join. For that we will take a brief look at what

the Bible has to say about them.

-Galatians 6:1-2

What is the Apostle Paul saying about anyone 'caught in any trespass'? _____

_____.

Who is to restore him or her? _____

_____.

How? _____

_____.

We here at Northside do believe in practicing Graceful!!! Church discipline. Jesus our Lord also believes in Church discipline and He is the one who gives us the Biblical steps for Church discipline. What are they? **Matthew 18:15-17.**

_____.

What are the objectives of Church discipline that we can draw from the Bible?

-2 Corinthians 2:5-11 _____

_____.

-I Corinthians 5:6-8; Titus 1:10-16 _____

_____.

-Galatians 6:1; I Timothy 5:20 _____

Another issue that often is a source of tension is the issue of giving. Here at Northside we believe in what is sometimes referred to as ‘giving under Grace’.

-2 Corinthians 9:6-8

What kind of giver does God love? _____

What does the Apostle Paul mean by “cheerful”? _____

When you hear of a person being ‘cheerful’ what does that person look like, what is that person like? _____

What are the other two principles the Apostle Paul presents in this passage which should govern our giving? _____

How does God respond to such giving? _____

For what purpose does God respond so? _____

We believe that giving is a matter of conviction between you and God. We are not here to tell you how much to give. We believe that while tithing is a good thing it is in no way a requirement to the New Testament Church. All we ask is that when you give, do so “as you purposed in your heart” and please never give under pressure or compulsion. That is why we do not pass around a plate but instead we just set up a box or basket in the back

for you to deposit your gift anonymously. We may make mention of it during the service for informational purposes and that is all. The handling of finances will never be a secret matter; any questions or concerns please direct them to the Overseers.

With that said we conclude our New Members class. All is left for you to do is to set your interview with the overseers and sign your statement of faith as well as your statement of agreement provided below. May God bless you, and thank you for taking the time to go through this class.

Statement of Faith

I hereby declare that I openly and publicly confess Jesus Christ to be my Lord and Savior. I believe with all my heart soul and mind that He died on the Cross in payment for my sins, and rose again from the dead on the third day. I confess that I have indeed received Him in my heart and therefore I am forever His.

Name

Signature

Date

I hereby declare that I have been Scripturally Baptized. Furthermore I understand that such baptism did not save me or cleanse me in any way but it only served as a public witness of an already existent inward reality.

Name

Signature

Date

Statement of agreement

After the completion of this class I hereby testify to the fact that I understand the main

frame of what Northside Church is about, where it stands, and how it operates.

Furthermore I find no reason that prevents me from joining this Church as a member in agreement with all its principles of doctrine and operation.

Signature

Date

Personal Data

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

E-mail address: _ _

Please check if applicable:

___ I request for my membership letter to be transferred here to Northside Church.

What Church? _____.

Address and/or phone number: _____

_____.

Appendix