



# BYLAWS of NEW HOPE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

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# ARTICLES OF FAITH

## **I. THE SCRIPTURES**

We believe the Holy Bible was written by man divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that God is its author, salvation for its end and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals principles by which God will judge us, and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions shall be tried.

## **II. THE TRUE GOD**

We believe the Scriptures teach there is one and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; equal in every divine perfection and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

## **III. THE FALL OF HUMANITY**

We believe the Scriptures teach that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgressions fell from that holy and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

## **IV. THE WAY OF SALVATION**

We believe the Scriptures teach that Salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God; who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full atonement for our sins; having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate and all-sufficient Savior.

## **V. JUSTIFICATION**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification; justification includes the pardon of sin and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every blessing needful for time and eternity.

## **VI. THE FREENESS OF SALVATION**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by cordial, penitent and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own determined depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel; which rejection involves Him in an aggravated condemnation.

## **II. REGENERATION**

We believe the Scriptures teach that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind that is affected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our visionary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith, and newness of life.

#### **VIII. REPENTANCE AND FAITH**

We believe the Scriptures teach that repentance and faith are sacred duties and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our prophet, priest and king, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.

#### **IX. GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE**

We believe the Scriptures teach that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end, that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God and active imitation of His free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands the utmost diligence.

#### **X. SANCTIFICATION**

We believe the Scriptures teach that Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means, especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness and prayer.

#### **XI. PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS**

We believe the Scriptures teach that such only are real believers as endure to the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

#### **XII. THE LAW AND GOSPEL**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government; that it is holy, just and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts, arise entirely from their love of sin; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel and of the Means of Grace connected with the establishment of the visible church.

### **XIII. A GOSPEL CHURCH**

We believe the Scriptures teach that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its only scriptural officers are Bishops or Pastors, and Deacons whose qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

### **XIV. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER**

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christian's baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son and Holy Ghost; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation; and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church, by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

### **XV. THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH**

We believe the scriptures teach that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day or Christian Sabbath, and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes both private and public, and by preparation that rest remaineth for the people of God.

### **XVI. CIVIL GOVERNMENT**

We believe the Scriptures teach that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society; and magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the Kings of the earth.

### **XVII. RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED**

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among people both in and after death.

### **XVIII. THE WORLD TO COME**

We believe the scriptures teach that the end of the world is approaching; at the last day, Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave for final retribution; a solemn separation will then take place; the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment and the righteous to endless joy; and this judgment will fix forever the final state of humanity in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

## **RULES OF CHURCH ORDER**

1. Let all things be done decently and in order - I Corinthians 14:40
2. Let all things be done with charity - I Corinthians 16:14
3. Let all things be done to edify Him - I Corinthians 14:26
4. Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus - Colossians 3:17

## **THE CHURCH COVENANT**

HAVING BEEN LED, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

WE ENGAGE, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to work together in Christian love; strive for the advancement of this Church, in knowledge, holiness and comfort; promote its prosperity and spirituality; sustain its worship, ordinances, disciplines and doctrines; contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expense of the Church, relief of the poor and spreading of the gospel throughout all nations.

WE ALSO ENGAGE to maintain family and secret devotions; religiously educate our children; seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; walk circumspectly in the world; be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment; avoid all gossiping and excessive anger; abstain from drunkenness; and be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

WE FURTHER ENGAGE to watch over one another in brotherly/sisterly love; remember each other in prayer; aid each other in sickness and distress; cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

WE MOREOVER ENGAGE that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible, unite with another church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## **CHURCH BYLAWS**

### **ARTICLE I. - NAME**

The Church shall be known as New Hope Baptist Church, located at 130 Delaware Street SW, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507.

### **ARTICLE II. - CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

#### **SECTION 1. - JOINING THE UNIVERSAL BODY OF CHRIST**

At the time of personal faith in Jesus Christ, the believer is called into fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ, and unites with the universal body of Christ, the church.<sup>1</sup>

The believer is also brought into fellowship with other believers and members of the body, so that he or she might share and participate in the various blessings and ministries of the body of Christ. For this to occur properly, believers are to seek the fellowship of one another in a local assembly of believers, to which they are to become responsible. The local assembly is considered a mini-flock of the greater, universal flock of God.<sup>2</sup>

It is contrary to scripture for believers to operate in isolation--not connected with a local assembly. The local assembly (the local church) is to be a body of people spiritually led by the church senior pastor<sup>3</sup> and subject to the discipline of that assembly.<sup>4</sup>

This union implies more than a loose relationship between a believer and a particular assembly. It involves a tie of commitment, responsibility, involvement and submission to the church leadership and to other members of that assembly.

## **SECTION 2. - QUALIFICATIONS FOR LOCAL MEMBERSHIP**

Individuals who meet the following scriptural and church requirements shall be eligible for membership in New Hope Baptist Church (hereinafter, "the Church").

The scriptural requirements include:

1. Making a personal confession and commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation (born again);<sup>5</sup>
2. Submitting to the ordinance of baptism by immersion as a public testimony of salvation if not already baptized by immersion;<sup>6</sup>
3. Supporting the testimony of the Church by faithfully attending Sunday worship, maintaining a Godly and holy lifestyle, and giving consistently;<sup>7</sup>
4. Cooperating in the responsibility and work of the Church through praying for its spiritual and numerical growth, evangelizing the lost, inviting the un-churched to attend and acting in love toward other members;
5. Serving the Church by understanding and discovering his or her spiritual giftedness and being equipped by the pastor(s) to serve the local body, the community, the world.<sup>9</sup>

The Church requirements include:

1. Completing an Application for Membership under either of the following methods:
  - a. As a candidate for baptism;
  - b. As a transfer by letter from a previous church; or
  - c. By rededication
2. Completing the Church's Membership classes within 180 days from the date of Application for Membership.

## **SECTION 3. - MEMBERSHIP DEFINED**

Membership in the Church is important and valuable. Membership affords certain rights, responsibilities and privileges to the members of the church, as set forth in the current Membership Handbook. This section outlines the church's three categories of membership. Any

dispute with regard to an assigned membership category will be resolved by the Pastor(s) and Deacons.

### **3.1. ACTIVE MEMBER**

An "Active Member" is qualified to vote in all business meetings of the Church, and to receive privileges from the Church as set forth in the Membership Handbook. Any individual who meets all of the following criteria shall be considered an "Active Member":

1. Meets the scriptural and Church requirements for membership as outlined in Section 2 of this Article;
2. Consistently gives to the church (a minimum of \$100 per year); and
3. Regularly attends worship service, unless physically unable to do so.

### **3.2 INACTIVE MEMBER**

An "Inactive Member" is not qualified to vote in the business meetings of the Church, nor to receive the privileges of the Church as set forth in the Membership Handbook. An individual who meets any one (1) of the following criteria shall be considered an "Inactive Member":

1. Has moved away from the community, but has not yet transferred his or her membership to another church;
2. Has for any cause, except physical inability, been absent from regularly attending worship service for a period of 180 days or more; or
3. Has not contributed to the Church treasury for a period of 180 days or more.

### **3.3 WATCH CARE MEMBER**

A "Watch Care Member" has all of the rights and privileges of an Active Member, with the exception of attending and voting in the business meetings of the Church. An individual who meets all of the following criteria shall be considered a "Watch Care Member":

1. Currently belongs to another church;
2. Temporarily resides in the Church community; and
3. Wishes to be under the care of the Church.

## **SECTION 4. - LEGAL MEMBERSHIP RIGHTS**

Membership does not afford any member with property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the Church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The Senior Pastor (or in his absence, an individual designated by the board of deacons) has the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property. If after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on church property, the person may, in the discretion of the Senior Pastor (or in his absence, an individual designated by the board of deacons), be treated as a trespasser.

## **SECTION 5. - DISCIPLINE AND RESTORATION OF MEMBERS**

The policy of church discipline and restoration is derived from the teachings of scripture (Matt. 18:15-17). Any member of the Church who (1) persists in serious behavior or doctrinal error contrary to scriptures, (2) no longer conforms to the qualifications for membership, or (3) willingly causes discord within the Church by word or action, in spite of repeated warnings and admonition, shall be subject to church discipline. No action shall be taken until patient and

persistent effort has been made to win such member back to the standard of faith and conduct of the Church.

#### **5.1. PURPOSE OF DISCIPLINE**

The purpose of discipline is to bring about repentance from sin and to reconcile and restore an individual to the fellowship. Discipline is essential for (3) scriptural reasons:

1. The glory and honor of God;
2. For the sake of the individual who is sinning; and
3. As a warning to others who are sinning.<sup>10</sup>

#### **5.2. PROCESS OF DISCIPLINE**

In accordance with Matthew 18:15-18, if any member of the Church has knowledge of another member's unbiblical beliefs or conduct, it shall be the duty of the member with knowledge to privately approach and communicate the error to the offending member. (If the member feels uncomfortable, that member should seek guidance from a Church officer.)

If the offending member does not repent of the offense after being privately approached, then the process of discipline shall be carried out in the following manner:

1. The member with knowledge of the offense shall privately approach the offending member again, accompanied by one or two witnesses, seeking the repentance of the offending member. If the offending member does not repent, then the process of discipline shall continue in the manner set forth in Section 5.2.2 of this Article.
2. The members with knowledge of offense, who contacted the offending member, shall contact the Pastor(s) and/or deacon board with the details of the offending member's beliefs or conduct. The Pastor(s), Deacon Board Chair, and one or two more deacons shall contact the offending member seeking more information, and his or her repentance if the sin is confirmed. If the member refuses to repent, then the Deacon Board shall either revoke the membership of the offending member, or develop another method of discipline.

During the entire discipline process, the officers and members involved must continually pray for the offending member's repentance and restoration of membership.

#### **5.3. CONFIDENTIALITY OF DISCIPLINE**

All persons involved in the discipline process of an offending member are required to keep the process completely confidential.

### **SECTION 6. - TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP**

Any Active Member who wishes to transfer his or her membership to another church shall inform the Church so that a letter of recommendation may be given to the member in question.

## **ARTICLE III. - BUSINESS MEETINGS**

### **SECTION 1. - ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**

The annual business meeting of the Church shall take place each January or no more than 30 days thereafter. The meeting shall be held at the church building or at any other place within the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The business that shall be conducted at the annual business meeting includes adoption of the annual church budget, election of officers, adoption of any amendments to the Church Bylaws, and any other business as may be appropriate.

### **Section 1.1 Notice of the Annual Business Meeting**

Notice of the annual business meeting shall be given to the church membership no less than two (2) consecutive Sundays prior to said meeting. Notice of the annual business meeting shall be given in either of the following manners, which shall be deemed reasonable methods of notice for the annual business meeting:

1. By including notice of the meeting in the church bulletin at a regular Sunday worship service; or
2. By orally announcing the meeting to the congregation in attendance at a regular Sunday worship service.

### **Section 1.2. Required Content of Notice of Annual Business Meetings.**

Notice of the annual business meeting shall include the time and place of the meeting.

### **Section 1.3. Review of Proposed Annual Budget**

The proposed annual budget must be presented for review to the eligible voting members no later than the annual business meeting.

### **Section 1.4. Election of Officers**

During election of officers, eligible voting members will be given the choice of group or individual election of officers.

## **SECTION 2. - QUARTERLY MEETINGS**

Quarterly church meetings shall be held during the following months, or soon thereafter: April, July and October. (The annual business meeting in January shall also serve as a quarterly meeting.) The business that shall be conducted at quarterly church meetings includes review of the budget, and any other business as may be appropriate.

### **Section 2.1 Notice of a Quarterly Meeting**

Notice of a quarterly meeting shall be given to the church membership no less than two (2) consecutive Sundays prior to said meeting. Notice of a quarterly meeting shall be given in either of the following manners, which shall be deemed reasonable methods of notice for a Quarterly Business Meeting:

1. By including notice of the meeting in the church bulletin at a regular Sunday worship service; or
2. By orally announcing the meeting to the congregation in attendance at a regular Sunday worship service.

### **Section 2.2. Required Content of Notice of Quarterly Meetings.**

Notice of a quarterly meeting shall include the time and place of the meeting.

## **SECTION 3. - SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS**

A "special business meeting" is a meeting to transact business that cannot wait until a quarterly or annual church business meeting. Special business meetings may be called at any time to address any business matter in either of the following ways: (1) at the request of the Senior Pastor; (2) at the request of the Joint Board Chair; (3) by a majority vote of the deacon board; or

(4) with a written request addressed to the joint board of not less than twenty-percent of the eligible voting members of the Church.

### **Section 3.1. Notice of Special Business Meetings.**

Notice of a special business meeting shall be given to the church membership no less than two (2) consecutive Sundays prior to said meeting. Notice of a special business meeting shall be given in either of the following manners, which shall be deemed reasonable methods of notice for a special business meeting:

1. By including notice of the meeting in the church bulletin at a regular Sunday worship service; or
2. By orally announcing the meeting to the congregation in attendance at a regular Sunday worship service.

### **Section 3.2. Required Content of Notice of Special Business Meetings.**

Notice of a special business meeting shall include the time, place, and purpose of said meeting. The only business that shall be conducted at a special business meeting are such business matters specifically stated in the notice.

## **SECTION 4. - VOTING ELIGIBILITY**

In order to be considered an eligible voting member, said member must meet the following requirements: (1) be an Active Member of the Church, and (2) be at least 18 years of age.

## **SECTION 5. - VOTING**

Church action on each matter being voted upon shall require a concurrence of a majority of the eligible voting members present at an annual, quarterly, or special business meeting, unless provided otherwise in these Bylaws. Eligible voting members will be allowed to vote in person or may be allowed to vote by absentee ballot on those issues which are identified prior to the meeting.

## **SECTION 6. – QUORUM**

A "quorum" is the minimum number of eligible voting members (Active Members that are at least 18 years of age) required to be present at an annual, quarterly, or special business meeting in order to transact business. For the purpose of transacting business, the eligible voting members that are present at an annual, quarterly, or special business meeting, shall constitute a quorum, unless provided otherwise in these Bylaws.

## **SECTION 7. RULES OF ORDER TO GOVERN ALL MEETINGS**

Unless stated otherwise in these Bylaws, the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be the accepted pattern for transacting church business in all annual, quarterly, and special meetings.

## **SECTION 8. - PRESIDING OFFICIAL**

The Senior Pastor shall moderate all church business meetings. In his absence, the following order of succession shall apply: (1) the Executive Pastor, (2) Deacon Board Chair, and (3) Trustee Board Chair.

## **SECTION 9. - SALARY LIMITATIONS**

Salary increases or decreases shall not be initiated in any church business meeting.

## **ARTICLE IV. - DEACONS**

### **GENERAL SCOPE**

Deacons are the servant-ministers of the Church. Their purpose is to relieve the pastor(s) of the multitude of practical duties of caring for the flock. No specific, on-going deacon roles are mentioned in Scripture, probably because service needs change, and so the role of the deacons must remain flexible. Perhaps this is why qualifications for deacons are stressed in Scripture rather than specific tasks. Deacons are to give their primary attention toward caring for the congregation's physical welfare. Deacons have the honor of modeling, for the local Church and the lost world, God's compassion, kindness, mercy, and love. As the Church compassionately cares for people's needs, the world sees a visible display of Christ's love, which will draw some people to the Savior. Deacons are to be an example of commitment, unity, and harmony in their service.

### **SECTION 1. - QUALIFICATIONS**

Deacons must possess the scriptural qualifications stated in I Tim. 3:8-10, 12-13\*

- 1) A man of dignity.
- 2) Not double tongued.
- 3) Not given to substance abuse.
- 4) Not fond of sordid gain.
- 5) Holds to the mystery of faith with a clear conscience.
- 6) Must be tested.
- 7) Beyond reproach.
- 8) Husband of one wife.
- 9) Good managers of their children and their households.
- 10) Must have a wife that is honest, sober and faithful.

Additionally, deacons must be Active Members of the Church and spiritually qualified to serve as a deacon by tithing at the Church, attending Sunday morning worship at least 40 weeks per year, and demonstrating their commitment to growing as a follower of Christ and to the fellowship of the Church by attending 75% of the Sunday School or Bible Study classes offered each year.

\*The pastoral leadership of New Hope Baptist Church has determined that there is nothing in scripture that prohibits a woman from also serving as a deacon of the Church. The interpretation of scripture held by pastoral leadership also holds the position that a deacon can be single or divorced. Scripture implies that the deacon can only have one spouse at a time and must be faithful to that spouse. Similarly, the proviso that deacons be good managers of their children and households does not necessitate that deacons be parents. Each of these biblical qualifications for a deacon are centered on personal character rather than stage of life.

### **SECTION 2. - SELECTION PROCESS**

When there is a need for deacons, as demonstrated in Acts 6:1-7, the Senior Pastor, after consultation with the Deacon Board Chair, will make his recommendation to the Church for a deacon-in-training at the annual business meeting.

#### **2.1 – Exclusivity of Board Service**

Any person to be considered as a deacon cannot serve simultaneously as a trustee. Any person serving on both boards at the time of adopting these bylaws will be grandfathered indefinitely. He or she will be able at his or her desire to continue to be eligible for re-election provided all other requirements are met.

#### **2.2 - Reciprocity of Deaconship**

The Church is not obligated to recognize any member as an Active Deacon, simply because he or she served as a deacon in a previous congregation.

### **SECTION 3. - TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

Special training is required to serve as a deacon. He or she will complete one year minimum of training. The training will be conducted by the Senior Pastor and/or his designee. The Senior Pastor will determine if the training should extend beyond one year.

### **SECTION 4. - ORDINATION**

Prospective deacons will not be ordained until the Senior Pastor, after consultation with the Deacon Board Chair, determines that the prospective deacon candidate is ready. After the completion of their training, deacon candidates will be ordained by the Senior Pastor in the presence of the membership.

### **SECTION 5. - TERM OF OFFICE**

The office term of a deacon is three years. Consecutive terms are acceptable and encouraged for those who are fulfilling their responsibilities as deacons.

#### **SECTION 5.1 CONSECUTIVE TERMS**

The deacon board will present the names of those deacons who wish to serve a consecutive term to the church membership in attendance at an annual meeting after the following criteria have been met:

1. The deacon completes a three-year service term,
2. The deacon affirms that God's leading is for him or her to continue serving as an active deacon, and
3. The deacon board votes to recommend that the deacon be presented to the church membership at the annual meeting.

### **SECTION 6. - DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The deacons are to effectively and carefully administer the Church's charitable activities. Although they meet, in many ways, the spiritual needs of those they serve, their primary service is related to physical needs. Specific duties include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Administering the benevolent fund in accordance with the current Benevolence Policy.
- 2) Assisting the Senior Pastor in the preparation and serving of the Lord's Supper.
- 3) Appointing a search committee to seek the Lord's will regarding the Senior Pastor, in the event the Church is without a senior pastor.
- 4) Evaluating the Senior Pastor every year.
- 5) Meeting regularly to discuss the fulfillment of the duties and responsibilities of deacons. Scheduling of meetings is determined by the chairman of the deacon board.
- 6) Performing any other duties and/or responsibilities as determined by the Deacon Board Chair.

### **SECTION 7. - SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE DEACON BOARD CHAIR**

In addition to the previously stated requirements, the Deacon Board Chair, because of his or her additional duties and responsibilities, must also meet the following additional requirements:

- 1) Exhibits leadership ability;
- 2) Possesses communications skills indicative of a leader;
- 3) Organizes and initiates activities;
- 4) Possesses cognitive ability to make intelligent decisions;
- 5) Motivates, directs and organizes board;
- 6) Has a firm understanding of biblical principles;
- 7) Participates in the training of future deacons;
- 8) Leads by example;
- 9) Has a firm understanding of financial reports;
- 10) Is knowledgeable of all Church Bylaws, rules, regulations and infrastructure; and
- 11) Understands *Robert's Rules of Order*.

#### **SECTION 8. - DISCIPLINARY REMOVAL**

Any deacon may be removed from office if he or she becomes scripturally or spiritually unqualified as outlined in Section 1 of this Article, or his or her inability to serve is established in the minds of the deacon board and/or the congregation. The deacon board and/or congregation has the right to rebuke a deacon due to a continuing sin based on I Tim. 5:19-20. The congregation has the right to remove a deacon in a special or quarterly business meeting with a majority vote.

#### **SECTION 9. - DEACON EMERITUS**

A "deacon emeritus" is an honorary position reserved for those who have amassed years of repeated service but are no longer willing and/or capable of fulfilling all the responsibilities of a deacon, as recommended by the deacon board and the Senior Pastor. Because of his or her wisdom and valuable experience, the deacon emeritus shall continue to support the deacon board in an advisory capacity without voting rights

### **ARTICLE V. - TRUSTEES**

#### **GENERAL SCOPE**

While Scripture indicates that pastors bear the ultimate responsibility for the watch care of the Church, it does allow for the delegation of responsibilities. The church is also able to realize significant benefits by being designated as a 501(c)(3) organization with the State of Michigan. For these reasons, the pastor(s) and congregation of the Church have specifically delegated to the Trustee Board the governance responsibility of the legal, financial, business, and property matters of the Church.

The Trustee Board shall create whatever supporting committees it deems appropriate to carry out its responsibilities, and to fulfill any requirements necessary for the Trustee Board members to act as legal representatives of the Church.

#### **SECTION 1. - QUALIFICATIONS**

Trustees must be Active Members of the Church. The scriptural qualifications for trustees are the same as those for deacons as noted in Article IV, Section I.

Additionally, trustees must be spiritually qualified to serve as a trustee by tithing at the Church, attending Sunday morning worship at least 40 weeks per year, and demonstrating their

commitment to growing as a follower of Christ and to the fellowship of the Church by attending 75% of the Sunday School or Bible Study classes offered each year.

## **SECTION 2. - SELECTION PROCESS**

When there is a need for a trustee, the Trustee Board Chair, after consultation with the Senior Pastor, will make the recommendation to the Church at the annual business meeting with the exception of extreme emergency as defined by the Senior Pastor and Trustee Board Chair.

### **2.1- Exclusivity of Board Service**

Any person to be considered as a trustee cannot serve simultaneously as a deacon. Any person serving on both boards at the time of adopting these bylaws will be grandfathered indefinitely. He or she will be able at his or her desire to continue to be eligible for re-election provided all other requirements are met.

### **2.2 - Reciprocity of Trustee Membership**

The Church is not obligated to recognize any member as an Active Trustee, simply because he or she served as a trustee in a previous congregation.

## **SECTION 3. - TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

It is the responsibility of the Senior Pastor and the Trustee Board Chair to ensure that all new trustees receive spiritual and procedural training. He or she will complete one year minimum of training. The training should be conducted as outlined in the Trustee Manual which is to be written by the Trustees.

## **SECTION 4. - TERM OF OFFICE**

The office term of a trustee is three years. Consecutive terms are acceptable and encouraged for those who are fulfilling their responsibilities as trustees.

### **SECTION 4.1. -- CONSECUTIVE TERMS**

The trustee board will present the names of those trustees who wish to serve a consecutive term to the church membership in attendance at an annual meeting after the following criteria have been met:

1. The trustee completes a three-year service term,
2. The trustee affirms that God's leading is for him or her to continue serving as an active trustee, and
3. The trustee board votes to recommend that the trustee be presented to the church membership at the annual meeting.

## **SECTION 5. - DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The specific governance duties and responsibilities of the trustee board include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Assisting the Senior Pastor in the administrative oversight of the Church. To determine and ensure that all of the administrative committees of the Church are performing their designated responsibilities.
- 2) Overseeing and developing all legal, financial and executive-related committees, which include reviewing and updating the fiscal policies, procedures, and responsibilities of these committees.

- 3) Properly exercising a fiduciary duty to the Church in all legal, financial and executive matters. Anything in excess of paying normal day-to-day bills must be brought before the joint board before final decision is made.
- 4) Executing all legal documents relative to contracts, Church property and other business matters as conditioned by these Bylaws.
- 5) Participating in the strategic planning of the Church.
- 6) Implementing and overseeing effective risk management policies and procedures.
- 7) Properly maintaining accurate books and financial records of the Church.
- 8) Overseeing the maintenance of accurate contribution records of contributors, and preparing contribution statements for contributors.
- 9) Overseeing the maintenance of church membership records.
- 10) Overseeing the maintenance of the written minutes of all church business meetings.
- 11) Assisting the Senior Pastor in the serving of the Lord's Supper.
- 12) Attending scheduled meetings as determined by the Trustee Board Chair.
- 13) Performing any other duties and/or responsibilities as determined by the Trustee Board Chair.

#### **SECTION 6. - SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE TRUSTEE BOARD CHAIR**

In addition to the previously stated requirements, the Trustee Board Chair, because of his or her additional duties and responsibilities, must also meet the following additional requirements:

- 1) Exhibits leadership ability;
- 2) Possesses communications skills indicative of a leader;
- 3) Organizes and initiates activities;
- 4) Possesses cognitive ability to make intelligent decisions;
- 5) Motivates, directs and organizes the trustee board;
- 6) Has a firm understanding of biblical principles;
- 7) Participates in the training of future trustees;
- 8) Leads by example;
- 9) Has a firm understanding of financial reports;
- 10) Is knowledgeable of all Church Bylaws, rules, regulations and infrastructure; and
- 11) Understands ~~the~~ *Robert's Rules of Order*.

#### **SECTION 7. - DISCIPLINARY REMOVAL**

Any trustee may be removed from office if he or she becomes scripturally or spiritually unqualified, as outlined in Section 1 of this Article, or his or her inability to serve is established in the minds of the trustee board and/or the congregation. The trustee board and/or congregation has the right to rebuke a trustee due to a continuing sin based on I Tim. 5:19-20. The Trustee Board has the right to censure and/or remove a trustee in accordance with the procedure outlined in the Trustee Manual. The congregation has the right to remove a trustee in a special or quarterly business meeting with a majority vote.

#### **SECTION 8. - TRUSTEE EMERITUS**

The "trustee emeritus" is an honorary position reserved for those who have amassed years of repeated service but are no longer willing and/or capable of fulfilling all the responsibilities of a

trustee as recommended by the trustee board and the Senior Pastor. Because of his or her wisdom and valuable experience, the trustee emeritus shall continue to support the trustee board in an advisory capacity without voting rights.

## **ARTICLE VI. – JOINT BOARD**

### **GENERAL SCOPE**

The deacon board and trustee board together will comprise the church's Joint Board. As such, The Joint Board serves as the Church's primary governance (or legislative) body. The Joint Board will meet periodically to discuss legal, financial, and/or administrative matters that exceed the scope of either individual board.

The Joint Board will annually recommend and appoint persons to serve in the "Standing Committees" and "Other Church Officer" roles as detailed below in Sections 3 and 4, respectively. The Joint Board will also establish standing and special committees as described in this Article.

### **SECTION 1 – JOINT BOARD LEADERSHIP**

The Joint Board shall be led by a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary. Generally, the Deacon Board Chair will serve as Joint Board Chair; the Trustee Board Chair will serve as Joint Board Vice-Chair; the Trustee Secretary will serve as Joint Board Secretary; and the Deacon Board Secretary will serve as Joint Board Assistant Secretary. The Joint Board shall vote annually to affirm these persons in these positions or elect others to fill these positions if it so desires.

### **SECTION 2 -- DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1) Reviewing and making recommendations to the congregation concerning legal, financial, and/or administrative matters.
- 2) During a Joint Board meeting, the Joint Board may approve to spend up a five-percent maximum of the yearly-approved budget by the congregation on a non-budgeted expense. Any such expense above five-percent (except for maintenance expenses) must be brought before the congregation in a special meeting.
- 3) Reviewing and recommending candidates for the deacons and trustees boards.
- 4) Reviewing the work of all standing and special committees and making recommendations accordingly to the membership.

### **SECTION 3. – STANDING COMMITTEES**

#### **GENERAL SCOPE**

Committees can be established by the Joint Board. The purpose of establishing committees is to assist the pastors in doing the administrative works of ministry in a "decent and orderly" manner. Committees will possess certain authority and responsibility levels of the corporate Church, as delegated by the Joint Board. Each approved committee will function under a Ministry Position Description. This description will outline each committee's purpose and describe the duties and responsibilities have been delegated to each committee. Each Committee's function will be primarily governance in nature, versus the pastor(s) and staff whose primary functions are ministerial and administrative. In other words, Committees will seek to ensure compliance with internal Church policies and procedures, as well as all pertinent external regulations.

The leadership of the Church believes that committees must be held to a minimum. Each committee:

- Is voluntary in nature;
- Is appointed annually by the Joint Board;
- Should have representation by non-officers; and
- Should be an odd number of individuals.

The present Standing Committees are as follows:

### **SECTION 3.1. - PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

Personnel Committee is responsible for overseeing personnel operations, reviewing compensation and benefits for paid employees, and recommending personnel policy to the Joint Board. All hiring (for non-approved positions) must be recommended by the Joint Board.

### **SECTION 3.2. – BUDGET COMMITTEE**

Budget Committee is responsible for reviewing the current budget, as approved and/or amended by the Church body, and insuring that each area is remaining within its approved budget. It is the responsibility of the budget committee chair to call budget committee meetings and to make a report at the Church business meetings.

### **SECTION 3.3. – BYLAWS & POLICY COMMITTEE**

Bylaws & Policy Committee is responsible for reviewing the current bylaws & policies and making recommendations for revisions and/or additions to reflect the most prudent practices. Revisions may also be necessary to reflect a better understanding of a biblical matter or organizational practice.

### **SECTION 3.4 – FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Finance Committee is responsible for reviewing the current investment portfolio of the Church and for making recommendations to the Joint Board concerning that portfolio. It is the responsibility of the finance committee chair to call meetings and to make a report at Joint Board.

## **SECTION 4: OTHER CHURCH OFFICERS**

### **SECTION 4.1. CHURCH TREASURER**

The Church Treasurer is recommended and approved by the Joint Board annually. He or she deposits funds into the Church bank accounts, records the deposits and withdrawals from various accounts, and provides an accounting for all funds. The Church Treasurer is also responsible for the quarterly financial reports and audits. The Church Treasurer is eligible to receive an honorarium for his or her service.

### **SECTION 4.2. CHURCH FINANCIAL CLERK**

The Church Financial Clerk is recommended and approved by the Joint Board annually. He or she keeps a record of all disbursements, executes payments in accordance with

established Church financial policies and procedures, and assists in the preparation of quarterly financial reports. The Church Financial Clerk is eligible to receive an honorarium for his or her service.

### **SECTION 4.3. CHURCH HISTORIAN**

The Church Historian is recommended and approved by the Joint Board annually. He or she is responsible for keeping accurate records and photos of church events and milestones, and organizing the information to preserve a historical record of the church's heritage.

### **SECTION 4.4. CHURCH RECORDS CLERK**

The Church Records Clerk is recommended and approved by the Joint Board annually. He or she is responsible for ensuring that the official minutes of all Church business meetings are recorded, transcribed and filed in a timely fashion as stated in Section 4.5.1 of this Article.

#### **SECTION 4.4.1. - CHURCH RECORDS**

##### **a. FILING AND MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS**

All minutes, certificates, records, reports, recordings and any other documents required by law must be filed and maintained at the Church office within thirty days of the event.

##### **b. INSPECTION AND COPYING OF RECORDS**

Any Active Member, upon five-business days prior written request made upon the church, may inspect or copy the prepared financial statements of the Church, and the minutes of all Church business meetings, and all board meetings.

- i. An unauthorized member (one who is not on staff or a board member) may not, under any circumstances, inspect or copy any record relating to another member's individual contributions or other personal information.
- ii. The Church may impose a reasonable charge, covering the costs of labor and material, for copies of any documents provided to the member before releasing the copies to the member.

## **ARTICLE VII. - SENIOR PASTOR**

### **SECTION 1. - QUALIFICATIONS**

The senior pastor shall be a man whose life is characterized by the qualities set forth in I Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. These qualities can be characterized as:

- 1) Must desire the office of senior pastor and demonstrate spiritual leadership abilities among the congregation.
- 2) Ability to teach and use the Word of God with wisdom and patience.
- 3) A lover of God and a man who takes God and His Word seriously.
- 4) Ability to manage his household in a biblical manner.
- 5) Ability to spiritually manage his interpersonal relationships.
- 6) Seeks to be controlled by Christ and His word, not by worldly and fleshly desires.
- 7) A husband of one wife.
- 8) Not given to substance abuse.
- 9) A good reputation with the community.

For final consideration as pastor, the applicant in question must pass drug and alcohol testing; he shall also participate in a medical examination including HIV testing, criminal and credit records check. There will be additional requirements for qualification, as determined by the search committee.

## **SECTION 2. - SELECTION PROCESS**

In the event the Church is without a senior pastor, the deacon board will appoint a search committee to seek the Lord's will regarding the senior pastor. A minimum of one deacon will be a search committee member and will act as chairman of the search committee. When they are unanimous in their recognition of God's leadership towards a candidate(s), they will seek affirmation from the members of the Church in a special meeting. A majority vote of all qualified Church members voting is required to select a senior pastor.

## **SECTION 3. - TERM OF OFFICE**

He shall remain in office for an indefinite period of time subject to the following reservations. If the deacon board is in three-fourths agreement with the purpose of removing the senior pastor from his position, it must bring this recommendation to the Joint Board. If the Joint Board is in three-fourths agreement with the purpose of removing the senior pastor from his position, it must bring this recommendation to the membership in a special meeting. By 2/3 majority of the votes cast by the Active Members, the senior pastor will be removed from his position.

## **SECTION 4. - RESPONSIBILITIES**

He is responsible to the Church in accordance with its deacon board in the discharge of his duties, as in following the custom and tradition of Baptist doctrine.

He will provide the majority of the teaching during worship services, bible study, etc. and will coordinate the administration of the ordinances (Baptism and the Lord's Supper).

In addition to his shepherding role, the primary responsibility is a ministry of the word of prayer providing strategic leadership and vision to the body. He is to help believers mature their faith through insightful and accurate presentation of biblical truth, equipping them to be true "ministers" of the body. Because of these primary roles, the ministry of the Word and his leadership, the senior pastor will prioritize his time, focusing upon these duties first.

He will supervise his direct reports as defined by the deacon board and/or the Church.

**Finances:** He will not have decision making authority regarding Church financial aspects or may not be involved in or have the authority to make disbursements of Church funds. He will be given a yearly budget and may not exceed it without the approval of the deacon board.

**Absence:** He will not be absent from the pulpit unless ill, on vacation or in agreement with the majority of the deacon board for more than two consecutive Sundays within any month (four weeks). Anytime the senior pastor is going to be absent from the pulpit (out of town, visiting another church, etc.), he must advise the chairman of the deacon board, or in his absence, the vice-chairman of the deacon board prior to announcing it to the congregation.

The above does not limit the responsibilities and duties of the senior pastor.

## **ARTICLE VIII. - COMMITTEES**

### **SECTION 1. - PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

Personnel committee members are appointed by the Joint Board. The Church membership (non-officers) should be represented on the committee. They are responsible for the oversight of personnel operations, recommending compensation and benefits for paid employees, and recommending personnel policy to the Joint Board. They have the authority to terminate all employees with a unanimous decision (other than the senior pastor and paid ministry leaders). Termination of paid ministry leaders requires concurrence of the senior pastor and deacon board. All hiring (for non-approved positions) must be recommended by the Joint Board.

### **SECTION 2. - BUDGET COMMITTEE**

Budget committee members are appointed by the Joint Board. They are responsible of meeting no less than quarterly to review the current budget as approved and/or amended by the Church body and to insure each area is remaining within their approved budget. It is the responsibility of the budget committee chairman to call a quarterly budget committee meeting and to make a report at the quarterly Church meeting.

## **ARTICLE IX. - INDEMNIFICATION**

### **SECTION 1. – ACTIONS SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION**

The church may indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals (other than an action by or in the right of the church) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a pastor, deacon, trustee, employee, or agent of the church, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him/her in connection with the action, suit or proceeding; and if that person acted in good faith and in a manner s/he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe her/his conduct was unlawful. The termination

### **SECTION 1. – ACTIONS SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION - CONTINUED**

of any action, suit or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or on a plea of *nolo contendere* or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that s/he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interest of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe that her/his conduct was unlawful.

### **SECTION 2. – EXPENSES SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION**

To the extent that a pastor, deacon, trustee, employee, or agent has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit or proceeding referred to in this Article, or in defense of any claim, issue, or matter in that action, suit, or proceeding, s/he may be indemnified against expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and reasonably incurred by her/him in connection with the action, suit or proceeding.

### **SECTION 3. – LIMITATIONS OF INDEMNIFICATION**

Any indemnification made under this Article, may be made by the Church only as authorized in the specific case on a determination that indemnification of the pastor, deacon, trustee, employee, or agent is proper in the circumstances because s/he has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in Section 1 of this Article. The determination shall be made (a) by a majority vote of quorum consisting of the pastor and deacons who were not and are not parties to or threatened with the action, suit or proceeding; (b) if the described quorum is not obtainable or if a majority vote of a quorum of disinterested deacons so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or (c) by a majority vote of the members of the church.

#### **SECTION 4. – TIMING OF INDEMNIFICATION**

Expenses of each person seeking indemnification under this Article, may be paid by the church as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit or proceeding, as authorized by the board of deacons in the specific case, on receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the pastor, deacon, trustee, employee, or agent to repay the amount if it is ultimately determined that s/he is not qualified to be indemnified by the church.

#### **SECTION 5. – EXTENT OF INDEMNIFICATION**

The indemnification provided by this Article shall be deemed to be discretionary unless otherwise required as a matter of law or under any agreement or provided by insurance purchased by the church, both as to action of each person seeking indemnification under this Article in her/his official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding that office, and may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a pastor, deacon, trustee, employee, or agent and may inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors and administrators of that person.

#### **SECTION 6. – INSURANCE**

The church may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a pastor, deacon, trustee, employee or agent of the church against any liability asserted against her/him and incurred by her/him in that capacity or arising out of her/his status in that capacity, whether or not the church would have the power to indemnify her/him against liability under the provisions of this Article.

### **ARTICLE X. - SEXUAL HARASSMENT and DISCRIMINATION**

Sexual harassment and/or discrimination (SHD) is prohibited, everyone is to be treated fairly in all aspects of Church and/or related activities.

What is sexual harassment? Un-welcomed (physical, verbal, written) sexual advance or inappropriate sexual action (gestures, jokes, etc.).

What is discrimination? Speech or action against anyone based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, physical or mental handicap.

If anyone feels s/he is a victim of SHD, they should discuss the matter with a member of the “Personnel Committee” immediately. All allegations will be investigated; identity of claimant will remain confidential unless further investigation is needed.

Substantial incidents of SHD will result in disciplinary/counseling action, which can include Church membership being revoked and/or denied future attendance at Church activities.

### **ARTICLE XI. - FUNDRAISERS / SALES**

All fundraisers/sales must have prior approval from the Joint Board.

#### **SCRIPTURAL FOOTNOTES**

<sup>1</sup>I Cor. 1:2, 9; 12:12-13; Col. 1:18. <sup>2</sup>I Pet. 5:2-3; I Cor. 1:2; I Thes. 1:1; II Thes. 1:1. <sup>3</sup>I Pet. 5:1-3; I Thes. 5:11; Heb. 10:14-15; I Pet. 4:8-10; I Cor. 12:20, 27. <sup>4</sup>I Cor. 5:2; II Thes. 1:14; II Thes. 3:6, 14; I Tim. 5:20. <sup>5</sup>Rom. 10:9-10; John 3:16 <sup>6</sup>Matt. 28:19 <sup>7</sup>Heb. 10: 25; Phil. 1:27; I John 2:15-17; I Thes. 5:22; I Cor. 16:2; Lev. 27:30. <sup>8</sup>I Thes. 1:2; Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 14:23. I Pet. 1: 22. <sup>9</sup>Eph. 4:11-12; Phil. 2:3-4, 7; I Pet. 4:10. <sup>10</sup>I Cor. 6:18-20; Heb. 3:12-13; I Cor. 5:6-7.