

# **New Haven Native American Church**

## **Chapter Administration Manual**

This manual is designed to assist the Principle Stone Carrier (Chapter Chief), the First Advisor and the Second Advisor of the New Haven Native American Church (NHNAC) in their duties and assist in the success of the Chapter's Unifying purpose. In all that you do follow the guidance by the Creator in fulfilling your administrative calling. You will also find on the website other education to assist you in understanding your legal rights as a Member of the Church, Medicine Person, and an NHNAC Chapter.

### **CHAPTER STRUCTURE**

The NHNAC Chapters are important for our Healing Ministers around the world. It is through the Chapter system that most members can obtain further training, fellowship, and experience the Ceremonies of the Church. As individuals, we learn to overcome self will and accept the rights of others to believe and live as they feel directed by the Creator. Getting along with people of different belief systems is vital for healing the Earth.

All NHNAC Chapters fall under the stewardship of the President of the Church. The President maintains the policy of non-interference with the operations of the Chapter unless a very specific need arises. If that need ever arises, the President will step in for that particular matter and then step back and allow the Chapter to continue to govern itself. All Medicine People are called into Chapter Leadership by the President of the Church but only have the authority to speak and act in the name of their Chapter.

***Warning:** It is the natural nature of mankind to become ego driven when power or supposed power is placed upon them. The drive to dictate, dominate, forcefully direct or control, even for good purposes, is going against the nature of the Creator. Leaders of the Church are asked to diligently strive to overcome ego and self will and truly establish charity in their hearts. As the Creator allows us the freedom to be and govern ourselves, so allow others the right to their understandings of truth.*

*The leadership positions in the Chapter are opportunities to learn and grow. We feel that every member of the Chapter, if they desire, should have some experience with these stewardships.*

### **Principle Stone Carrier/Chapter Chief**

The Principle Stone Carrier (PSC) or Chapter Chief is the local leader of the NHNAC Chapter. The Members should choose, as directed by the Spirit, as to who they feel would best serve or benefit the NHNAC Chapter. The President of the Church considers the recommendation(s) for the PSC/Chapter Chief and will establish one person as the Head of the Chapter.

It is the PSC/Chapter Chief's responsibility to be caretaker of the Unifying Purpose (Principle Stone) of the NHNAC Chapter. He or she has the specific responsibility of being in service to the members of the Chapter and to guide the Chapter towards fulfilling its Unifying Purpose. At any time the Principle Stone Carrier may step down or it may be suggested by the members of the Chapter to have the Principle Stone Carrier resign from office. At any time if there is a vacancy or a wish of replacement members may suggest an appropriate replacement for the office. The suggested replacements information will need to be submitted to the President of the Church for approval.

The PSC/Chapter Chief's specific duties are as follows:

- In charge over organizing teachings, Ceremonies, and the administration of Sacraments to the Members of the Chapter.
- Is responsible for the Chapter's Bundle. Members of the Chapter donate Sacred Items that represent the Unifying Purpose of the Chapter. It is respectful and highly suggested that this Bundle should be open at the beginning of any NHNAC Chapter Activity or Ceremony. After the conclusion of the activity or Ceremony, the bundle is closed. The Chapter's Bundle is passed from the PSC/Chapter Chief to their successor. It may be changed or updated according to the needs of the Chapter.
- Presides at all public gatherings of the Chapter as the Talking Feather or appoints a Talking Feather for that gathering. It is good to maintain order, equality, and unity at gatherings so the feelings of good will should be preserved at all times. Insure that all those wishing to speak are allowed the opportunity to do so in a safe environment.

Often the Talking Feather will stand with a staff in hand and decide who speaks. If a person interrupts the speaker or is unruly, the Talking Feather will stand by the person and instruct them of their error. If the lack of order continues, the Talking Feather instructs the person to leave the gathering.

The Talking Feather only has influence during the course of the meeting. When presiding as the Talking Feather if an issue comes to vote, the Talking Feather does not vote.

- The guardian of all donations or other offerings made directly to the Chapter. The funds you receive should be used to assist in furthering the Chapter's Unifying Purpose. It is honorable to donate a small portion of regular offerings or tithes (usually 10%) directly to NHNAC to support all the Missions of the Church. (Do not send NHNAC donations received for special offerings like land funds, building funds, and so forth. The total offerings collected for those unique Chapter Projects should stay in the area they were received.)
- In charge of keeping the records of all donations given to the Chapter. The donations must include the date, the type of donation, and who was the donating party when appropriate. Once a year, between January 1<sup>st</sup> and January 30<sup>th</sup>, all donations from the previous year must be reported to the President of the Church or his assigned.
- In charge of keeping the records of all expenses paid by the Chapter. The expenses must include the date, amount paid, and purpose of the expense. Once a year, between January 1<sup>st</sup> and January 30<sup>th</sup>, all expenses from the previous year must be reported to the President of the Church or his assigned.
- Gives the recommendations as to who should be called to the position of First Advisor and Second Advisor. If the Spirit concurs, the President establishes them as the two members of the Chapter Council. Changes in the positions of First Advisor and Second Advisor are made from time to time in order to allow all who wish the opportunity to serve or changes in circumstances of the Advisors.
- The PSC/Chapter Chief is the head of the Chapter Council. Important matters should be discussed and agreed upon by the Chapter Council before presenting them to the Members/General Assembly of the Chapter. In this way, some measure of order is obtained over the agenda. All important matters affecting the Chapter and its operation should be communicated with the General Assembly of the Chapter before taken into action.

**Example:** Purchasing land for your Chapter's Ceremonial Grounds should be discussed in detail

by the Chapter Council. After the Council is unified, the matter should be discussed in the Chapter's General Assembly. Actions to implement the purchase should be taken after the matter has been carefully discussed.

If the First and Second Advisors cannot reach consensus on a matter, the matter is not prepared to move forward or there are other personal Spiritual issues, like egos, involved. If the PSC/Chapter Chief feels that the First and Second Advisors are not suited to work together, release the Advisors and create a new leadership.

- In charge of selecting Delegates for the Great Council. Each Chapter may provide two Delegates for the Great Council. The PSC/Chapter Chief is most often one of those Delegates unless circumstances do not allow it.
- In charge of resolving all disputes within their Chapter in accordance to the NHNAC Code of Ethical Conduct. Remember to follow the Spirit when resolving all disputes.

### **First Advisor**

The First Advisor is recommend by the PSC/Chapter Chief and then approved by the President of the Church. A change in the positions of First Advisor is made from time to time in order to allow all who wish it the opportunity to serve. The First Advisor should be a person well suited to organization. The specific duties of the First Advisor are as follows:

- Arranges for the place, setting, facilities, time, and so forth for the Chapter's Official Gatherings.
- Keeps a database of all the members of the Chapter. This database should at least include names, address, telephone numbers, email addresses, birth dates, and anything else they feel called to record.
- Informs the members of the Chapter when and where a meeting or Ceremony is being held. (Emails are most often used for informing members; however a calling tree could easily be organized by the First Advisor as well.)
- Attends Chapter Council meetings.

### **Second Advisor**

The Second Advisor is the advocate for the Ceremonies. When a Ceremony is desired, the members contact the Second Advisor to arrange for the Ceremony. The Second Advisor should be one that is tolerant and open to protecting and assisting all members' rights of worship. For example: Some Ceremonies many not be something that the Second Advisor holds a belief in. Still, it is the Second Advisor's calling to support the member's request. The specific duties of the Second Advisor are as follows:

- Is the contact person for all Chapter Members wishing to hold a Ceremony.
- Organizes whatever is needed for the Ceremony. This includes assigning a Medicine Person and assistants, who will perform/officiate in the Ceremony.
- Works with the First Advisor to coordinate the best place and time for the Ceremony.
- Attends Chapter Council meetings.

## **The Unifying Purpose**

The Unifying Purpose or Declaration of Intention of an NHNAC Chapter is the common ground of the Chapter. It should be the foremost work of the Chapter. The Unifying Purposes between different Chapters can vary greatly. (Example: One Chapter may wish to learn through the teachings of others whereas another may wish to learn through personal experiences.) No matter what the Chapter's Unifying Purpose is, when the members work towards accomplishing the goals of the Chapter a sense of community is established.

It is highly suggested that a Chapter establish a very specific Unifying Purpose rather than one that is large and vague. Below are some examples of specific and vague Unifying Purposes.

Vague: The Chapter will be engaged in teaching others good things.

Specific: The Chapter will be teaching all who are interested in the healing power of local herbs.

Vague: The Chapter will be established to hold Ceremonies.

Specific: The Chapter will be focused on experiencing and teaching the Sweat Lodge and Prayer Pipe Ceremonies.

New Haven Native American Church has found that it is far easier to make an impact for good when a group of unified people come together. Even though a Chapter may be made up of people from many different belief systems, the leadership of the Chapter has the opportunity to lay or build upon the foundation of a unified group. The leadership should take advantage of the opportunity to meet together often. Holding Ceremonies, education, or other activities on a regular basis is highly advisable.

The NHNAC has its own Unifying Purpose and beliefs systems as set forth in the Constitution of the Church. The main purpose of the Church is its Three-Fold Mission. That Mission being one, improvement and enlightenment of the Body of the Church; two, for the work of the Ministry; and three, for the saving of the Living and the Dead. These are very broad Missions that every Member should be able to take upon themselves to specifically fulfill in their Healing Ministry.

## **SETTING UP**

Once you have submitted the names for the Principle Stone Carrier, First Advisor, and Second Advisor, your Unifying Purpose of the Chapter, and the name of your new Chapter you will be notified by mail that your application was accepted.

Always remember that no matter what your belief systems are, or what your Unifying Purpose is, you are still a part of New Haven Native American Church. As a Chapter of the Church in order for you to have full legal benefits, you must be recognized by the state where your NHNAC Chapter resides. You can either make a suggested donation of \$150.00 and have the Church's main office register all the information and pay the fees to your state, or you can do this yourself. The process of registering with your state should be along the lines below:

- Go to your state's official website for the secretary of state.
- Click on the Business section of the website. Normally a tab or in a drop down section.
- Click on the section about the online registration or starting a new business.

- If you are not in the state of Missouri, you must register in your state as a Foreign Corporation.
- In some states you must create or register an account before you fill out the online business registration.
- Open up the form for starting a new business. In some states this is a two part process where you have to reserve the name of your corporation (your NHNAC Chapter name) first before you can fill out the online business form.
- When you are filling out the online form(s) each state will charge a small fee. Normally this fee is about \$40.00 and can be put on a credit card. You will need to know the following information to properly fill out the forms:
  1. Your business will be registered as a corporation but you will be a nonprofit Church corporation. (You are a Church not an Indian Tribal Government Enterprise).
  2. Your name of your business is the name of your NHNAC Chapter.
  3. The date your business is going to start. This can be the date you fill out the form.
  4. The address, phone number, and names of the people registering the church corporation. Depending on the State this can be either be the information of the Principle Stone Carrier or you may also need the information of the First and Second Assistant as well.
  5. You will need the Federal Identification Number, date of forming, and Certificate of Good Standing of the New Haven Native American Church. This information will be included in your Chapter Acceptance Letter from the Church. (Also if desired, a pdf file of the Certificate of Good Standing can be emailed to the Principle Stone Carrier of the Chapter so it can be available for an attachment.)
  6. You will not have any voting members.
  7. You have no employees.
  8. You are a nonprofit Church entity and not an Indian Tribal Government Enterprise.
  9. You do not need to fill out any tax returns or file any Forms other than the registration and renewal forms from the state.
  10. You do not have a sales tax or insurance liability.
  11. You do not need any bonds or licenses for cigarette, tobacco, radioactive waste, alcohol, and so forth.
  12. If your state requires any other information, contact the Church at the email address of [NewHavenNAC@yahoo.com](mailto:NewHavenNAC@yahoo.com).

Once you have registered with your state, you can take the state business license and your Chapter's Acceptance Letter to a bank and open up a bank account with them. This is where you can deposit all the

offerings your Chapter receives from its Members. As a church, all that we do is by offering or donation only. We never charge or collect fees of any kind. Since all commerce transactions fall under the regulatory agencies of the government, by just accepting offerings, we add another layer of legal protection for the Church and its Members.

All offerings and donations are exempt from taxes and the Federal Government requires the Church keep track of these transactions. As a Chapter you must keep track of all offerings and donations and at the end of the year report those amounts to the Main Church Office. (You must also keep track of how the offerings are spent. The IRS may require an accounting of those transactions from time to time to ensure you are following the guidelines of a tax exempt church.) The Chapter is also required to maintain in good standing with the state, and country they are operating in.

## **LEGAL BENEFITS**

As the leadership of the Chapter, you have the unique opportunity to guide others and assist in their emergence into greater Light and Knowledge and also give them the opportunity to be protected under the law. We as a Church have the right to practice our religion as we see fit and be free of substantial burdens placed upon us by the government except the least restrictive means of furthering compelling government interests. Just as the Bundle Ceremony is a layer of legal protection for the Members of the Church, so is the NHNAC Chapter System.

When a Chapter is engaging its Members in its Unifying Purpose, legally their validity as a Native American Church is confirmed. Remember it is said, "By their fruits ye shall know them," as well as, "Show me your faith without your works and I will show you my faith by my works." By having the members united in faith holding Chapter meetings establishes a Sincerity of Belief and Pattern of Behavior that demonstrates some of the requirements for protection of individuals' religious liberty. This is one of the reasons we ask each member to work to create at least one Chapter in their area.

The government's agencies also want to make sure people are safe so they also legally require competence for activities/Ceremonies. When the NHNAC Chapter holds a Ceremony, the Medicine Person who is running the Ceremony must be certified to perform that Ceremony. As the leadership of your Chapter, strive to have all Medicine People in your Chapter become certified in the Ceremonies they wish to participate in.

When you set up the NHNAC Chapter you are now legally able to take advantage of the tax benefits that a Church has to offer. One benefit is when purchasing items for your Chapter; the purchases can be sales tax exempt. In order to be exempt, a filled out state tax exempt form must be given to the store you purchase from.

The NHNAC Chapters do not participate in any commerce activities, but they are allowed to fund raise and accept donations. They can use those funds to further support the Chapter and its members.

**Example:** A Chapter decides to hold a Sweat Lodge Ceremony and a dinner after the Ceremony. The Medicine Person that has been trained in that Ceremony may ask for a free-will donation from participants. By not requiring a specific set amount for the donation but allowing the individual to donate what they feel to donate assist to demonstrate the free-will non-commercial nature of the donation. Any donor wishing to use their donation as a tax write off on their Income Tax Return may do so but they will require a receipt given to them by the Chapter. (Yearly donation receipts generated at the

year's end can simplify the receipt process.) As a Church, the Chapter purchases all food for the dinner tax free from their local store. The Chapter may also decide to donate funds to the Medicine Person and others involved in the running of the Ceremony to cover their expenses. All excess funds can then be used to further the Unifying Purpose of the Chapter and the Church.

Regular Chapter meetings assist to demonstrate the basis of legal protection. Also it is important to know that the NHNAC qualifies for recognition as an Indigenous Group by the United Nations. As we continue to grow as a Native American Church, it may be prudent to receive official written recognition from the U.N. This recognition and the benefits it offers, would continue to add further protection to the Church.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Effective leadership is not by compulsion or “show the way” but rather by being a connected part of a group. The Leaders of the Chapter should continually seek the guidance of the Creator to understand how to best direct their Chapter and its projects. It is highly understandable that different opinions may arise about how an individual project should be run. If embraced, having this diversity can greatly assist your Chapter.

When an assignment or stewardship is given to a member, the member should understand that they have the authority delegated to them from the PSC/Chapter Chief to complete that assignment in a manner that is pleasing to the Creator. If advice or support is solicited from the member to support their assignment, leaders should freely assist but not take control of the assigned stewardship. By allowing individuals the freedom to perform according to the dictates of their own hearts, feelings of good will and trust are fostered.

Leadership should allow the member to perform their assignment without interference or control unless it becomes absolutely necessary. If the PSC/Chapter Chief feels it has become necessary to revoke an assignment, they should privately discuss the matter with the assigned steward. A public intervention should be avoided.

When the Chapter Council tries to do everything themselves, it can cause a great hindrance upon the Unifying Purpose of the Chapter. When members work together on the Unifying Purpose of the Chapter, an opportunity to connect as a spiritual family arises. Strive to foster unity in the Chapter by allowing all members who wish it the opportunity to serve in a stewardship. Do not ask for volunteers, since this can lead to a few members doing most of the assignments, but rather assign a stewardship to a member. Remember it is the right of every member to turn down an assignment.