

TRUE NORTH CHURCH

FOUNDATION FOR MINISTRY



True North Church
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to lay out the foundational beliefs, philosophies and passions that guide the ministries of True North Church in Cannon Falls, MN. The apostle Paul wrote, “The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.” (1Cor 12:12 NIV) This “Foundation for Ministry” expresses the heart of True North. It describes why we do what we do along with some of the foundational guidelines that help us stay focused on our mission.

WHO ARE WE

"For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." (Rom 12:4-5NIV)



Above all, True North Church is a part of the body of Christ. True North is a gathering of people bound together by their love for God, a common faith in Jesus Christ, similar values in the expression of that faith and a unified mission. Every member is a minister mutually dependent upon one another for encouragement, accountability to God, and growth in their individual relationships with the Lord.

True North Church is a Christian church founded for the purpose of glorifying God, growing in our love for Him, and fulfilling Jesus' command to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matt 28:19-20 NIV)

True North was founded in Sept, 2006 as a daughter church plant of the River Church in Farmington, MN (www.riverchurch.cc) under the authority of the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches (FEC, www.fecministries.org). As an affiliate of the FEC, we work in partnership with a number of FEC churches throughout the United States and are committed to a common set of beliefs as expressed in the *FEC Manual of Faith, Practice & Organization* (www.fecministries.org/text_files/FEC_Manual.pdf)

PURPOSE

True North exists to bring glory to God. We accomplish this by growing in our understanding of God's love and grace exhibited to us through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ; by encouraging and equipping one another to love and serve God; and by sharing God's love with the people around us.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." (Mar 12:30 NIV)

"For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen" (Rom 11:36 NIV)

MISSION

Our mission is to fulfill Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations. We do this work in full reliance upon the Holy Spirit and faith in Jesus' promise to be with us to the end of the age.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Mat 28:18-20 NIV)

BELIEFS

The following statements express our foundational beliefs about God and mankind's relationship with Him. These statements are essential beliefs that we will seek to uphold in all situations. They are not merely statements of religious belief, but rather of what we believe to be true about the world we live in.

We also acknowledge that there are "non-essential" beliefs about which disagreements can exist without changing the fundamental foundations of our church. In these "non-essential" matters we seek to exhibit humility, charity, and acceptance of one another.

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. (Rom 14:19-20 NIV)

And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, a good teacher, and patient. The Lord's servant must gently teach those who disagree. Then maybe God will let them change their minds so they can accept the truth. (2 Tim 2:24-25 NCV)

THE BIBLE

We believe that the Bible is God's Word to mankind and is the supreme source of truth for Christian faith and living. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament were written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit.



While reflecting the backgrounds, styles and vocabularies of the human authors, speaks with the authority of God.

"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:20-21 NIV)

We hold that the Scriptures are infallible, inspired and without any mixture of error in the original writings. They are the unique, full and final authority on all matters which they address. The Holy Spirit has guided the writing of these books and their preservation today as Holy Scripture. We are not at liberty to add or remove from them. (Psa 119:105, 2 Tim 3:15-17; 2 Tim 1:13-14, 2 Pet 1:20-21, Rev. 22:18-19)

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”.(2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIV)

GOD

We believe in the one and only true God who is Creator and Sustainer of the universe. God is self-existent, infinite, personal, unchangeable and eternal in His being. In His character God exhibits perfect holiness, justice, goodness, wisdom, truth and love. He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. This one God exists and reveals Himself in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We acknowledge that all we know of God is from what He has revealed to us and what we understand of that revelation. At present, we know only in part, but continue daily to seek greater knowledge and love of Him. (Gen 1:1; Psa 90:2; John 14:6-7; Rom 11:36)

JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son of God who was born in the likeness of man. He chose to humble Himself to be born of a virgin through a miraculous conception of the Holy Spirit, without ceasing to be God. Demonstrating unity with the Father, He lived a sinless human life, and out of love for all mankind He voluntarily offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for our sins by dying on



a cross as our substitute. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven where He reigns with all authority over heaven and earth and intercedes on our behalf before the Father. Jesus will return again to earth some day, personally and visibly, to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. (Matthew 1:22,23; Matthew 28:18; John 1:14; Acts 1: 9-11; Phil. 2:5-11; Col 1:18; Hebrews 4:14-16; 1Peter 1:18-19)

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. He enlightens the minds of sinners, awakens in them recognition of their need of a Savior, and brings spiritual life to them. At the point of salvation, He permanently indwells every believer to become the source of assurance, strength and wisdom, and He uniquely endows each believer with gifts for the building up of the body of Christ – the Church. The Holy Spirit guides believers in understanding and applying the Scriptures. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily, to exhibit Christ-like character, and to bear fruit to the glory of the Father. (John 14:16,17; John 16:7-13,17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Ephesians 1:13, 5:17-21; Galatians 5:25; Hebrews 9:14)



HUMAN BEINGS

Mankind was created by God as an intentional act of His will and in His image and likeness. We have been assigned by God the responsibility of care and authority over the earth. Humans find their greatest joy and fulfillment in accomplishing the purpose for which they were created: to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:7; Ephesians 1:5-6)

SIN & SALVATION

Sin is willful disobedience to God's will resulting in our lack of faith in God's purposes and/or placing our own desires above God's. In the beginning, man and woman were given the opportunity show their love and trust in God through their obedience to Him, but instead chose to disobey. Through this original act of disobedience man alienated himself from God, and all of creation has suffered the consequences. Each of us possesses a sinful nature and is guilty of disobedience to God. The penalty for this sin is death, which Jesus freely took upon Himself so that we could be forgiven and restored to fellowship and eternal life with God. (Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-19; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:10-12, 5:8, 6:22-23; 1 John 1:8-10)

Salvation is God's free gift to mankind. It is offered to all, but is individually received through repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation is wholly a work of God's free grace, not the result, in whole or in part, of human works or goodness. Eternal life and the forgiveness of sins begins the moment one transfers their trust from themselves to Christ for forgiveness of their sins. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of Christians, and when God has begun a saving work in the heart of any person, He promises to continue performing it until the day of its completion. We are involved in this process by choosing to follow Christ, trust Him, and obey Him as our lives are transformed. If you have been genuinely saved, you cannot unintentionally "lose it." (John 1:12, 14:6; Roman 6:23, 8:38-39; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5)

HUMAN DESTINY

Mankind was created by God to exist forever. Death seals the eternal destiny of each person. For all mankind, there will be a bodily resurrection and a judgment that will determine the fate of each individual. Those who have rejected Jesus Christ are destined to eternal separation from God. Those who have personally trusted Jesus Christ



will be received into eternal communion with God and will be rewarded for works done in this life. (John 3:16; Romans 6:23; Matthew 25:44,46; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:15)

THE CHURCH

The Church is the living Body of Christ on earth and at the point of salvation a person becomes a member of Christ's Body – the Church. There is one true Church universal, comprised of all those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior.

The Scriptures encourage believers to gather together to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, and observance of baptism and communion as ordinances established by Jesus Christ for the purpose of fellowship, service to the body through the development and use of talents and gifts, and outreach to the world.

The ordinances of baptism and communion are regular practices of the church instituted by Christ to represent spiritual truths and serve as outward expressions of faith and obedience to the Lord. These ordinances are not a means of salvation, but provide necessary opportunities for the believer to re-evaluate their faith life, to publicly declare their devotion to Christ, and to build milestones into their lives that will strengthen and encourage them as they continue to grow in Christ.

Baptism is a public profession of faith in Christ in which the believer identifies with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ through immersion in water. Baptism is separate from salvation, forgiveness of sin and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; and should be administered after an individual has accepted Jesus' sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin and received God's gift of salvation. This is an expected step in the life of a believer out of obedience to Jesus' command to "make disciples of nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," (Matt 28:19), and in following the examples of baptism set forth in Scripture by those who put their faith in Christ.

Communion, or the Lord's Supper, was instituted by Jesus for the purpose of remembering His life and the sacrifice He made for us. Communion is administered by the partaking of bread and the fruit of the vine. These elements symbolize Jesus' body and blood which were freely given for the forgiveness of our sins so that we may be restored to an unbroken relationship with God.

Through communion, each person has the opportunity to remember that although they fall short of God's glory, God has reached out to them in love by sending Jesus into the world. God sacrificed His son, Jesus, as full and complete atonement for our sins, and it is only by believing in Him and accepting this sacrifice that we can reconnect with God.

The physical elements of communion remind us that Jesus is fully God who humbled Himself to become man and live among us, who was raised from the dead, and is alive today. Finally, as a church we are reminded that through Jesus we are bound together as brothers and sisters through the Holy Spirit.



"And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me'. In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.'" (Luke 22:19-20)

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

Whenever God's people meet regularly, there is the local expression the Church. Under the watchful care of elders and the supportive leadership of deacons, its members are to work together in love and unity, intent on the one ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ. (Matt. 22:36-40, 28:19-20, Acts 1:8; 2:41-47, Romans 12:3-16, 1 Cor. 12:4-12, Ephesians 2:19-22; 4:11-13, Col. 1:18)

FAITH & PRACTICE

Scripture is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. We recognize that we cannot bind the conscience of individual members in areas where Scripture is silent. Rather, each believer is to be led in those areas by the Lord, to Whom he or she is ultimately responsible.

We believe this Statement of Faith to be an accurate summary of what Scripture teaches and is in agreement with the [Articles of Faith](#) of our parent organization, [the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches](#).

PARTNERSHIP

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. (1Co 12:12 ESV)

The partners of True North Church are those people, 18 years and older, who have made a clear commitment to active participation in the ministry. Partnership is membership in the church. It is an acknowledgement that you are part of the True North family, but partnership is more than simply belonging. It is an agreement between members to mutually support one another in seeking know God more fully and to fulfill the mission of the church according to the vision set forth by the Lead Pastor and his leadership team.



REQUIREMENTS

1. A partner must have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Being forgiven of our sins through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and entering into a new life with Him, filled with the Holy Spirit is foundational to everything we are as a church, and is a vital relationship for all partners.
2. Partners must be in agreement with the essential beliefs of True North church as detailed earlier in this document. There are many varying beliefs within Christian communities today. While there is room for disagreement on some issues, it is important that we do have unity on certain essentials of the faith.
3. Partners must be willing to agree to the partnership commitments stated below. Partnership is a relationship built upon trust that involves commitments made between the partners of True North.

PARTNERSHIP COMMITMENTS

We, the leadership of True North Church, agree to:

1. Provide you with tools, opportunities & support to help you grow in your relationship with God.
2. Value you as a member of our family; being available to the best of our availability in times of celebration & need, and seeking to develop mutual love and trust with you as brothers & sisters in Jesus Christ.
3. Provide opportunities for you to discover and develop your personal ministry calling.
4. Be careful and faithful stewards of the financial gifts provided to True North Church.
5. Include you in discussions about major church decisions and in "partner" level church communications.

As a partner of True North Church, You agree to:

1. Regularly participate in weekly worship gatherings.
2. Seek out & take part in opportunities outside of Sunday worship to grow deeper in your relationship with God & with the people He has placed in your life.
3. Find ways to make use of the unique gifts & talents God has given you to enhance the ministry of True North Church & affect the lives of others for Jesus.
4. Give generously & joyfully out of the finances God provides you in order to practically exhibit your faith in His provision & support His work through True North Church.
5. Prayerfully share your experiences with others to help lead them into a closer relationship with God through Jesus Christ

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

BASIS FOR LEADERSHIP

“...if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. (2Ch 7:14 ESV)

First and foremost, we acknowledge God as the ultimate and final authority of True North Church. This is His church and we will humbly seek His guidance in all matters.



But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1Pe 2:9 ESV)

Becoming a leader in the world and learning to lead as Jesus did is a fundamental part of growing in faith as a follower of Christ. Every Christian is called to share their gifts, talents and experiences in order to influence others for Christ. This influence is to be used to help people discover the new life in Jesus Christ and to help continue growing in their relationship with Him.

God establishes a structure within the church by placing some people in authority as the heads of the church. These authorities are charged with teaching, guiding, encouraging, protecting and equipping the members of the church so that they may grow to be fully engaged followers of Jesus Christ who are living by faith in Him and fulfilling their personal ministry calling to make disciples of Him.

All partners of True North are encouraged and invited to seek opportunities to develop as leaders and influencers for God. This kind of leadership development will take on many forms. It will most often begin with serving in the church and then growing into taking responsibility for new or established ministries within the church and/or our community. The level of leadership a person attains depends upon God's call on their life and the circumstances He places before them. It will also depend upon their faithfulness in serving, their availability to God and the church, and their willingness to learn (teachability).

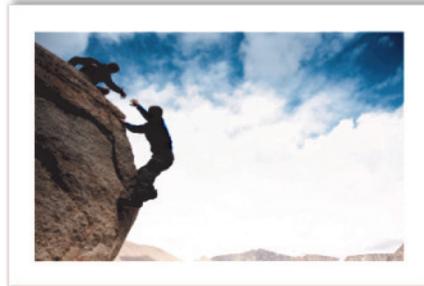
As True North Church continues to grow and pursue its mission, God will call some partners into specific roles of church leadership. The primary church leadership roles are described below.

LEAD PASTOR

The Lead Pastor is the spiritual leader and chief executive officer of the church. He shall be a man called by God to shepherd the church, and shall be entrusted to provide leadership for the vision, spiritual life and administration of the church. In fulfilling this role, the Lead Pastor is expected to work in mutual accountability and submission to God with the partners of True North Church.

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ... (Eph 5:21)

...Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him. (Eph 6:7-9)



The Lead Pastor remains an employee of True North Church until his resignation or until the Elders recommend termination after careful and prayerful consideration. Should the Senior Pastor resign, he must make his decision known in writing to the Elder Team. In the event of a termination, a 60 day notice will be given. This notice may be waived if both parties agree.

Whenever there is need to select a new Lead Pastor for True North Church, the Elders and Foundation Team shall establish a selection committee to review potential candidates. The Lead Pastor must be a man of personal integrity who has accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and has a growing and dynamic relationship with Him. He shall be a man who can adequately lead people and one in whom people put personal confidence. He shall possess the ability to inspire people to activity and involvement and be committed to equipping the people of True North for ministry. He shall preach the Word; exercise prayerful and diligent oversight of the church; watch the souls thereof as one who shall give account; and seek earnestly the salvation of the lost so that in all things he may be approved of God. The Lead Pastor shall also be in agreement with the mission and values of True North.

A Lead Pastor candidate must be approved by the FEC Elder Board. The FEC Elder Board shall meet with the candidate, provide feedback to the leaders of True North and determine whether the

candidate is eligible to be licensed as a pastor within the FEC. Upon approval by the FEC Elder Board, the True North Elders shall determine whether to recommend the candidate to the partners of True North. The partners may approve the recommendation with a 2/3 majority vote.

FOUNDATION TEAM

The Foundation Team is the group of people responsible for the administrative leadership of the church. The Foundation Team will meet



regularly to prayerfully seek God's guidance for True North, grow together as leaders, assess organizational needs of the church, oversee financial stewardship and administer the church's calendar of events. The Lead Pastor shall be the leader of the Foundation Team.

Foundation team members are chosen from among the partners of True North Church. A Foundation team member is a partner who has demonstrated the ability to take responsibility for leading ministry groups and serving others. They must have an active and growing relationship with God and a visible level of spiritual maturity. In addition, Foundation Team members are those partners with a desire to take responsibility for seeing that the church fulfills its mission and a heart to serve the members of the church. In serving on the Foundation Team, members do not seek to do all the work of the church themselves, but to equip, encourage, and make room for others to serve so that they may continue to grow in their faith and ministry to God.

The current Foundation Team members will make recommendation for others to join the team as they actively mentor and observe partners serving in the church. Upon such recommendation, the Foundation Team and Elders will prayerfully discuss and consider the candidate's ability to serve. The Lead Pastor

will invite the candidate to join the team pending his approval after these discussions.

ELDERS

The Elders are the primary spiritual overseers of the church. They are a group of men accountable to God for ensuring that True North Church remains rooted in biblical principles and seeks to honor God in all that we do. The Elders shall meet regularly to prayerfully seek God's guidance, grow together as leaders, assess the spiritual state of the church, provide recommendations and feedback to the Foundation Team, and seek to ensure that the people of the church are maintaining active, dynamic relationships with God. The Elder team shall consist of the Lead Pastor and men fulfilling the qualifications detailed below. Members of the elder team shall provide Godly accountability to one another for mutual encouragement and assistance in maintaining a growing faith.

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. (Heb 10:23-24)

Elders should carry out their role with a desire to honor God and serve the people of the church as expressed in 1 Peter 5:

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. (1Peter 5:1-4)

Elders shall be chosen from among the partners of the church. Any partner may recommend a person for service on the Elder team. Current elders will review all candidates and recommend approval of new Elders. The partners of True North shall vote to affirm those

recommendations with a majority vote. The qualifications for an elder at those listed for an overseer of the church in 1Timothy 3:

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. (1Ti 3:1-7)



In the event of a serious breach of duties, routine nonperformance of responsibilities or moral failure, an Elder can be dismissed by unanimous decision by the remainder of the Elder Team. The dismissal procedure shall be conducted in the spirit of Christ as articulated in Matthew 18.

MINISTRY TEAMS

A variety of ministry teams will exist within the church to fulfill the various activities we develop carry out the mission of the church. Ministry teams will be led by partners in the church who have demonstrated faithfulness in service. Members of the foundation team will oversee, encourage, and mentor the leaders of these ministry teams, and Elders will provide spiritual guidance and mentorship as needed.

In addition to accomplishing the goals of the church, ministry teams are a means for developing meaningful relationships, putting faith into practice, and developing skills for sharing God's love with others. Ministry leaders will work to encourage, invite and equip those serving on their teams to grow in their faith and learn to teach others as they gain maturity and a desire to influence others for Christ.

AMENDMENTS

This "Foundation for Ministry" may be amended by recommendation of the Elder team and affirmation by a 2/3 majority vote of the True North partners. Partners will be given 2 weeks to consider recommended changes before a vote is taken at a partners meeting.

