Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

Eligibility for serving on Board of Trustees: 3 year membership

Northwoods' Board of Trustees consists of eight voting members:

- President
- President Elect
- Past President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Parliamentarian
- Leader of the Coordinating Circle
- Delegate from the Coordinating Circle

The Minister serves as a non-voting member of the Board.

Although trustees hold different positions, all voting members share responsibility for the Board's work. Each trustee supports the Mission and Vision, prepares for meetings, and participates in decisions. Trustees exercise sound fiduciary judgment and communicate responsibly. They protect confidential information and follow through on commitments. They act in the best interests of the congregation as a whole.

Some positions have authority to carry out specific duties. However, no individual trustee has the authority of the full Board unless the Board has formally delegated it.

President

The President supports the Board in carrying out its responsibilities and helps ensure that Northwoods operates within its bylaws and governing policies.

Responsibilities

- presides at meetings of the Board and congregation;
- works with others to prepare Board agendas;
- helps the Board maintain focus on governance and long-term priorities;

- represents Northwoods in the wider community when appropriate;
- signs documents authorized by the Board or congregation;
- reports on the Board's work at the Annual Congregational Meeting;
- supports communication among trustees;
- helps ensure that decisions and assignments receive follow-through; and
- helps ensure that the congregation operates within the letter and spirit of the bylaws.

The President facilitates the Board's work rather than carrying it alone. Effective presidents distribute responsibility, seek participation from every trustee, and use the Board's collective knowledge.

The President may delegate meeting facilitation when another trustee or trained facilitator can better serve the process.

President Elect

The President Elect prepares to assume the presidency while supporting the current President and the work of the Board.

Responsibilities
- acts as President when the President is absent or requests it;
- becomes familiar with current Board responsibilities, priorities, and relationships;
- accepts responsibilities assigned by the Board or Board policy; and
- succeeds to the position of President at the beginning of the next term.

The President and President Elect should communicate regularly. The year as President Elect is an opportunity to learn the role, develop relationships, and understand issues likely to continue into the following year.

Past President

The Past President provides continuity, historical knowledge, and support during leadership transition.

Responsibilities
- advises the Board as directed;
- advises the Leadership Development Committee, as directed by the Board;

- helps preserve institutional knowledge;
- assists the President and President Elect when appropriate; and
- accepts responsibilities assigned through Board policy or consent.

The Past President should support new leadership without continuing to direct work that now belongs to the President. Experience is most useful when offered as context and advice rather than as control.

Secretary

The Secretary maintains the official record of Board and congregational governance.

Responsibilities
- records and preserves minutes of Board and congregational meetings;
- documents decisions and formal votes;
- ensures that minutes are made available within the required timeframe;
- compiles annual reports;
- ensures that meeting notices are provided as required;
- manages official Board communications to the congregation; and
- helps preserve records needed for accountability, legal compliance, and institutional memory.

The Board Communication Agreement establishes the current process for distributing, reviewing, correcting, and approving draft minutes.

Minutes should record what the Board did, not everything each person said. They should be clear enough that a future Board can understand the decision, assigned responsibility, deadline, and any conditions or review date.

Treasurer

The Treasurer supports the Board's stewardship of Northwoods' financial resources.

Responsibilities
- provides for the safekeeping of church funds and financial instruments, except assets specifically entrusted elsewhere;
- protects confidential contribution information;
- presents regular financial reports to the Board and congregation;

- incorporates Endowment reporting into congregational financial reports;
- works with the Finance Circle on financial planning;
- proposes and presents the annual budget;
- helps trustees understand the financial implications of Board decisions; and
- ensures that financial information is accurate, timely, and useful for governance.

The bylaws require candidates for Treasurer to have a basic understanding of accounting practices.

The Treasurer is not solely responsible for the financial health of the church. Fiduciary responsibility belongs to the full Board. The Treasurer provides information and expertise that allow all trustees to exercise that responsibility. Financial reports should help the Board understand not only what has already happened, but also emerging risks, trends, and choices.

Parliamentarian

The Parliamentarian helps ensure that formal governance actions comply with the bylaws, policies, and required meeting procedures.

Responsibilities

- supports compliance with the bylaws and policies;
- advises on formal meeting procedure;
- certifies members qualified to vote at congregational meetings;
- prepares written ballots when required;
- oversees the counting and reporting of congregational votes;
- maintains current official copies of bylaws and policies; and
- makes governing documents available to the congregation.

Northwoods is developing sociocratic practices while retaining formal requirements established in the bylaws. The Parliamentarian helps the Board understand when consent-based processes are appropriate and when quorum, voting, ballot, or other formal procedures are required. The Parliamentarian should support lawful and orderly meetings without unnecessarily limiting sociocratic rounds, proposal development, or other participatory practices.

The Parliamentarian serves as an adviser to the facilitator and Board. The role is most effective when procedural guidance helps the group move forward rather than interrupting the substance of its work.

Leader of the Coordinating Circle

The Leader of the Coordinating Circle supports coordination among Northwoods' ministry circles and provides a formal connection between the Coordinating Circle and the Board.

Responsibilities

- oversees operations within the Coordinating Circle, as a member with full consent rights;
- carries relevant information from the Board to the Coordinating Circle;
- participates as a voting member of the Board, with full consent rights;
- helps identify matters requiring coordination across circles;
- supports communication of Board direction and priorities; and
- helps maintain alignment between congregational ministry and governance.

The Leader is not simply a messenger for Board instructions. The role supports two-way communication and helps the Coordinating Circle understand the wider governance context of its work.

Delegate from the Coordinating Circle

The Delegate brings the perspective and voice of the Coordinating Circle into Board governance.

Responsibilities

- is selected by the Coordinating Circle, as a member with full consent rights;
- serves as a voting member of the Board, with full consent rights;
- communicates relevant Coordinating Circle perspectives, needs, and concerns;
- carries Board information back to the Coordinating Circle as appropriate;
- helps the Board understand the work of ministry circles; and
- supports coordination without transferring operational management to the Board.

The Delegate is accountable both to the responsibilities of Board membership and to the defined role within the Coordinating Circle. The Delegate should bring the circle's voice while still exercising independent judgment as a trustee serving the whole congregation.

Eligibility for serving on Leadership Development Committee: 5 year membership, and has served at least one year on the BoT or two years as chair of a Standing Committee/Circle

Responsible for recruiting and nominating qualified members to fill open positions on the Board of Trustees, LDC, the elected member of the Healthy Congregation Committee, and other leadership positions.

Provided resources for leadership training.

Partner with the Membership Circle to identify members who have interest, experience, and or/or skill in leadership.