



# BOARD MEMBER HANDBOOK

Board Member Orientation and Board Operations

## Abstract

This document is intended to ensure that the church board maintains consistency and alignment with all operational documents of NLAG.

2023 Edition

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## Board Member Orientation

All new or returning board members shall go through an annual orientation that informs them of the board's responsibilities, functions, and the policies that govern the church board.

### Welcome to Our team!

You're here *because* your Lead Pastor, leaders, and peers have found you to be an honest, kind, and compassionate person who demonstrates the attributes of Jesus. You're known for being cooperative, open-minded, and for having a teachable attitude. You've shown yourself to be congenial, professional, and are known to possess leadership qualities. We believe in your ability to maintain a high level of confidentiality. We appreciate that you're relaxed and are able to serve others with respect. We also appreciate that you maintain a positive attitude towards yourself and others. We like that you have a sense of humor and are able to laugh and enjoy life with others. We believe you'll maintain a good rapport with the Lead Pastor, staff, volunteers, church members, and outside professionals.

We believe in you and are excited to serve with you,

Welcome to our team!

### Expectations of a Board Member (Summary)

#### Board members are expected to publicly and privately:

- Lead the way by modeling the attributes of a follower of Jesus (Galatians 5:22-23).
- Model Biblical leadership in prayer, ministry, giving, outreach, worship, service attendance, and church discipline or conflict resolution. Lead by example in giving encouragement and showing your appreciation of leadership and volunteers.
- Publicly support the Lead Pastor's vision and strategic initiatives through encouragement and attendance; as well as provide observations, personal insight and feedback about the health of NLAG privately with the Lead Pastor.
- Protect the Lead Pastor or staff by keeping confidences, refusing to gossip, and when necessary, practicing the biblical model of confrontation outlined in Matthew 18:15-17.
- Provide accountability by partnering with the Lead Pastor in stewarding the resources of NLAG (i.e. finances, membership, asset maintenance, and property upkeep).
- Assist in establishing and upholding policy guidelines along with the Lead Pastor.
- Uphold the Bylaws and Operational Documents of New Life Assembly with integrity.
- Attend and be fully engaged in the monthly Board meetings.

#### Board members are **NOT** expected to:

- Carry the complaints of the congregation. How should I respond when people complain? *That's not how we operate. You should share these feelings with... first.*
- Field the requests of the congregation. How should I respond? *That's not how our board functions. When can you and I meet with (the Lead Pastor) to share your thoughts?*

- Carry the complaints of the staff. How should I respond when staff complains? *That's not my role or that's not how we operate. You should share these feeling with... first.*
- Field the requests of the staff. How should I respond? *That's not how our board functions. When can you and I meet with (the Lead Pastor) to share your thoughts?*
- Determine the vision (spiritual direction) and missional strategy of NLAG.
- Manage day-to-day operations.
- Hire, fire, or discipline staff.

### **Board Member's Training**

Because leaders are learners, the board will invest and participate in leadership training on a regular basis. The Lead Pastor shall provide opportunities for all church board members to add to their knowledge and hone their leadership skills as members involved in the leadership process. This could include such opportunities as reading books together, attendance at conferences and workshops, working with a church consultant, and other valuable training experiences and/or resources.

### **Board Member Covenant**

You've been identified as a spiritual leader in the church—that's why you are here serving in this capacity! The following is what we expect a board member to commit to:

**Prayer.** Board members are expected to practice spiritual disciplines like fasting (as you can), and to faithfully pray for:

- A spiritual awakening within our church and our community
- The Lead Pastor (and his or her family)
- Staff members and their families (*if applicable*)
- Those in leadership and their families (*if applicable*)
- As well as be available to pray with those in the congregation as needs arise

**Attendance.** Board members are expected to be fully engaged in the life and ministry of the church by faithfully maintaining consistent and regular attendance. Board members are expected to be present for (*unless your schedule or extenuating circumstances forbids you*):

- Coffee and Connection
- Sunday Morning Service
- Wednesday Night Bible Study
- Special prayer or worship services
- Outreach initiatives
- All board meetings

**Being Supportive and Honest.** If you have a disagreement and/or concerns with the Lead Pastor personally, he or she should never hear them from someone else. If you are on the board, your opinion and your spouse's (*if applicable*) carry significant weight. If you think something isn't going to work, he or she will want to hear your opinion when we all talk about it, not after it

fails. If you have complaints and/or unhappiness, communicate them properly to the Lead Pastor in a Biblical (*Matthew 18*) manner. Open and honest conversation is imperative!

**Stewardship.** Board members are expected to be faithful stewards. They're to be responsible in the way they conduct their personal business and financial affairs. Board members must support the ministry of the church through their tithe, and if possible, in offerings.

**The Ministry.** Being a board member is not a passive position. Board members are expected to be actively involved in the ministries of the church. They're to be an extension of the Lead Pastor's ministry and vision to the congregation. Board members are also expected to invest in the spiritual growth of others.

**Continual Training.** Learning is a lifelong process. Board members are expected to continue to learn how to better serve the church (i.e. reading books, blogs, articles, listening to Podcasts, etc.).

**Be an Example.** Board members are expected to set a Godly example for the church family. Their lifestyle must be free of addictive drugs, sinful habits (gambling, gossip, pornography, etc.), and excessive alcoholic beverages. Their marriage (*if applicable*) must be strong, Godly, and free from activities that might be considered as unholy. Board members are expected to have the integrity to confess sin(s) and resign from the church board in the event that their actions or that of their spouses (*if applicable*) would ever cause the church to suffer in any way.

**Keep Confidentiality.** Board members are expected to keep all sensitive matters confidential. This is extremely important! What's discussed in the board room should always be kept confidential. You will have access to information that wouldn't be understood by everyone outside of the conversation. We will discuss staffing issues and strategic issues that no one else will ever hear. Sometimes, the Lead Pastor will just need to talk through personal and non-personal issues out loud...it is extremely important to him or her that he or she is able to process church, staff, and even life issues with you. To have this kind of open communication we must be able to trust each other. Often, the Lead Pastor will talk about something with you that he or she has not yet discussed with staff, or even the people involved. As you know, *how* something is shared is often as important as *when* it is shared. The Lead Pastor will want to do any initial rollout and communication of things like vision, strategy, and new ministry or all-church initiatives. He or she will do their best to tell you when it's ok to share information with your spouse (*if applicable*) or with others in the church. The Lead Pastor will also do their best to tell you when *not* to share information with your spouse (*if applicable*) or with others in the church. He or she will always strive to provide you with clarity on issues of confidentiality. A good rule of thumb is, *always assume the information is confidential and is not to be shared.*

**Value Ethics.** All board members are expected to conduct themselves ethically. There may be times when individuals will quiz you as to how you feel about certain issues or actions of the board. It is inappropriate for you to discuss these issues. Sometimes others may approach you to tell you to pass information on to the Lead Pastor. Immediately stop those who want to use

you in this way and insist that they go directly to the source (Matthew 18). Always handle those people directly, yet with love and compassion. It's also inappropriate to use your spouse as a voice to the congregation for your own opinion, preferences, and/or agenda. By conducting yourself ethically, you will ensure that you and your spouse (*if applicable*) are above reproach.

**Note:** By accepting this position, you're agreeing to uphold this covenant to the best of your ability.

### **Board Member Spouse Covenant** (*if applicable*)

As the spouse of a church board member, you play an important part in the board member's ministry, often determining their effectiveness. As the spouse you should be aware of the following ways in which you're able to minister to your spouse.

**Support.** Your spouse must have your full support! He or she has been chosen to serve in this role and you will be expected to faithfully stand with him or her.

**Pray.** You have a spiritual responsibility to pray for your spouse. Your spiritual support is essential to his or her successful leadership in the body. A board member's spouse is also expected to practice spiritual disciplines like fasting (as you can) and to faithfully pray for:

- A spiritual awakening within our church and our community
- The Lead Pastor (and his or her family)
- Staff members and their families (*if applicable*)
- Those in leadership and their families (*if applicable*)
- As well as be available to pray with those in the congregation as needs arise

**Attendance.** A board member's spouse is expected to be fully engaged in the life and ministry of the church by investing in the spiritual growth of others, and by faithfully maintaining consistent and regular attendance. Board member's spouses are also expected to be present for (*unless your schedule or extenuating circumstances forbids you*):

- Coffee and Connection
- Sunday Morning Service
- Wednesday Night Bible Study
- Special prayer or worship services
- Outreach initiatives

**Unity in the Home.** Disunity in the home means a weak spiritual life, which, in turn, means a weak link in the leadership of the church. Consistently work towards unity in your relationship and in your home.

**Family.** You and your family are examples, and you will have certain expectations over you that you may not have considered before. Remember that you and your family's attitude and actions speak louder than your words (*Colossians 3:18-21; Proverbs 31:10-31; Psalm 127:3-5*).

**Confidentiality.** There may be times when your spouse is aware of things that he or she is not at liberty to share with you at the moment. You are expected to pray with him or her without knowing all the facts. There will be times when you *are* aware of things that the congregation is not aware of yet. You are expected to remain free from gossip and in an attitude of prayer.

**Ethics.** There may be times when individuals will quiz you as to how you feel about certain issues or actions of the church board. It is inappropriate for you to discuss these issues disparagingly. Sometimes others may share their feelings with you in hopes that your spouse will tell the Lead Pastor. You are not the listening post for your spouse or for the Lead Pastor. Always handle those people directly, yet with love and compassion. Immediately stop those who want to use you in this way and insist that they go directly to the source (Matthew 18). It is also inappropriate to use your spouse as a voice for your own opinion, preferences, or agenda. By conducting yourself ethically, you will ensure that you and your spouse are above reproach.

**Note:** *Board member*, by accepting this position, your spouse is agreeing to uphold this covenant to the best of their ability.

## Board Operations

### Board Code of Conduct

Together we're committed to protecting the church board's credibility by practicing biblical and ethical conduct with integrity. We do this by:

1. Working together as a unified team in the best interest of the *entire* church.
2. Courageously making the right decisions despite personal preferences and/or opinions, no matter how unpopular or controversial they may be at the time.
3. Trusting, caring about, genuinely appreciating, and respecting one another (including the Lead Pastor) in accordance to scripture (*see Hebrews 13:17*).
4. Dealing with disagreements among ourselves according to Matthew 18:15-17. Note: if the matter is not resolved in an initial conversation, the Lead Pastor will arbitrate. If the issue is with the Lead Pastor, another board member or District Official will arbitrate the dispute. See *Conflict Resolution and Arbitration* in the *NLAG Policies and Procedures Manual*.
5. Not attempting to exercise individual authority over others in the church (i.e. the Lead Pastor, other board members, staff, and congregation). Note: Board members only have authority over others (i.e. the Lead Pastor, other board members, staff, and congregation) when acting corporately as a church board.
6. Not interacting with the public, press, congregation, or others individually in an attempt to speak for the board except to explicitly repeat non-confidential board decisions.
7. Not condoning or voicing criticism of the Lead Pastor, other board members, or staff performances beyond the individuals involved. If you're not part of the problem or the solution—it's gossip!

8. Respecting the confidentiality appropriate to each issue we discuss.
9. Avoiding a conflict of interest with respect to your responsibility. You may recuse yourself from a discussion that you feel conflicts with your objectivity.
10. Having a secure, ethical way of communicating with the church board (i.e. personal email address, personal *Facebook Messenger*, or personal cell phone). No shared accounts will be permitted.

## Responsibilities of the Board

The function of the church board is to act as a covering for the Lead Pastor in prayer and in financial accountability and to assist the Lead Pastor in the ministry of the ordinances of the church. They shall also act in an advisory capacity with the Lead Pastor in all matters pertaining to the spiritual life of the church, and in all business matters of the church, to help ensure that the Lead Pastor and the church fulfill its mission and vision (Bylaws: Article VI, Section 1, A). The primary and occasional responsibilities of the church board include but are not limited to the following:

### Primary Responsibilities

1. The board shall pray for the spiritual awakening of our community, the congregation, the Lead Pastor (and his or her family), staff members, leadership, and for each other.
2. The board shall advise the Lead Pastor on:
  - a. The financial and physical condition of the church.
  - b. The Lead Pastor's strategic initiatives (mission).
  - c. The development of operational policies, processes, and procedures, as well as amendments to the church's Bylaws (Article XVI) as clarification is needed.
3. Maintain financial accountability by setting the annual church budget (Article XII, Section 4, A), and by reviewing and approving the monthly financial report.
4. The board shall oversee the maintenance of the grounds/facilities (Article VI, Section 3).
5. Informally monitoring the Lead Pastor's character and leadership (Article VI, Section 8 and Board Monitoring and Evaluations, Section 1. a.), respectfully addressing any questionable behavior according to Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Corinthians 2:7-8; Galatians 6:1-2.
6. The board shall set, oversee, and evaluate the yearly compensation package of the Lead Pastor.

### Occasional Responsibilities

1. The board will oversee the selection of the Lead Pastor.
  - a. Hiring a Lead Pastor: The church board will adhere to the following procedure after obtaining the Lead Pastor's resignation. See Article VII, Section 7 of the Bylaws.
  - b. Emergency Lead Pastor Succession: In order to protect NLAG and the church board from the consequences of a sudden loss of the Lead Pastor due to



ailment or death, the Lead Pastor shall have one other staff member, or Elder, or church board member sufficiently familiar with non-confidential church issues and processes, enabling them to take over with reasonable proficiency as an interim successor. This person will temporarily oversee the spiritual needs of the congregation both in and out of the pulpit, and will ensure the mission of NLAG continues to move forward by providing adequate spiritual leadership. This person will not act as President of the Corporation nor act as the sitting Chairman of the church board. The church board will immediately adhere to Article VII, Section 7 of the Bylaws.

2. The board will serve as an arbitrator in any disputes with the Lead Pastor in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17 should it go beyond an initial conversation. See NLAG Policies and Procedures Manual: Conflict Resolution and Arbitration.
3. The board will protect the Lead Pastor from those who would seek to undermine him or her and his or her ministry by addressing any sinful behavior that would cause disunity.
4. In the event the Lead Pastor has serious charges preferred against him or her, or his or her ministry has ceased to be effective, power is vested in the church board, only by a unanimous vote, to ask for the resignation of the Lead Pastor at any of its regular business meetings. If such resignation is refused, the pastorate will not be considered vacant until the unanimous action of the church board has been confirmed by a majority vote of the membership at a meeting called for that purpose, such meeting to be presided over by a District Officiary. If the majority of the members confirm the unanimous action of the church board, the pastorate position shall be considered vacant. However, if the majority should not confirm the unanimous action of the church board, all church board members will be expected to immediately resign from the church board, and the sectional committee of the Pennsylvania-Delaware Network shall serve as the temporary church board until a new board is established (Article VII, Section 5.).
5. The board will assist the Lead Pastor in evaluating new member's applications and/or discipline (Article VI, Bylaws).
6. The board will assist the Lead Pastor in evaluating the Active Membership list at his or her discretion, at least annually.
7. The board may grant local church credentialing.
  - a. The church board may grant local church credentials to persons whom it unanimously feels:
    - I. Are being led by the Holy Spirit into a *fivefold* ministry (Eph. 4:11-13).
    - II. Has demonstrated spiritual maturity and leadership competency.
    - III. Are actively seeking to formalize their theological preparation.
  - b. It is understood that local church credentials serve only to endorse the calling of individual active members within NLAG. Individuals wishing to pursue formal ministerial recognition must follow the guidelines established by the General Presbytery of The General Council of the Assemblies of God and the District Council. Individuals who receive a local church credential must understand that

this is not a formal certification by the District Network or the General Council, and is not transferable to other churches or ministries.

## Board Efficiency

The church board commits to operate biblically and efficiently in conducting its meetings, making the best use of its time with the Lead Pastor.

1. The board will make its decisions by consensus, defined as a simple majority vote. The final decision will be the position of the board (*as if there were no difference of opinion*).
  - a. In the event of a tie, the Chairman (*by law*) has the right to cast his or her vote.
2. Any and all decisions pertaining to the use of church finances and/or facility outside of a scheduled board meeting must be presented to the Lead Pastor (Chairman) for his or her advisement before deciding on the matter at hand among themselves (via email, phone call, text messages, or in person).
  - a. All decisions of the church board must be (*by law*) chaired by the Chairman. Therefore, the church board and its Chairman will adhere to the following procedure:
    - I. The matter and all its pertinent information will be brought to the Chairman for his or her advisement.
    - II. The Chairman will then discern the urgency of the matter. If the matter is deemed *not urgent*, the Chairman reserves the right to table the matter until the next official board meeting for their consideration.
    - III. If the matter is deemed *urgent*, the Chairman will submit the matter with all of its pertinent information to all members of the church board (via email, phone call, text messages, or in person). If the church board feels that the information is sufficient to make a decision, the Chairman will call for a vote on the matter and will follow Board Efficiency, Section 1.
3. No person will be allowed before the church board in an official board meeting without an approved *Invitation Request Form* by the church board as detailed in the NLAG Policies and Procedures Manual: Operational Forms, and in Article IX, Section 8, D.

## Lead Pastor's Responsibilities to the Board

1. The Lead Pastor commits to operate biblically and effectively in conducting his or her meetings, making the best use of each board member's time (Article IX, Section 4).
2. The Lead Pastor will try to keep the church board informed of any relevant trends, church issues, needs, external and internal changes, and problems that they should be aware of that are affecting, or could affect, the ministry of NLAG positively or negatively.
3. The Lead Pastor will do their best to confront the board if he or she believes that it has violated the standards set by the Bylaws, the NLAG Policies and Procedures Manual, and/or the Board Handbook.

4. The Lead Pastor will do their best to provide the board with any pertinent information necessary for it to make fully informed decisions on the matters that come before it.
5. Out of courtesy, the Lead Pastor will inform the board (via email) with advanced notice when he or she is using his or her vacation time, or when he or she is using his or her sick leave as agreed upon in the Lead Pastor's compensation package for their mutual consent.
6. Out of courtesy, the Lead Pastor will do their best to inform the board with advanced notice when he or she is inviting a special speaker or group to minister to the Assembly.

## Board Monitoring and Evaluations

The church board will monitor and evaluate its ministry performance for the purpose of staying aligned with its purpose and responsibilities. *We're not looking for perfection, but proficiency!* No church board or Lead Pastor will be fully excellent. We're all human! The goal is to *help each other* to be as healthy as possible. When this is done in love, we can learn to trust each other.

1. The church board will informally and regularly monitor the leadership performance and spiritual health of the Lead Pastor. A minimum of one annual review will be conducted and documented in the church board minutes. The minutes will not reflect the results.
  - a. The church board and its Chairman will adhere to the following procedure:
    - I. Each member will complete the *Functions of Pastoral Ministry Audit*. See Operational Form: *Functions of Pastoral Ministry Audit*
    - II. Functions of Pastoral Ministry Audit Key.
      - i. If the score in each section is:
        - 17–20: The Lead Pastor is excellent in that area!
        - 13–16: The Lead Pastor is above average in that area.
        - 9–12: The Lead Pastor may need assistance in that area.
        - 5–8: The Lead Pastor may need resourced in that area.
2. The Lead Pastor will informally and regularly monitor the leadership performance and spiritual health of the church board, and will discuss these evaluations with the church board for the purpose of improving its leadership. A minimum of one annual review will be conducted and documented in the church board minutes. The minutes will not reflect the results.
  - a. The church board and its Chairman will adhere to the following procedure:
    - I. Each member will complete the *Church Board Audit*. See Operational Form: *Church Board Audit*
    - II. Church Board Audit Key:
      - i. If the score is:
        - 66–80: The board is in excellent health!
        - 50–65: The board is in above average health.
        - 35–49: The board in below average health and needs recalibrated.
        - 20–34: The board is dysfunctional and needs resources.

## Amendments to this document

The Board Member Handbook may be amended by the Lead Pastor or any church board member at any regular board meeting by a majority vote of the membership present, provided the proposed amendment has been presented to all of its members two weeks prior to the date of the board meeting. The Chairman will then call for a vote on the amendment. The decision will be the final position of the church board and will follow Board Efficiency, Section 1. of this Handbook. If the amendment passes, the Chairman will send a revised edition to each church board member no later than one month following the time of the decision.

## Church Board Audit

*(NOTE this is given as a separate document)*

**NOTE: Please DO NOT put you name on this document and DO NOT over think your answers.**

One of the most influential leadership groups in NLAG is the church board. This annual audit will help us gage how we are doing. Circle the answer that best describes our current board:

**(1) False, (2) More False than True, (3) More True than False, (4) True**

I feel that my work on the board is a most valuable use of my time. 1 2 3 4

The board addresses the most important issues that affect NLAG. 1 2 3 4

The board doesn't micromanage the church and its ministry. 1 2 3 4

The board has a clear, compelling direction. 1 2 3 4

I feel my work on the board is a good use of my gifts and abilities. 1 2 3 4

The board doesn't spend a lot of time on trivial matters. 1 2 3 4

No one person dominates or tries to control the board. 1 2 3 4

The board is performing at a high percentage of its leadership potential. 1 2 3 4

The board is proactive not reactive in its work. 1 2 3 4

The board members often disagree and debate with one another. 1 2 3 4

New board members receive an orientation and training for their position. 1 2 3 4

The board members trust and show respect for one another. 1 2 3 4

The board members are well qualified spiritually for the board's work. 1 2 3 4

The board has set clear lines of authority between itself and the Lead Pastor. 1 2 3 4

By being on the board, I am making a significant difference for Jesus. 1 2 3 4

I am disappointed when board meetings are canceled. 1 2 3 4

The board has established a clear set of policies that guide our decisions. 1 2 3 4

It is rare that board meeting last more than two hours. 1 2 3 4

All items that appear on the board's agenda are carefully screened. 1 2 3 4

Rarely do the board members interfere with the staff's work. 1 2 3 4

Directions for scoring: Add up all the numbers that you have circled. Total score: \_\_\_\_\_

## Functions of Pastoral Ministry Audit

*(NOTE this is given as a separate document)*

**NOTE: DO NOT put you name on this document and DO NOT over think your answers.**

One of the most influential leaders in NLAG is the Lead Pastor. This annual audit will help us gauge how they're doing (Article VII, Section 8). Circle the answer that best describes our current Lead pastor:

**(1) False, (2) More False than True, (3) More True than False, (4) True**

### Equip and Serve the Assembly with Leadership

The Lead Pastor has and continues to:

1. Clearly determines and communicates God's will (vision) for NLAG. 1 2 3 4
2. Invest in the development of other leaders with clear direction. 1 2 3 4
3. Clearly demonstrates administration skills by completing management tasks. 1 2 3 4
4. Establish systems that protect and sustain essential operational functions. 1 2 3 4
5. Establish systems and goals (strategy) that mobilizes people towards accomplishing the mission of NLAG. 1 2 3 4

Add up all the numbers that you have circled. Total score: \_\_\_\_\_

### Equip and Serve the Assembly with the Ministry of the Word

The Lead Pastor has and continues to:

1. Equip the congregation towards maturity and service (Ephesians 4:12). 1 2 3 4
2. Teaches sound truths of the faith and rightly interprets the Word of God. 1 2 3 4
3. Increase biblical and theological literacy in the congregation. 1 2 3 4
4. Clearly prepares and clearly delivers sermons and lessons. 1 2 3 4
5. Bath their ministry in prayer and shows an anointing by the Holy Spirit. 1 2 3 4

Add up all the numbers that you have circled. Total score: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Equip and Serve the Assembly with Pastoral Care**

The Lead Pastor has and continues to:

1. Shepherd the congregation by showing care and by offering spiritual help. 1 2 3 4
2. Strengthen others faith through: counseling, prayer, and encouragement. 1 2 3 4
3. Challenge others to grow through prayerfully administered correction. 1 2 3 4
4. Show loving concern through visitation as others pass through difficulties. 1 2 3 4
5. Reflect the attitude of Jesus, to serve others and not to be served. 1 2 3 4

Add up all the numbers that you have circled. Total score: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Equip and Serve the Assembly with Fulfilling the Great Commission (Global and Local)**

The Lead Pastor has and continues to:

1. Lead by example in reaching and discipling others. 1 2 3 4
2. Be motivated to inspire followers of Jesus to make a difference. 1 2 3 4
3. Teach practical approaches to reaching and discipling others. 1 2 3 4
4. Provide opportunities for followers of Jesus fulfil the Great Commission. 1 2 3 4
5. Clearly communicate our global and local outreach and discipleship strategy. 1 2 3 4

Add up all the numbers that you have circled. Total score: \_\_\_\_\_