

# **Constitution and Bylaws of Hope Christian Fellowship Church, Incorporated**

## **Constitution**

### **PREAMBLE:**

WHEREAS, it is the express purpose of God our Heavenly Father to call out of the world a saved people (I Peter 2:9) who shall contribute to the body of Christ, Jesus Christ being the Chief Cornerstone; and,

WHEREAS, the people of the Body of Christ are enjoined to assemble themselves together for worship, fellowship, counsel, and instruction in the Word of God and the work of the ministry (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:25) and for the exercise of those spiritual gifts and offices provided for in the New Testament (Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4), therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED: That we recognize ourselves a body of Christian believers working together for the common purpose of spreading the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and building believers in the body of Christ for the glory of God, and that under the laws of the State of New Jersey we may exercise all the rights and privileges granted to religious bodies.

### **ARTICLE I NAME**

The name of this corporation shall be Hope Christian Fellowship Church, Incorporated (1 Peter 1:3)

### **ARTICLE II PURPOSE**

The purpose of this corporation shall be:

1. To establish and oversee places of worship under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Titus 1:5; Acts 2:42, 46, 47; Heb.10:25).
2. To conduct the work of evangelizing through both home and foreign missions in obedience to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:46, 47; John 20:21).
3. To create departments as may be necessary in order to establish places of worship, to spread the Gospel, (including but not limited to educational, recreational, community, and social services), to support missionary activity (Acts 6:1-7), and to build the body of Christ to maturity (Ephesians 4:11-16).
4. To have the right to own, hold in trust, use, possess, sell, convey, mortgage, lease or dispose of such property, real or chattel, as may be needed for the prosecution of its work.
5. To license ministers of the Gospel

## **ARTICLE III TENETS OF FAITH**

The human phraseology employed in this statement is not inspired nor contended for, but the truth set forth is held to be essential to an evangelical and Bible believing ministry. No claim is made that it contains all the truth in the Bible, only that it covers orthodox fundamental matters.

### **1) THE SCRIPTURES INSPIRED**

The Bible is the inspired Word of God, a revelation from God to men, the infallible rule of faith and conduct, and superior to conscience and reason, but not contrary to reason (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 Pet. 1:23-25; Heb. 4:12). We accept the sixty six books that comprise the Old and New Testaments as the verbal, plenary, and complete canon of Scripture. There is no new revelation today; rather, believers are illuminated by the Holy Spirit to a deeper understanding of what has already been written. We accept different Bible translations so long as they do not undermine the Biblical position regarding the scriptures or theology and are faithful translations of the original texts.

### **2) THE ONE TRUE GOD**

The one true God has revealed Himself as the eternally self-existent, self-revealed "I AM," and has further revealed Himself as embodying the principles of relationship and association, by simultaneously existing as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29; Isa. 43:10, 11; Matt. 28:19; Matt. 3:16-17).

#### **GOD THE FATHER**

We believe that God is infinite in power and ability. God the Father is the sovereign King over all the earth. He is the Creator of the universe and is by nature holy, just, merciful, good, gracious, and loving.

#### **GOD THE SON**

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God and became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit in the virgin Mary. He died as a substitutionary sacrifice for our sin. He rose bodily from the grave on the third day, and then ascended to heaven to be our High Priest and Mediator (Heb 4:14-16; I John 3:2-3). He will return again personally and visibly for His people and to rule over all creation.

#### **GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the triune God with many functions in the church. He seals and indwells new believers, He sanctifies each child of God, He baptizes them into the body of Christ, and indwells them permanently. He gives spiritual gifts to each believer and empowers them to use these gifts. We do not advocate the use of sign gifts for this time, believing that these gifts were given to help establish the church, and were no longer needed upon the completion of the Scriptures. Therefore, these gifts are not publicly or organizationally practiced at Hope Christian Fellowship, although we recognize that many of our spiritual brothers and sisters do accept and practice these gifts.

### 3) MAN: HIS FALL AND REDEMPTION

Man was created good and upright, for God said, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." But man, by voluntary transgression, fell. The result of this fall is an eternal destiny of punishment and suffering for all mankind. Each person's only hope of redemption is in Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Gen. 1:26-31; Gen. 3:17; Ro. 5:12-21).

### 4) THE SALVATION OF MAN

#### a) The Gift of Salvation

We believe that salvation is a gift from God to man by grace, received by man through faith in the personal work of Christ (Eph 2:8,9). Jesus shed His blood on the cross to atone for the sins of the world. Salvation is by faith alone and is not earned by any good works whatsoever.

#### b) Results of Salvation

We believe salvation is a new birth and creation (John 3 and 2 Cor 5:17). At the moment of regeneration, the Holy Spirit gives us a new nature and spiritual life which we did not before possess. Our sins are forgiven forever and the eternal, spiritual consequences of sin will never be demanded of us (Rom 8:1). We believe that the salvation of every believer is secure for all eternity, guaranteed by the seal of the Spirit (Eph 1:13) the keeping power of God (John 19:27-29) and the interceding ministry of Christ (1 John 2:1).

### 5) BAPTISM IN WATER

The ordinance of baptism by burial with Christ should be observed (as commanded in the Scriptures) by all that have repented of their sins and in their hearts have believed on Christ as their Savior and Lord. In doing so, they declare to the world that they have died with Christ and that they have also been released to walk with Him in newness of life (Matt. 28:19; Acts 19:47,48; Ro. 6:4). We believe that the Scripture calls for baptism by immersion, but we understand that this is an interpretation that is subject to disagreements. Therefore, we will practice baptism by immersion for all those who come to make a public declaration of their faith in Christ. This ordinance is not necessary for salvation, and is a symbolic representation of the events that took place spiritually at salvation.

### 6) THE LORD'S SUPPER (COMMUNION)

The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements, bread and fruit of the vine, is the symbol expressing our sharing in a memorial to His suffering and death, and prophecy of His second coming, and is enjoined to all believers "until He comes" (John 6:48,51, 53-57; Luke 22:19,20; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 Cor. 11:25). This ordinance is a way of remembering the

sacrifice of our Savior by means of symbols. We do not believe that the Bible teaches that the bread and wine become the literal body and blood of our Savior. This ordinance is not required for salvation but is a God ordained method of reflecting on the sacrifice of the cross.

## 7) SANCTIFICATION PROCESS

We believe that God has called us to live holy lives in light of the regeneration that occurs at salvation. Since our spirit is made holy and righteous as an act of grace by God, we are to live that reality out in our daily lives by living dependent on the power of the Spirit (filled with the Spirit) and by refusing to live in the power of our unregenerated flesh (walking after the flesh). It is the grace of God that teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world (Titus 2:11). The Law has no power to help us live righteously, but simply serves to show us how incapable our flesh is of doing right. This reality is the driving force behind the desire for the power of God to fill our lives daily.

## 8) THE CHURCH

The church is the body of Christ with Christ as the head. The universal church is comprised of all those who have believed in Jesus for genuine salvation. The local church is a congregation of believers that God has called to fellowship and work together for the kingdom of God. The church is called to spread the gospel and disciple believers. This body is the primary tool that God has chosen to use for each believer to serve the cause of Christ. Thus, each believer should find the local body to which God has called them, and dedicate themselves to serving the Lord in that ministry.

## 9) ETERNAL DESTINY

We believe that man is created to exist forever so that there is an eternal destiny after life on this earth is over. The Bible teaches two destinations, which are the only possibilities for man after death. We believe in a literal hell of conscious misery and punishment, which will be the destiny of all who do not accept Christ by faith. We believe in a literal heaven which is the home of God and the place of bliss and joy eternally for all who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

## 10) ESCHATOLOGY

We believe in the imminent return of Christ – His second coming. We believe that beyond this basic truth, there is freedom for many to give legitimate interpretations of prophetic Scriptures. We further take the position that many different views exist on future events that are each faithful attempts to interpret what is given in Scripture. We embrace these differences of opinion and interpretation, knowing that these matters are certainly not clear or absolute so as to enable a detailed timeline which can be trusted as inspired.

## **ARTICLE IV ORDINANCES**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Head over all the Church (Ephesians 1:22) commanded His people to observe two ordinances, neither of which is essential to salvation or to membership partnership in this church, but both of which are an evidence of obedience and of a fulfilling vibrant relationship with the Lord. These two ordinances are:

### 1.) WATER BAPTISM

The ordinance of water baptism by immersion (Matt. 28:19) shall be administered by all established places of worship to all those who have repented of their sins and who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls (Acts 8:36-39).

### 2.) THE LORD'S SUPPER

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly by all established places of worship, as enjoined in the Scriptures, (Luke 22:19, 20; 1Cor. 11:23-26).

## **ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP PARTNERSHIP**

The membership partners of the corporation shall consist of any person accepted by the official board who is willing to work for the spreading of His kingdom through this corporation. A believer who meets the below listed requirements may, upon request, be admitted to membership partnership by agreement of the leadership team and presented to the body for affirmation at any scheduled meeting of the corporation.

### 1) REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for becoming a membership partner of this corporation are as follows:

- A. 18 years of age or older
- B. One must confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior
- C. One must be a faithful attendee of the worship services of this corporation. It is suggested that anyone considering becoming a membership partner attend services for at least one month before requesting consideration for joining officially. This gives each person a chance to get to know Hope, her people, and mission, as well as time for each person to devote to prayer in this important matter.
- D. One must be willing to declare that they are convinced by the Spirit that God has led them to become part of the official body at Hope and contribute their resources (time, energy, talent, funds, etc.) to the ongoing mission of Hope Christian Fellowship as God provides opportunity. No one should become a partner of Hope without seeking God's face in prayer and asking for clear direction in the matter of whether to become a partner at Hope.

## 2) RESPONSIBILITIES

Membership partners will be called upon to affirm certain decisions by the Leadership Team. These votes shall require a quorum of thirty-three percent of the membership partnership and a vote of affirmation shall be valid if sixty-six percent of those present vote to affirm (except where specifically noted as a different percentage in the constitution or bylaws).

Membership partners must diligently follow the constitution and bylaws of Hope Christian Fellowship Church, Incorporated. A membership partner will be subject to dismissal by the leadership team if he/she violates the constitution and bylaws of the corporation, or if called for by a process of church discipline in instances which are described in Matthew 18:15-17. This dismissal must be affirmed by the membership partners at a meeting scheduled for conducting this type of business.

- A. Church disciplinary action shall be entrusted to the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team shall endeavor to proceed in all cases with careful deliberation according to both the letter and the spirit of the Scriptures. Every effort should be made to clear up the difficulty and to remove the offense before church action is taken. Corrective discipline has for its aim the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the church, and the spiritual growth of the offending membership partner. Issues of formal church discipline must be clear violations of Scriptural directives. Further, church discipline is not for those who are struggling with a particular weakness, but for a believer who does not acknowledge the sin as being wrong. 1 John 1:8-2:2 makes it clear that each of us battle sin constantly, but the deeper problem addressed is a sinning believer who does not own up to the sin. Once the wrong is acknowledged, we can embrace the forgiveness and advocacy that comes through Jesus Christ.
- B. In the case of a person who may be found out of harmony with the practices of the church, and in any case of disorderly conduct or heretical teaching so opposed to the church's life and faith as to destroy the fellowship of that member or adherent, the procedure shall be as directed by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17. If such an effort to restore fellowship fails, the facts shall be presented in writing (by the "witnesses" as described in Matthew 18) as they have been ascertained and the offending member or adherent shall be called before the Leadership Team for examination. If, after a hearing, the restoration of fellowship is still impossible, the Leadership Team may present the membership partner to the church for dismissal proceedings. (The decision to present the membership partner must receive an affirmative vote of 75% of the Leadership Team members present in order to proceed to the public meeting). A special business meeting will be scheduled for the purpose of a vote of affirmation on the dismissal proceedings. The membership partner who is the subject of the discipline shall be given an opportunity to speak on their own behalf, as well as any other membership partners who agree with that membership partner. After a full hearing, a vote of

affirmation of 75% by a quorum of the membership partnership is required to remove the name of the offending member from the roll of membership. The facts as ascertained shall be presented in writing to the offender as well as a record of the business meeting minutes and vote tally.

Membership partners are responsible to see that they are doing everything possible to see Hope Christian Fellowship fulfill the call of God on this ministry. Each partner should continually ask God to direct the ministry and its members to be effective in sharing hope with the world around us and building one another. If there are needs in our ministry, it is implicit that the membership partners are called by God to meet those needs.

## **ARTICLE VI LEADERSHIP TEAM**

### 1) GENERAL

There shall be a Leadership Team consisting of no fewer than four membership partners and no more than ten membership partners. The officers of this team shall be considered the board of directors for the corporation. At the January business meeting of each year, officers of the corporation (as listed in Bylaws Article IV) shall be appointed by the leadership team for the new calendar year.

The Leadership Team shall be responsible for leading the ministry in all matters. The pastor shall always be a part of the Leadership Team.

The Leadership Team is entrusted to make decisions regarding the ministry as necessary. They shall exercise discernment and wisdom in fulfilling this role. They shall be voluntarily and regularly accountable to the body for the business they are conducting on behalf of the ministry. Votes of affirmation shall be used with the entire membership partnership on issues that the Leadership Team deems important or sensitive enough to need the communication afforded by the voting process. For example, the calling of a pastor, the ordination of a man, the purchase of land or other major purchases, the setting of an annual budget, and the dismissal of a membership partner would be considered matters normally presented for a vote of affirmation to the entire membership partnership.

#### A) Quorum

Sixty-six percent of the Leadership Team must be present to constitute a quorum. All members of the team should be notified of any meeting. If for some reason, a team member cannot be notified of one meeting, he/she must be notified of the next meeting. Every attempt shall be made to choose meeting times that all team members can attend.

## B) Determinations

The Leadership Team shall prayerfully strive to seek the direction of God in each decision for the ministry. The goal of discussion and prayer is to seek consensus of the team on all matters. In matters where consensus cannot be reached, a two-thirds majority vote is required to pass any decision. However, every team member's insight and opinion shall be seriously considered by the entire team, particularly if it disagrees with the majority. God may choose to speak through a few to bring direction to the whole team.

If there comes a time where the Leadership Team makes a decision and a membership partner disagrees with the determination, and this disagreement is to such a degree as to require the filing of a grievance with the Leadership Team, that membership partner shall express their opinion in writing to the Leadership Team. If a quorum of the membership partnership presents a written grievance over a particular decision, the Leadership Team shall call a church business meeting to discuss and review the decision and consider the merits of the grievances. This provision is included because every believer is a priest of God and has the benefit of the Spirit of God living in them. In addition, the members of the Leadership Team are not infallible and must be open to reevaluating the decisions that are made, particularly if a significant portion of the membership partnership disagrees with the decision that was made.

## C) Appointment

The members of the Leadership Team shall be selected from the membership partnership. No one shall be appointed to the team who is not a membership partner. When the term of the members office (deacon, deaconess, special nomination) expires, their term for Leadership Team also expires. They may be reappointed through the normal process as noted below.

## 2) DEACONS AND DEACONESSES

Nominations for Deacon and Deaconess shall be given to the Vice Chairman of the corporation before the annual business meeting. The Leadership Team shall review all nominations and make the final determination as to who will be presented to the body at the annual business meeting for a vote of affirmation. Anyone nominated for Deacon or Deaconess must meet the qualification as described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-6. A Leadership Team affirmation of seventy-five percent is required for anyone to be presented to the body by the Leadership Team.

Deacons or Deaconesses are appointed for a term of two years. At the end of this time, they may choose to take a break from serving or be available for re-nomination as a Deacon or Deaconess. If they are willing to continue serving, they must be nominated and affirmed by the Leadership Team and the body through the normal appointment process.

The Deacon and Deaconess boards shall appoint members from their respective boards to be part of the Leadership Team for the following year. Each board shall appoint between 2 and 4 of its members to serve in this second capacity (both as deacon/deaconess and as Leadership Team member). In selecting the members to represent the board on the Leadership Team, certain gifts are paramount. Those who are appointed to the Leadership Team should have some of these gifts as part of their spiritual giftedness: leadership, administration, wisdom, discernment, and knowledge. The effectiveness of this giftedness should be evident to those nominating and voting Deacons and Deaconesses to the Leadership Team. If anyone feels that someone does not effectively possess these gifts, they should not vote to place that person on the Leadership Team.

### 3) ELDERS

Ordination for Elder (or Pastor) is the official recognition of the call of God placed on a specific man to serve by spiritually leading the church through teaching, preaching, counsel, and example (1 Timothy 4:11-16). For Elders at Hope Christian Fellowship, it further represents a call by God to lead HCF specifically in this role. The call of a Pastor to Hope Christian Fellowship will include his ordination by HCF. Associate Pastors can be ordained after their call by the normal ordination process.

Nominations for a new Elder to be ordained shall be initiated by an existing Elder and reviewed by the Leadership Team. Men presented for Eldership must meet the Biblical qualifications for an Elder as described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Since the Scriptures specify men for this role and specifically exclude women (1 Timothy 2:11-15), Hope Christian Fellowship will only nominate and ordain men as Elders and Pastors. The ordination process shall be governed by the Leadership Team. Ordination can be granted by two methods:

- A) The acceptance and recognition of a previous ordination or equivalent (a prolonged period of service in the role of pastor or elder) with votes of affirmation from the Leadership Team and the membership partnership. In applying this method, the Leadership Team must be responsible to examine 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and determine individually whether the candidate for ordination meets these qualifications. Each member of the Leadership Team is encouraged to meet personally with the candidate to ascertain qualifications. When each team member is satisfied that the candidate is qualified, there shall be one month devoted to prayer regarding the ordination, particularly asking for the Lord to confirm the candidate's call to the ministry. At the end of this prayer time, a Leadership Team meeting shall be called to officially vote on ordination. A unanimous vote is required by the Leadership Team in order to ordain. The candidate must then be affirmed by the membership partnership with an affirmative vote of at least 75%.

- B) The examination by the Leadership Team followed by an official vote of affirmation from the membership partnership. In applying this method, there shall be a period of one year where the candidate for Eldership is considered an official "Elder Candidate." At the start of this year, the membership partnership must be informed of the candidacy. During this year, the Candidate shall be placed in various ministry positions so as to ascertain their giftedness for ministry. There shall be an official examination meeting by the Leadership Team to question the Candidate about their qualifications for ministry in light of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 as well as other pertinent Scriptures. Further, if this ordination is for an Elder at HCF, the Candidate shall be examined regarding his call to this particular church. This examination meeting shall be undertaken during the course of the year of the prospective Elder's candidacy. At the end of the year, an official vote of the Leadership Team on the issue of ordination will be taken. A unanimous vote of the Leadership Team is required to present the Candidate to the membership partnership for a vote of affirmation. A vote of affirmation of 75% is required for the ordination to be considered "affirmed" by the membership partnership.

All Elders shall be a part of the Leadership Team. Associate Pastors shall be a part of the Leadership Team if they have been ordained as elders by Hope Christian Fellowship.

#### 4) SPECIAL NOMINATIONS

If needed, special nominations for members of the Leadership Team can be made. This would be anyone who is not a deacon, deaconess, or elder but whose leadership would be valuable on the team. These nominations shall be initiated by the Leadership Team when they become aware of a person who would meet the qualifications for a special nomination.

Special nominations are appointed for a term of two years. At the end of this time, they may choose to take a break from serving or to be available for re-nomination as a part of the Leadership Team. If they are willing to continue serving, they must be nominated and affirmed by the Leadership Team and the body through the normal appointment process

If a vacancy for Leadership Team, Deacon, or Deaconess occurs at some time other than just before the annual business meeting, the Leadership Team can, at its discretion, solicit nominations and make appointments at any time during the year. The need for such appointments shall be decided by the normal Leadership Team voting procedures and requirements. Their two-year term will end at the close of the calendar year in their second year. This means that these vacancy appointments will last less than the regular two-year term.

It is intended that a team of ordained elders shall eventually be entrusted with the decision-making responsibility presently entrusted to the Leadership Team. This transition will not occur before there are at least four elders ordained at Hope Christian Fellowship. At that time, the Leadership Team will revise the constitution accordingly and pass the leadership of the ministry on to the elder board.

## **ARTICLE VII FINANCE**

The corporation shall be financed by the freewill offerings, by the established places of worship, by all other subordinate groups affiliated with Hope Christian Fellowship Church, Incorporated, and by fund raisers that are recognized by the pastor and Leadership Team (1 Cor 16:1-2, 2 Cor 8:6-7)

## **ARTICLE VIII MEETINGS**

### 1) CHURCH MEETINGS

The church shall meet every Sunday morning for public worship. Other times for public worship shall be established as needed by the Leadership Team.

### 2) CORPORATION MEETINGS

- A. The corporation year shall coincide with the calendar year beginning on January 1, and running through December 31. The annual business meeting shall be scheduled in December. This meeting time and location shall be publicized at least two weeks prior to the meeting at a regular church meeting or through a mailing. All membership partners should attend the annual business meeting if possible.
- B. Special business meetings shall be called as needed by the Leadership Team. The time and location of each meeting shall be publicized at least ten days prior to any meeting. The intent of this announcement is to notify the membership partnership so that they can attend. If it is possible, all membership partners should be notified.

## **ARTICLE IX AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this constitution may be made by a seventy-five percent vote of the Leadership Team and a vote of affirmation of at least seventy-five percent by the membership partnership.

Editorial changes to the constitution (such as document structure, language, Scripture references, etc.) that do not affect the organizational structure or function can be made by the Leadership Team in accordance with normal voting procedures (Article VI, 1, A and B).

## **Bylaws**

### **ARTICLE I ORDER**

For the purpose of conducting business, the Leadership Team shall, in an orderly manner, preside over all of the affairs of the corporation.

For business meetings involving the membership partnership, a moderator shall be appointed by the Leadership Team. This moderator shall not participate in the meeting on a personal level (making personal comments and recommendations) but instead shall oversee the orderly progress of the meeting. The moderator shall run the business meeting, following the meeting agenda, in accordance with the following procedure:

1. Announce the proposed motion, and take the motion as made by a membership partner
2. Allow for an explanation of the motion
3. Allow for questions or comments on the motion
4. Ask for a membership partner to second the motion
5. Take a vote of the membership partnership

This process will be repeated for each motion to be presented at the business meeting.

A quorum of 33% of the membership partnership is required for any business to be conducted at a church business meeting.

Votes can be taken by a show of hands or by secret ballot as determined by the Leadership Team. Ballots will be used for votes where privacy of the individual's vote is an issue.

### **ARTICLE II FINANCES**

#### 1) BUDGET

The funds for the maintenance of the corporation shall be provided for by the freewill offerings of friends of the corporation, established places of worship, by all other subordinate groups affiliated with Hope Christian Fellowship Church, Incorporated, and recognized fund-raisers. All offerings shall be passed on to the treasurer or another designated membership partner for deposit in the corporation's treasury.

An annual budget shall be adopted each year at the annual business meeting. This budget, when approved, will provide the guidelines for that year's spending. The budget will provide the overall spending limit for the church for the upcoming year. Each category in the budget may be seen as a guideline and not a mandate. Therefore, more or less money can be spent in each category so long as the overall spending limit is not exceeded. If more funds are needed than have been approved, a special business

meeting shall be called to inform the membership partnership of the need and proposed solution. A vote of affirmation by the body is required to change the overall spending limit for the year.

## 2) AUDIT

An annual internal audit shall be completed by the treasurer and presented to the Leadership Team. This audit of all financial records shall be made after the close of the calendar year, prior to the end of February.

## 3) WITHDRAWALS

The Leadership Team shall oversee any withdrawals from the church treasury. A designated membership partner (e.g., church treasurer) may be entrusted with normal distributions as provided for in the annual budget.

The Leadership Team may also spend money outside of the budget for minor purchases without membership partnership approval. The annual total of this discretionary spending shall not exceed 2% of the annual budget.

## 4) SALARIES

All salaries of pastors and employees of the church shall be determined by the Leadership Team and presented as part of the annual budget. It is the intent of these salaries to enable the most effective and unconstrained ministry possible by those whom God has called to serve vocationally at Hope Christian Fellowship.

Paid vacations for employees shall be determined by the Leadership Team.

## 5) HOUSING ALLOWANCE

Under the provisions of section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code, a minister of the gospel is not subject to federal income tax on the housing/parsonage allowance paid to him as a part of his compensation to the extent that it is used by him to rent, buy, or maintain a home.

To this end, the Leadership Team will pass a resolution for any staff pastor at Hope to create a housing allowance in the amount of his entire salary or up to the extent that it covers the actual cost of providing a home to the minister, whichever is less. The staff pastor is required to submit to the board by January 15<sup>th</sup> of the each year a signed statement that outlines the actual housing costs incurred in the previous tax year. The board will provide the minister such statement for him to fill out and submit by said deadline.

### **ARTICLE III PROPERTY RIGHTS**

- 1) All property, real or chattel, shall be taken, held, sold, transferred or conveyed in the corporation's name.
- 2) No real or chattel property of the corporation shall be sold, leased, mortgaged, or otherwise alienated without authorization of the Leadership Team.
- 3) The Chairman of the corporation shall certify in such conveyances, leases, or mortgages.

Upon the dissolution of the corporation, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be distributed by a Court of Competent Jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

### **ARTICLE IV GOVERNMENT AND OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS**

The officers of the corporation will be elected from members of the Leadership Team at the first meeting of each year. The method of election is at the discretion of the Leadership Team.

- 1) CHAIRMAN
  - A. The Chairman shall oversee the entire corporation
  - B. The Chairman will oversee all meetings of the Leadership Team.
  - C. The Chairman will be responsible for the overall spiritual direction, welfare, and health of the church. His focus is to be the spiritual role of the church in the lives of those attending.
  - D. In line with the role of Chairman, this office will normally be filled by the pastor as provided by the Holy Scriptures.
- 2) VICE CHAIRMAN

- A. The Vice Chairman shall fill in for the Chairman in any instance in which the Chairman is unavailable.
- B. The Vice Chairman will be responsible for overseeing the overall physical well being of the church. This includes looking after the church's ability to meet the physical needs of its members and (when possible) the surrounding community. This also includes the oversight of the physical affairs of the church. His focus is to assist the Chairman by effectively handling the physical affairs so that the Chairman can focus on the spiritual affairs.
- C. In line with the role of the Vice Chairman, this office will normally be filled by the chairman of the deacon board.

#### 4) SECRETARY

- A. The Secretary shall keep a true and accurate record of all meetings, including business meetings of the corporation. He/she shall ensure that all of the clerical needs of the church are addressed, and shall keep a record of all legal documents pertaining to the church.
- B. In fulfilling the role of Secretary, the Secretary may present a membership partner to the Leadership Team for the role of Church Clerk. The Church Clerk will assist the Secretary by handling the actual tasks of recording business meeting minutes, keeping a list of membership partners, and performing clerical work as needed. The Leadership Team shall approve the Church Clerk by normal voting procedures.

#### 5) TREASURER

- A. The treasurer shall keep, in a business-like manner, an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements of moneys committed to his/her trust and shall make reports to be presented during the official board meetings. He/she shall deposit and make or oversee withdrawals in a manner prescribed in article II of the bylaws.
- B. In fulfilling the role of Treasurer, the Treasurer may present a membership partner to the Leadership team for the role of Church Treasurer. The Church Treasurer will assist the Treasurer by handling the actual tasks of bookkeeping, bill paying, and generating partner giving records for tax purposes if requested. The Leadership Team shall approve the Church Treasurer by normal voting procedures.

#### 4) OTHER EMPLOYEES

Employees will be hired by the Leadership Team as needed. Their salaries and vacation allowances will be determined upon hiring. Any Leadership Team member who is a family relation to a prospective employee shall recuse themselves from discussions and votes regarding the hiring of that prospective employee.

If there is a need to call a pastor, the Leadership Team shall form a committee from within the Leadership Team. This committee will then be responsible for soliciting resumes, interviewing candidates, and presenting candidates to the Leadership Team for approval. If a candidate is approved unanimously by the Leadership Team, he will then be presented to the membership partnership. After a reasonable time for interaction is allowed, a vote of affirmation shall be taken to place the candidate as pastor. An affirmative vote of at least 75 % is required for the candidate to be considered affirmed.

## **ARTICLE VI OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

Anything that has not been discussed in this constitution and bylaws shall be discussed and decided upon at an official Leadership Team meeting.

## **ARTICLE VII AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to these bylaws may be made by a 75% vote of the Leadership Team and a vote of affirmation of at least 75% by the membership partnership.

Editorial changes to these bylaws (such as document structure, language, etc.) that do not affect the organizational structure or function can be made by the Leadership Team in accordance with normal voting procedures.

### **Amendment #1**

*This amendment is meant to alter the organization and makeup of the Leadership Team to reflect the stated direction in Article VI to move to a Leadership Team comprised of duly called elders. This amendment will supersede the portions of the constitution and bylaws which make specific mention of a Leadership Team or Officers structure that does not reflect this revised "elder team" approach.*

*This amendment is written to replace Article VI of the constitution of Hope Christian Fellowship:*

## **ARTICLE VI LEADERSHIP TEAM**

There shall be a Leadership Team consisting of no fewer than four membership partners and no more than ten membership partners. The officers of this team shall be considered the board of directors of this corporation.

The Leadership Team shall appoint officers of the corporation each year at their first meeting in the new calendar year. Chairman and Vice Chairman shall be members of the Leadership Team, with the Chairman normally being the pastor of the church. The Secretary and Treasurer of the corporation shall be membership partners entrusted with the duties outlined in the by-laws and do not need to be members of the Leadership Team. These designations supersede the descriptions of those holding these corporate offices in the corporate bylaws.

The Leadership Team is entrusted to make decisions regarding the ministry as necessary. They shall exercise discernment and wisdom in fulfilling this role. They shall be voluntarily and regularly accountable to the body for the business they are conducting on behalf of the ministry. Votes of affirmation shall be used with the entire membership partnership on issues that the Leadership Team deems important or sensitive enough to need the communication afforded by the voting process. For example, the calling of a pastor, the ordination of a man, the purchase of land or other major purchases, the setting of an annual budget, and the dismissal of a membership partner would be considered matters normally presented for a vote of affirmation to the entire membership partnership.

#### A) Quorum

Sixty-six percent of the Leadership Team must be present to constitute a quorum. All members of the team should be notified of any meeting. If for some reason, a team member cannot be notified of one meeting, he/she must be notified of the next meeting. Every attempt shall be made to choose meeting times that all team members can attend.

#### B) Determinations

The Leadership Team shall prayerfully strive to seek the direction of God in each decision for the ministry. The goal of discussion and prayer is to seek consensus of the team on all matters. In matters where consensus cannot be reached, a two-thirds majority vote is required to pass any decision. However, every team member's insight and opinion shall be seriously considered by the entire team, particularly if it disagrees with the majority. God may choose to speak through a few to bring direction to the whole team.

If there comes a time where the Leadership Team makes a decision and a membership partner disagrees with the determination, and this disagreement is to such a degree as to require the filing of a grievance with the Leadership Team, that membership partner shall express their opinion in writing to the Leadership Team. If a quorum of the membership partnership presents a written grievance over a particular decision, the Leadership Team shall call a church business meeting to discuss and review the decision and consider the merits of the grievances. This provision is included because every believer is a priest of God and has the benefit

of the Spirit of God living in them. In addition, the members of the Leadership Team are not infallible and must be open to reevaluating the decisions that are made, particularly if a significant portion of the membership partnership disagrees with the decision that was made.

### C) Appointment

Hope Christian Fellowship will appoint elders to lead as a part of leadership team. The process for this appointment is detailed in this section. Hope Christian Fellowship can also ordain ministers as is deemed appropriate. These two processes are similar, yet distinct. Ordination by HCF does not necessarily include appointment as an elder at HCF, and appointment as an elder does not necessarily include ordination as a minister. However, the call of a Pastor to Hope Christian Fellowship will include his ordination by HCF. Since the leadership structure of the church is the primary goal of this article, appointment of elders will be the focus.

Appointment as an elder (or ordination as a pastor) is the official recognition of the call of God placed on a specific man to serve by spiritually leading the church through teaching, preaching, counsel, and example (1 Timothy 4:11-16). For elders at Hope Christian Fellowship, it further represents a call by God to lead HCF specifically in this role. The pastor will always be appointed as an elder and a member of the Leadership Team. Associate Pastors can be appointed as an elder by the normal process for any membership partner.

Men presented for eldership must meet the Biblical qualifications for an elder as described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Since the Scriptures specify men for this role and specifically exclude women (1 Timothy 2:11-15), Hope Christian Fellowship will only nominate and appoint men as elders. The ordination of pastors shall be governed by the Leadership Team.

#### Leadership Team Members

Leadership Team will normally be comprised of men who are appointed as elders at Hope Christian Fellowship, as well as men who are nominated and confirmed through the elder candidate process. An elder candidate is a man who has not yet been appointed as an elder at Hope Christian Fellowship, but who is known to be a man of the qualities and characteristics that are given for elders. This man would be nominated and confirmed by the elder candidate process for a one year term. During that time, he will be a part of Leadership Team in order that he can evaluate for himself whether this is God's call on his life. The church and the elders will also evaluate his 'fit' for this role, giving training and feedback during the one year term. This allows for a man to 'try out' the role in the public eye before being appointed as an elder. In this process, it is anticipated that some men will recognize before the term is up that this role is not a fit for them and will relinquish the role. If at the end of the one year term they are still convinced that the elder role is a calling for

them, they can be presented by unanimous decision of the elders for appointment as an elder.

In addition, if the existing Leadership Team believes that more members would be necessary or beneficial to the team, they may 'borrow' a deacon for a period of one calendar year. During that time, the deacon will set aside his duties as a member of the deacon team to take up duties as a part of the Leadership Team.

### The Elder Candidate Process

Any man presented as an elder candidate or an elder must be a membership partner. Nominations will be taken from all membership partners for the selection of men to begin the elder candidate process. These nominations will be collected by the Vice Chairman of the corporation (unless he needs to recuse himself due to personal involvement – in which case, another unencumbered member of the Leadership Team will collect the nominations). This nomination process will normally take place in anticipation of the annual church business meeting, giving membership partners at least a month to make nominations, followed by at least a month to pray over those men nominated before voting for confirmation at the annual business meeting. Nominations called at any other time will be planned in such a way as to give the membership partners at least a month to make nominations and another month to pray over those who achieve nomination before having to vote for confirmation.

In order for a man to be duly nominated as an elder candidate, he must receive nomination by at least 15% of the membership partners on the roll (the number of partners for an annual business meeting will be determined as of October 1<sup>st</sup> of that calendar year). For example, if the church currently has 80 partners, the required number of nominations would be 15% of 80 or 12 nominations. Each partner can only nominate a candidate once.

If a man receives the required number of nominations, he will be presented for confirmation at the annual church business meeting on the ballot. Each partner in attendance will be given a chance to vote for each candidate. In order to be placed as an elder candidate, a nominee must receive at least an 80% affirmative vote from those partners in attendance. This candidacy will be for a term of one year. In the event a man is appointed at a time other than the annual business meeting, his term will run for more than one year and expire at the annual business meeting following the anniversary of his appointment as an elder. During his term, the Candidate shall be placed in various ministry positions so as to ascertain their giftedness for this role in ministry.

### Appointment as an Elder

At the end of the elder candidacy period, a man who is still willing can be presented to the membership partners for appointment as an elder at the annual business meeting by unanimous vote of the elders. In order to be appointed, an

elder nominee must receive 90% of the votes of those partners in attendance at the annual business meeting.

This appointment is for a three year term. At the end of three years, an elder can be re-nominated by unanimous vote of the elders and re-appointed by a 90% affirmative vote of the partners in attendance at the annual business meeting. An elder can also choose to take a one year break before being re-nominated and re-appointed. Issues such as a need to redirect attention to family or personal spiritual health could drive such a decision. If for any reason an elder thinks it wise to take that break, he can be re-nominated to be appointed as an elder in any successive year by unanimous vote of the elders. He does not need to begin the process as an elder candidate again unless the break is longer than 5 years.

Any elder who needs to take a sabbatical during the time of his three year term can do so. A sabbatical should last no less than three months and no longer than a year. If a longer sabbatical is needed, the elder should resign until he is ready to be re-nominated by the elder team for appointment at the annual business meeting.

#### D. Removal

If any member of Leadership Team gives cause to justify removal from the team, it shall be done in accordance with the instruction in Matthew 18:15-18 and Galatians 6:1. The goal of all of this interaction is restoration of the personal and spiritual relationship first, and every effort should be made to accomplish this before proceeding to formal removal.

If a formal removal is necessary, it must be initiated in writing to the team member who is being confronted for removal. Such notice must be approved by 75% of the Leadership Team members before it is given to the team member in question. The notice must include the listing of the problem(s) as clearly as possible and the attempted steps at restoration per the Scriptural instructions. It should call for restoration again and spell out the planned course of action toward restoration and the alternative plan toward removal. After this notice is given, the team member in question must be given a month to pray over the issue. During this time, immediately after written notification is given, the team member will be placed on leave from their position on Leadership Team and all responsibilities connected to that role. At the end of that period of time, if restoration remains unaccomplished, the Leadership Team can remove the team member in question by a 75% majority vote.

## 2) DEACONS

A deacon must be a membership partner of Hope Christian Fellowship and can be a man or a woman. This team exists to assist the Leadership Team in tracking and accomplishing specific tasks as necessary to help the church run effectively. The

Leadership Team will assign and oversee the duties of the deacon team and will work in conjunction with them, demonstrating an example of the unity of the body of Christ and the call to work together as a team.

Nominations for deacon shall be given to the Vice Chairman of the corporation before the annual business meeting. In order for a partner to be nominated, they must be nominated by at least 10% of the total membership partners (as of October 1<sup>st</sup> of the calendar year). Anyone nominated for deacon must meet the qualification as described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-6. Confirmation of each deacon requires at least a two thirds majority of affirmative votes by those partners in attendance at the annual business meeting.

Deacons are appointed for a term of two years. At the end of this time, they may choose to take a break from serving or be available for re-nomination as a deacon. If they are willing to continue serving, they must be nominated and affirmed by the Leadership Team and the body through the normal appointment process.

### 3) SPECIAL NOMINATIONS

If needed, special nominations for members of the Leadership Team can be made. This would be any man who is not a deacon or elder but whose leadership would be valuable on the team. These nominations shall be initiated by the Leadership Team when they become aware of a man who would meet the qualifications for a special nomination.

Special nominations are appointed for a term of one year. At the end of this time, the nominee would be eligible to become a part of the elder candidate process (if they have not previously completed this process) or to be nominated as an elder.

If a vacancy for Leadership Team or Deacon occurs at some time other than just before the annual business meeting, the Leadership Team can, at its discretion, solicit nominations and make appointments at any time during the year. The need for such appointments shall be decided by the normal Leadership Team voting procedures and requirements. Their term will end at the close of the calendar year in their final year. This means that these vacancy appointments will last less than one year for special nominations, less than two years for deacons, and less than three years for elders.

## **Amendment #2**

*This amendment is meant to alter the nomination and appointment procedures for elder, elder candidate, and deacon as described in Amendment #1. The church family and leadership have applied some 'lessons learned' after several years of implementing the nomination and appointment procedures given in Amendment #1. These provisions incorporate revisions meant to clarify, simplify, and streamline the voting of partners for officers. We desire for each partner to have the opportunity to prayerfully consider the*

*Lord's leading in each vote, and believe that this revision reflects an improved method. The details included in this amendment supersede the prescribed process in the previous one. All other aspects of the constitution, by-laws, and amendments remain in effect to govern the activity and decisions of the church.*

## **Nominations and Appointments**

### **BACKGROUND AND TIMETABLE**

For the purposes of the percentages given below, the official number of partners at Hope will be defined as the number of partners listed as active on September 30<sup>th</sup> of the calendar year. The voting process will take place during the month of October each year. This allows the month of November to be a time when those voted into offices can prayerfully consider God's leading in their life toward a given role (do they have the time and availability to step into that role, do they believe God is calling them to it, etc). In addition, this process gives the church a chance to organize for the new year before the end of the current year so that it is prepared to function fully on January 1 of the new year.

Each partner has the opportunity to submit a ballot during the month of October and can vote for partners that fit the qualifications given for each role. While there is no limit to the number of people a partner can vote for, a partner can only vote for someone one time for any office in that calendar year. For example, it is acceptable to vote for any man to be both a deacon and an elder candidate on the same ballot or in the same year, but not to cast two votes for a man to be a deacon in the same year. Only one vote will be counted in this case.

### **ELDER**

Elders will be appointed by Leadership Team. This appointment remains for a three year term. In order to be appointed to this role by Leadership Team, a man must have served on Leadership Team as a 'candidate' or as a borrowed deacon for a period of at least one year. During this time, the Leadership Team must evaluate the candidate's qualification and giftedness according to Scripture and practical leadership concerns. They must also make an evaluation of fit and calling with the team. If at the end of this evaluation the team believes that the candidate should be appointed (or re-appointed) for a three year term as an elder, the team must vote unanimously to make the appointment.

### **ELDER CANDIDATE**

In order for a man to be appointed as an elder candidate for a term of one year, he must be a partner and receive votes from a minimum of 40% of active partners. If a man receives votes from less than 40% but at least 20 % of active partners, the Leadership Team can appoint that man to the office of elder candidate with an 80% affirmative vote of the Leadership Team. All those appointed as Elder Candidates will be notified following appointment so that they can prayerfully consider this role. After this

consideration, the candidate must notify Leadership Team of his decision on whether or not to accept the appointment.

### **DEACON**

In order for any partner to be appointed as a deacon for a term of two years, he or she must receive votes from a minimum of 20% of active partners. If a partner receives votes from less than 20% but at least 10% of active partners, the Leadership Team can appoint that partner to the office of deacon with an 80% affirmative vote of the Leadership Team. All those appointed as Deacons will be notified following appointment so that they can prayerfully consider this role. After this consideration, the partner must notify Leadership Team of his decision on whether or not to accept the appointment.

### **VETO**

If the Leadership Team is aware of some specific issue in the spiritual life or testimony of an appointee that would preclude them from serving, they can veto an appointment by unanimous vote.