

**THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN DEVELOPING A POLICY STATEMENT
REGARDING USE OF CHURCH FACILITIES**

- Local policies should express that all activities carried out by, through and in the church are part of the Church of the Nazarene’s worship and mission, as the Church understands its sacred obligations according to the Scripture. Civil courts are likely to disregard or reject policies that are based on matters of personal preference, but they give much greater deference to how a church interprets its religious obligations based on what it views as sacred writings.
- The *Manual* serves as the bylaws for every local church. The Covenant of Christian Character, Covenant of Christian Conduct, and paragraphs 29.1, 30-30.4, 32, 514.10, 536.16 are examples of specific provisions that address the Church’s belief in the sanctity of biblical marriage, define marriage as existing only between one man and one woman, and place limitations on the manner in which marriage may be solemnized. No local policy may contradict the provisions of the *Manual*.
- Because the *Manual* takes precedence over any policy statement, caution should be exercised to not replicate language already in the *Manual* or to contradict the *Manual*. This could create confusion and difficulties if the policy or practice of the local church is challenged.
- It is important that the local church actually apply the policy that all activities be connected to worship and the mission of the Church on a consistent and uniform basis. If, for example, a church permits a certain group to meet, or a certain activity to be performed, on church premises that has no connection to worship or mission, but then declines the use of its facilities to another group, it will appear that the policy is arbitrary (or is being applied arbitrarily), and it could be invalidated for that reason. This is a good time for every church to consider each activity that occurs on its property and evaluate whether it truly is meeting a strategic purpose to help the church accomplish worship and/or its mission.

**Template for
Policy Statement Regarding the Christian Community
and Mission of The Church of the Nazarene**

[LOCAL CHURCH] is a member of the denomination of the Church of the Nazarene. As such, it is in full harmony with the doctrine and polity of the Church of the Nazarene as set forth in the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene. All references herein to “Church” refer to both [LOCAL CHURCH] and the denomination, unless specifically or by context a different application is intended.

I. Key Characteristics of the Church of the Nazarene’s Christian Community and Mission

A. Christian Beliefs and Values

The Church of the Nazarene (the “Church”) is a community of faith that exists to exercise and express the Christian beliefs of the Church of the Nazarene. These beliefs, and corresponding values, are described in the *Manual*, as revised from time to time by the General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene.

B. Representatives and Other Participants

The Church community is represented by all of the Church’s officers, directors, employees, licensed workers and volunteer leaders, each of whom serves the Church’s mission and is an integral part of the community (each such person is described for purposes of this Policy Statement only as a “Church representative”). The other community participants, including Church of the Nazarene local church members and volunteers, contribute to the Church’s Christian community, but they do not represent the Church unless they are also employees or leaders or have been designated as such by the appropriate ecclesiastical authority.

C. Christian Exercise and Expression

1. As a Community. **The Church believes that God desires people to live out their faith in community with other believers, and that accordingly Church’s Christian community is itself an exercise and expression of its Christian beliefs.** The Church believes that the local church is the visible organized expression of the Body of Christ and that the local church finds broader meaning and outreach in fulfilling its biblical responsibilities within the life and witness of the denomination. In addition, those who participate in the life of the Church of the Nazarene, including Church representatives, are following the biblical command to live out their faith in community with other believers. Accordingly, the Church is itself an exercise and expression of the Church of the Nazarene’s Christian beliefs.

2. Through its Mission-Based Activities. The Church believes that all Church activities, including the duties of every Church member and employee, should be rendered in service to God as a form of worship. Therefore, in every activity the local church as a community exercises and expresses the Church of the Nazarene’s Christian beliefs.

II. Christian Community Standards for Ministry Activities

A. General Standards

The Church shall engage in activities and use its facilities solely to exercise and express the Christian beliefs of the Church of the Nazarene and to further the mission of the Church. In furtherance of this mission, the Church may provide services or goods to, and may allow

use of its facilities by, other groups and persons who are not members of the Church of the Nazarene. However, no activity may be conducted, nor any use of Church facilities permitted, if the Church determines that such activity or use condones, or expresses a message of support by the Church for, any view contrary to the Christian beliefs of the Church of the Nazarene.

B. Current Trends

In response to current cultural and legal trends, the Church affirms the position of the Church of the Nazarene as expressed in the *Manual* with regard to marriage, gender identity, sexual conduct, and the sanctity of life and is bound in all of its activities and functions to remain in harmony with these beliefs and values.

C. Religious Activities

The Church engages solely in activities that further its Christian mission. All such activities can and should be vehicles for spiritual growth. Therefore, the Church considers all of its activities to be a form of religious worship.

The Church distinguishes between exclusive religious activities and integrated religious activities. Exclusive religious activities include devotional worship services such as chapel services conducted by the Church, and distinctly theological or pastoral education.

Integrated religious activities include activities similar to those conducted by nonreligious organizations for the benefit of society. The Church conducts such activities in furtherance of and in accordance with its Christian beliefs and values.

The Church shall not agree to any limitations on its integrated religious activities. The Church may agree not to conduct exclusively religious activities in certain facilities or programs.

D. Implementation

To the extent the pastor determines it to be necessary or advisable to further the Church's mission or to cultivate the Church's Christian community, he or she may establish additional standards, based on Holy Scripture and the Church of the Nazarene's Christian beliefs, for the activities and programs conducted within the community or for Church representatives or other community participants.

Determining whether any particular activity or use of Church facilities is permitted under this Policy requires spiritual discernment applied to each particular circumstance, and shall be made in the sole discretion of the spiritual leaders of the Church designated by the governance authority. With respect to activities or uses by other groups or persons, the Church may consider without limitation both the content of the proposed activity or use and whether the group or

person is generally perceived by the public as advocating views contrary to the Christian beliefs of the Church of the Nazarene.

III. Community Standards for Church Representatives

A. Roles and Expectations

In response to God's calling in their lives, Church representatives exercise and express the Church of the Nazarene's Christian beliefs by working together to advance the Church's Christian mission. Church representatives are responsible for defining, cultivating, leading and/or representing the Church's Christian community as an expression and exercise of the Church of the Nazarene's Christian beliefs. Accordingly, each Church representative shall be expected to (i) model the Church of the Nazarene's Christian beliefs for others, (ii) perform all of his or her duties as a service to God, and (iii) comply with the following obligations:

1. *Christian Beliefs.* Each Church representative shall affirm his or her agreement with the Church of the Nazarene's statement of faith and other Christian beliefs, and shall not subscribe to or promote any religious beliefs inconsistent with these beliefs.

2. *Christian Conduct Standards.* Church representatives shall at all times (both during working and nonworking hours) endeavor to conduct themselves in a manner that affirms Biblical standards of conduct in accordance with the Church of the Nazarene's Christian beliefs.

3. *Distinctly Christian Activities.* Each Church representative shall be ready, willing and able to lead or contribute to distinctly Christian activities such as worship or prayer services.

B. Noncompliance by Church Representatives

If any Church representative does not comply with the obligations set forth above, such representative shall have an obligation to disclose such noncompliance to the Church. The Church may determine whether such representative intends or is likely to continue in such noncompliance. If so, then the Church may dismiss such representative from his or her position on the basis that such representative's noncompliance is inconsistent with and undermines the expression and exercise of the Church Christian community. Such action shall be taken in accordance with any applicable procedures in the Uniform Policy on Discipline, Restoration and Appeal.

C. Mission-Based Exceptions

In situations where the Church of the Nazarene's Ministry Organization mission can best be advanced by employing an individual who is unable to comply with one or more of the foregoing obligations, the individual designated by the Church governance authority shall have the discretion to authorize an exception to this Policy and approve such individual's employment. However, such exception may not be granted unless it is first determined that

such exception will not materially impair the distinctive Christian-expression and exercise of the Church. Any individual granted an exception shall be required to acknowledge that he or she understands and agrees to support the Church's mission and values.

D. Volunteers and Contract Workers

Volunteers and contract workers are not considered to be representatives of the Church's Christian community unless they are serving in leadership positions. Nevertheless, when such persons serve with the Church, they shall be required to acknowledge that they understand and agree to support the Church's mission and values. The Church may give preference for such service to volunteers and contract workers who share the Church of the Nazarene's Christian beliefs.

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