

Hope Community Church

Constitution and Bylaws

Adopted by the membership on **October 24, 2010**
Amended on March 18, 2018

PREAMBLE

We, the members of Hope Community Church, put forward this Constitution, to which we voluntarily submit.

ARTICLE 1 NAME

The name of this church shall be Hope Community Church of Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania

ARTICLE 2 PURPOSE

This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. The church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying his commands through:

- a. Worshipping Him (Mark 12:29-30; Acts 13:1-2; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 14:26)
- b. Equipping the saints through Bible preaching, instruction, counsel, and study (Acts 6:1-7; Ephesians 4:11-12; 2 Timothy 4:1-5)
- c. Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture (Romans 10:14-15; 1 Timothy 2:1-6; 2 Timothy 4:1-5)
- d. Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work: local, domestic, and international (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 13:1-3)
- e. Administering the ordinances of baptism and communion (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 8:36; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; John 6:48-57; 2 Peter 1:4; Luke 22:19-20)
- f. Encouraging Biblical fellowship and prayer among believers (1 Timothy 2:1-8; Hebrews 10:24-25; Ephesians 5:18-21; Hebrews 3:12-13)
- g. Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE 3 STATEMENT OF FAITH AND BELIEFS¹

1. Of the Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction (1); that it has God for its author, salvation for its end (2), and truth without any mixture of error for its matter (3); that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us (4); and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union (5), and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried (6).

1. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Sam. 23:2; Acts 1:16; 3:21; John 10:35; Luke 16:29-31; Psa. 119:11; Rom. 3:1-2

2. 2 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 1:10-12; Acts 11:14; Rom. 1:16; Mark 16:16; John 5:38-39

3. Prov. 30:5-6; John 17:17; Rev. 22:18-19; Rom. 3:4

4. Rom. 2:12; John 12:47-48; 1 Cor. 4:34; Luke 10:10-16; 12:47-48

5. Phil. 3:16; Eph. 4:3-6; Phil. 2:1-2; 1 Cor. 1:10; 1 Pet. 4:11

6. 1 John 4:1; Isa. 8:20; 1 Thess. 5:21; 2 Cor. 8:5; Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:6; Jude 3:5; Eph. 6:17; Psa. 119:59-60; Phil. 1:9-11

¹ Revised New Hampshire Baptist Confession of 1853

2. Of the True God

We believe that 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 (1); inexpressibly glorious in holiness (2), and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love (3); that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (4); equal in every divine perfection (5), and executing distinct and harmonious offices in the great work of redemption (6).

1. John 4:24; Psa. 147:5; 83:18; Heb. 3:4; Rom. 1:20; Jer. 10:10
2. Exod. 15:11; Isa. 6:3; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Rev. 4:6-8
3. Mark 12:30; Rev. 4:11; Matt. 10:37; Jer. 2:12-13
4. Matt. 28:19; John 15:26; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 1 John 5:7
5. John 10:30; 5:17; 14:23; 17:5, 10; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; Phil. 2:5-6
6. Eph. 2:18; 2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4-5; comp. 2, 7

3. Of the Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker (1); but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state (2); in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners (3), not by constraint, but choice (4); 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 (5), without defense or excuse (6).

1. Gen. 1:27, 31; Eccl. 7:29; Acts 16:26; Gen. 2:16
2. Gen. 3:6-24; Rom. 5:12
3. Rom. 5:19; John 3:6; Psa. 51:5; Rom. 5:15-19; 8:7
4. Isa. 53:6; Gen. 6:12; Rom. 3:9-18
5. Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 1:18, 32; 2:1-16; Gal. 3:10; Matt. 20:15
6. Ezek. 18:19-20; Rom. 1:20; 3:19; Gal. 3:22

4. Of the Way of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace (1), through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God (2); who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon him our nature, yet without sin (3); honored the divine law by his personal obedience (4), and by his death made a full atonement for our sins (5); that having risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven (5); and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior (7).

1. Eph. 2:5; Matt. 18:11; 1 John 4:10; 1 Cor. 3:5-7; Acts 15:11
2. John 3:16; 1:1-14; Heb. 4:14; 12:24
3. Phil. 2:6-7; Heb. 2:9, 14; 2 Cor. 5:21
4. Isa. 42:21; Phil. 2:8; Gal. 4:4-5; Rom. 3:21
5. Isa. 53:4-5; Matt. 20:28; Rom. 4:25; 3:21-26; 1 John 4:10; 2:2; 1 Cor. 15:1-3; Heb. 9:13-15
6. Heb. 1:8, 3; 8:1; Col. 3:1-4
7. Heb. 7:25; Col. 2:9; Heb. 2:18; 7:26; Psa. 89:19; Psa. 14

5. Of Justification

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ (1) secures to such as believe in him is Justification (2); that Justification includes the pardon of sin (3), and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness (4); that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood (5); by virtue of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God (6); that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity (7).

1. John 1:16; Eph. 3:8
2. Acts 13:39; Isa. 3:11-12; Rom. 8:1
3. Rom. 5:9; Zech. 13:1; Matt. 9:6; Acts 10:43
4. Rom. 5:17; Titus 3:5-6; 1 Pet. 3:7; 1 John 2:25; Rom. 5:21
5. Rom. 4:4-5; 5:21; 6:28; Phil. 3:7-9
6. Rom. 5:19; 3:24-26; 4:23-25; 1 John 2:12
7. Rom. 5:1-3, 11; 1 Cor. 1:30-31; Matt. 6:33; 1 Tim. 4:8

6. Of the Freeness of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel (1); that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith (2); and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel (3); which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation (4).

1. Isa. 55:1; Rev. 22:17; Luke 14:17
2. Rom. 16:26; Mark 1:15; Rom. 1:15-17
3. John 5:40; Matt. 23:37; Rom. 9:32; Prov. 1:24; Acts 13:46
4. John 3:19; Matt. 11:20; Luke 19:27; 2 Thess. 1:8

7. Of Grace in Regeneration

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again (1); that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind (2); that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth (3), so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel (4); and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith, and newness of life (5).

1. John 3:3, 6-7; 1 Cor. 1:14; Rev. 8:7-9; 21:27
2. 2 Cor. 5:17; Ezek. 36:26; Deut. 30:6; Rom. 2:28-29; 5:5; 1 John 4:7
3. John 3:8; 1:13; James 1:16-18; 1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 2:13
4. 1 Pet. 1:22-25; 1 John 5:1; Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 3:9-11
5. Eph. 5:9; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 5:16-23; Eph. 3:14-21; Matt. 3:8-10; 7:20; 1 John 5:4, 18

8. Of Repentance and Faith

We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God (1); whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ (2), we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy (3); 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 (4).

1. Mark 1:15; Acts 11:18; Eph. 2:8; 1 John 5:1
2. John 16:8; Acts 2:37-38; 16:30-31
3. Luke 18:13; 15:18-21; James 4:7-10; 2 Cor. 7:11; Rom. 10:12-13; Psalms 51
4. Rom. 10:9-11; Acts 3:22-23; Heb. 4:14; Psalms 2:6; Heb. 1:8; 8:25; 2 Tim. 1:12

9. Of God's Purpose of Grace

We believe that Election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners (1); that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end (2); that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable (3); that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy (4); that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree (5); that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel (6); that it is the foundation of Christian assurance (7); and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence (8).

1. 2 Tim. 1:8-9; Eph. 1:3-14; 1 Pet. 1:1-2; Rom. 11:5-6; John 15:15; 1 John 4:19; Hos. 12:9
2. 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Acts 13:48; John 10:16; Matt. 20:16; Acts 15:14
3. Exod. 33:18-19; Matt. 20:15; Eph. 1:11; Rom. 9:23-24; Jer. 31:3; Rom. 11:28-29; James 1:17-18; 2 Tim. 1:9; Rom. 11:32-36
4. 1 Cor. 4:7; 1:26-31; Rom. 3:27; 4:16; Col. 3:12; 1 Cor. 3:5-7; 15:10; 1 Pet. 5:10; Acts 1:24; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 2:9; Luke 18:7; John 15:16; Eph. 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:12
5. 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Cor. 9:22; Rom. 8:28-30; John 6:37-40; 2 Pet. 1:10
6. 1 Thess. 1:4-10
7. Rom. 8:28-30; Isa. 42:16; Rom. 11:29
8. 2 Pet. 1:10-11; Phil. 3:12; Heb. 6:11

10. Of Sanctification

We believe that Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness (1); that it is a progressive work (2); that it is begun in regeneration (3); 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 (4).

1. 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:23; 2 Cor. 7:1; 13:9; Eph. 1:4
2. Prov. 4:18; 2 Cor. 3:18; Heb. 6:1; 2 Pet. 1:5-8; Phil. 3:12-16
3. John 2:29; Rom. 8:5; John 3:6; Phil. 1:9-11; Eph. 1:13-14
4. Phil. 2:12-13; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 13:5; Luke 11:35; 9:23; Matt. 26:41; Eph. 6:18; 4:30

11. Of the Perseverance of Saints

We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end (1); that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors (2); that a special Providence watches over their welfare (3); and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (4).

1. John 8:31; 1 John 2:27-28; 3:9; 5:18
2. 1 John 2:19; John 13:18; Matt. 13:20-21; John 6:66-69; Job 17:9
3. Rom. 8:28; Matt. 6:30-33; Jer. 32:40; Psa. 121:3; 91:11-12
4. Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13; Jude 24-25; Heb. 1:14; 2 Kings 6:16; Heb. 13:5; 1 John 4:4

12. Of the Harmony of the Law and the Gospel

We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government (1); that it is holy, just, and good (2); and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin (3); 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 (4).

1. Rom. 3:31; Matt. 5:17; Luke 16:17; Rom. 3:20; 4:15
2. Rom. 7:12, 7, 14, 22; Gal. 3:21; Psa. 119
3. Rom. 8:7-8; Josh. 24:19; Jer. 13:23; John 6:44; 5:44
4. Rom. 8:2, 4; 10:4; 1 Tim. 1:5; Heb. 8:10; Jude 20-21; Heb. 12:14; Matt. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 12:28

13. Of a Gospel Church

We believe that a visible Church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers (1), associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel (2); observing the ordinances of Christ (3); governed by his laws (4), and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his Word (5); that its only scriptural officers are Elders (includes Pastors) and Deacons (6), whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

1. 1 Cor. 1:1-13; Matt. 18:17; Acts 5:11; 8:1; 11:31; 1 Cor. 4:17; 14:23; 3 John 9; 1 Tim. 3:5
2. Acts 2:41-42; 2 Cor. 8:5; Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 5:12-13
3. 1 Cor. 11:2; 2 Thess. 3:6; Rom. 16:17-20; 1 Cor. 11:23; Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5:6; 2 Cor. 2:7; 1 Cor. 4:17
4. Matt. 28:20; John 14:15; 15:12; 1 John 4:21; John 14:21; 1 Thess. 4:2; 2 John 6; Gal. 6:2; all the Epistles
5. Eph. 4:7; 1 Cor. 14:12; Phil. 1:27; 1 Cor. 12:14
6. Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23; 15:22; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1

14. Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer (1), into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost (2); 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 (3); that it is prerequisite to the privileges of Church membership. We believe in the Lord's Supper (4), in which the Church, by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ (5); preceded always by solemn self-examination (6).

1. Acts 8:36-39; Matt. 3:5-6; John 3:22-23; 4:1-2; Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12; 16:32-34; 18:8
2. Matt. 28:19; Acts 10:47-48; Gal. 3:27-28
3. Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:20-21; Acts 22:16
4. Acts 2:41-42; Matt. 28:19-20; Acts and Epistles

5. 1 Cor. 11:26; Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20

6. 1 Cor. 11:28; 5:1, 8; 10:3-32; 11:17-32; John 6:26-71

15. Of the Christian Sabbath

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, or Christian Sabbath (1); and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes (2), by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private (3) and public (4); and by preparation for that rest that remains for the people of God (5).

1. Acts 20:7; Gen. 2:3; Col. 2:16-17; Mark 2:27; John 20:19; 1 Cor. 16:1-2

2. Exod. 20:8; Rev. 1:10; Psa. 118:24

3. Psa. 119:15

4. Heb. 10:24-25; Acts 11:26; 13:44; Lev. 19:30; Exod. 46:3; Luke 4:16; Acts 17:2,

3; Psa. 26:8; 87:3

5. Heb. 4:3-11

16. Of Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society (1); and that government officials are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed (2); except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ (3) who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth (4).

1. Rom. 13:1-7; Deut. 16:18; 1 Sam. 23:3; Exod. 18:23; Jer.30:21

2. Matt. 22:21; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13; 1 Tim. 2:1-8

3. Acts 5:29; Matt. 10:28; Dan. 3:15-18; 6:7-10; Acts 4:18-20

4. Matt. 23:10; Rom. 14:4; Rev. 19:16; Psa. 72:11; Psa. 2; Rom. 14:9-13

17. Of the Righteous and the Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked (1); 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 (2); while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the curse (3); and this distinction holds among men both in and after death (4).

1. Mal. 3:18; Prov. 12:26; Isa. 5:20; Gen. 18:23; Jer. 15:19; Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 6:16

2. Rom. 1:17; 7:6; 1 John 2:29; 3:7; Rom. 6:18, 22; 1 Cor. 11:32; Prov. 11:31; 1 Pet. 4:17-18

3. 1 John 5:19; Gal. 3:10; John 3:36; Isa. 57:21; Psa. 10:4; Isa 55:6-7

4. Prov. 14:32; Luke 16:25; John 8:21-24; Prov. 10:24; Luke 12:4-5; 9:23-26; John 12:25-26; Eccl. 3:17; Matt. 7:13-14

18. Of the World to Come

We believe that the end of the world is approaching (1); that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven (2), and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution (3); that a solemn separation will then take place (4); that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy (5); and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness (6).

1. 1 Pet. 4:7; 1 Cor. 7:29-31; Heb. 1:10-12; Matt. 24:35; 1 John 2:17; Matt. 28:20; 13:39-40; 2 Pet. 3:3-13

2. Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; Heb. 9:28; Acts 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-11

3. Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:12-59; Luke 14:14; Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; 6:40; 11:25-26; 2 Tim. 1:10; Acts 10:42

4. Matt. 13:49, 37-43; 24:30-31; 25:31-33

5. Matt. 25:35-41; Rev. 22:11; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Mark 9:43-48; 2 Pet. 2:9; Jude 7; Phil. 3:19; Rom. 6:32; 2 Cor. 5:10-11;

John 4:36; 2 Cor. 4:18

6. Rom. 3:5-6; 2 Thess. 1:6-12; Heb. 6:1-2; 1 Cor. 4:5; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:2-16; Rev. 20:11-12; 1 John 2:28; 4:17

ARTICLE 4 STANDARDS OF LIVING

1. Ministry and Evangelism

We are divinely called, and spiritually ordained to minister in a two fold purpose. 1. To edify the body of Christ, and 2. To evangelize the world. (Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-20, Ephesians 4:11-13)

2. Worship

Worship is the act of paying reverence, and adoration to God. God's people are instructed by His Word and the example of Christ to make worship a regular part of one's life. As a church, we will continue to follow Biblical standards of worship, as we strive to maintain a contemporary atmosphere to the needs of our congregation.

Public Worship - Worshipers at Hope Community Church should make it a practice to attend the meetings of this congregation as much as possible, which shall consist of singing, prayer, special music, receiving of tithes and offerings, and preaching of God's Word. The scriptures emphatically state that we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. It is not only our God-given responsibility, but a blessed privilege and Joy. (Heb. 10: 24,25, Ps. 122:1)

Private Worship - Every believer is instructed by God to make the experience of private worship a regular part of daily life. We encourage believers to establish a good program of personal devotions, and a regular daily time for such worship. (Ps. 1:2 , Matt. 6:6, 14:23)

Family Worship - We encourage family worship which ought to be performed daily by every family. (Deut. 6:7, 2 Tim. 3:15)

3. Christian Stewardship

Christian stewardship has its origin in God's ownership of all things. Since the New Testament clearly indicates that our giving is to be systematic and proportionate, believers are encouraged to adopt the principle of tithing their income as a minimum expression of their stewardship. Our stewardship should be motivated by the Holy Spirit and by the example of our Lord who freely gave Himself for all. (1 Cor. 6:20, Rom. 12:1, 1 Cor. 16:2, Mal. 3:8, 2 Cor. 16:2)

4. Dignity Of Marriage

Marriage is a total commitment of a total person for a total life between one man and one woman. Marriage, which is the foundation of the family, the Christian home, government, and society, should only be entered into in the fear and in the will of God. Accordingly, a believer shall not be united in holy matrimony with an unbeliever, nor shall persons of the same sex be married at Hope Community Church

Furthermore, we believe that the sexual union is reserved for one man and one woman in a marriage relationship, therefore any sexual relationship outside of the bounds of marriage (heterosexual or homosexual) is considered sexual immorality. Persons involved in sexual immorality shall not be considered for membership nor permitted to serve or teach in any capacity within the church. Current members and leaders will be addressed through Article 6, Section 4. (Gen. 2:23-24, 1 Cor. 7:7, 2 Cor. 6:14-17, Rom 1:18-32, 1 Thess. 4:3-8; Galatians 5:19; Heb. 13:4)

5. Divorce

God hates divorce. Divorce, in scripture is permitted as an accommodation to man's sin for the protection of the innocent party. Since divorce is only a concession to man's sin, and not part of God's original plan for marriage, all believers considering divorce should have the same attitude toward divorce as God does. There are two Biblical reasons for divorce. The first is sexual immorality and the second is when a non-believing partner refuses to live with his or her believing partner. The fact that God permits divorce, does not mean the Bible encourages divorce. Reconciliation is God's ideal plan for any marriage problems. (Matt. 19:4-9, 5:32, 1 Cor. 7: 11-16, Gal. 6:1, Hosea 1-3)

6. Child Dedication

Child dedication is a voluntary act where believing parents publicly present their child to the Lord as an outward expression of their gratitude to Him, and as a formal appeal to God for divine assistance in the rearing of the child. It is not to be confused with infant baptism, or to be viewed as an ordinance of the church. In dedicating their child in the presence of fellow believers, parents are publicly dedicating themselves to the faithful fulfillment of their parental responsibilities and are acknowledging their need for the prayerful support and encouragement of those fellow believers. (Ps. 127:3, Eph. 6:4,18, Prov. 22:6, Deut. 6:4-9)

7. Sanctity of Human Life

God is the creator, sustainer, and giver of life. Only He has the right to say under what conditions this gift of life may be taken. His Word declares that all human beings, including unborn children, the disabled, the dependent, the weak, and the vulnerable, are living humans, made in His image. God requires the death penalty for murder because man is made in His image. Therefore it is an abomination before God to voluntarily kill unborn children or any human beings who likewise bear His image. (Gen. 1:27, 9:5,6, Ex. 20:13, 21:14, Ps. 127:3-5, 139:13-16, Eph. 5:11, Heb.10:24.)

8. Gift of Tongues

We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts. While we recognize the fact that all believers possess spiritual gifts and are to exercise them according to Biblical principles and the Holy Spirit's direction, we cannot identify with the unscriptural abuses of these gifts or with the erroneous idea that the possession of certain gifts is an evidence of spirituality. Therefore, we do not endorse the current Charismatic Movement, ecstatic utterances (charismatic tongues), or other temporary sign gifts such as healing, prophecy, etc. We believe that Christ Himself is the source of spiritual satisfaction, rather than some undefined, spiritual experience. Speaking in tongues, and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament scriptures were completed, and their authority became established. (1 Cor. 13:8, 1 Cor. 14:1-25.)

9. Apparel

The scripture instructs believers to adorn themselves with respectful apparel, with modesty and self-control. Children of God are to guard themselves against immodesty, extravagance, and extremes in their dress. We therefore urge decency and modesty in the mode of dress. (1 Tim. 2:9,10; 1 Thess. 4:3-8).

ARTICLE 5 CHURCH COVENANT

Having, as we trust, been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully covenant with each other.

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian Church, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others.

We will endeavor to bring us such as may at any time be under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.

We will rejoice at each other's happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows

We will seek, by Divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation to lead a new and holy life acceptable to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

ARTICLE 6 MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized in obedience to Christ following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and Beliefs (Article 3) and Standards of Living (Article 4), and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant (Article 5). The elders (See Article 7, Section 2) shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, Membership Form, or such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate. All members under the age of 18 shall be considered non-voting members.

Section 2. Procedure for Receiving Members

Any person desiring to unite with this church shall request membership through an elder. An elder shall meet with the applicant to determine qualification for membership (see Section 1). The applicant will then be presented to the elders and upon recommendation by the elders shall be presented to the congregation for membership, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

When being presented to the congregation, applicants will be given the opportunity to publicly acknowledge their profession of faith or will have another member read it for them. The members shall then, together with the new member, read the church covenant and extend to them the right hand of fellowship.

Section 3. Duties and Privileges of Membership

In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God.

Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation. Non-members may serve on an as needed basis with the approval of the elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

Under Christ, this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

Section 4. Church Discipline

A. Formative Discipline

Formative discipline is a natural function of the life of the body of Christ. It has several aspects. One aspect of formative discipline is that which occurs within the Body of Christ as a result of mutual ministry and mutual submission to one another in the Lord (Heb. 10:24-25; Col 3:16; 1 Thes. 5:14-15). Another aspect is that occurring as members of the Body submit to overseers whom the Lord has set over the church (Eph. 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5, Heb. 13:7,17). Formative discipline also occurs as passages such as Matthew 18 are employed to resolve conflicts between brothers and sisters. There are occasions, however, when failure in the application of formative discipline makes the application of corrective discipline necessary and proper.

B. Corrective Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and the example of Scripture. Church discipline, then, should be ordinarily contemplated after individual private admonition has failed and shall be administered through the elders.

Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5).

The Purpose of such discipline should be:

For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (Proverbs 15:5 ; 29:15; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Hebrews 12:1-11; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26-27; 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; 1 Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:13-14; James 1:22)

For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24-25)

For the purity of the church as a whole (1 Corinthians 5:6-7; 2 Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2)

For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1-14; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Peter 2:2; 1 John 3:10) and

Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (Deuteronomy 5:11; 1 Kings 11:2; 2 Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; 18:17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15:5-6; 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 17: 1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; 1 Peter 2:12).

Section 5. Termination of Membership

Termination of membership shall be recognized by the church following the death or voluntary resignation of any church member. Membership may be terminated as an act of church discipline at the recommendation of the elders and with a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members.

ARTICLE 7 CHURCH OFFICERS

Section 1 – Summary

The Biblical offices in the church are elders (includes pastors) and deacons. In addition our church recognizes, for administrative and legal purposes, the administrative positions under this constitution of clerk and treasurer. All officers, with the exception of the Pastor and Associate Pastor(s), must be members of this church for one year and in good standing prior to assuming their responsibilities. All officers of the church shall be 18 years of age or older.

Section 2 – Elders

A. Elders

The elders shall be comprised of not less than three men who satisfy the qualifications of elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. A majority of the active eldership shall be composed of church members not in the regular pay of the church, and no elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine and practice), and shepherding the flock.

The Church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders. This recognition shall be reaffirmed triennially. After an elder, other than the pastor or associate pastor(s), has served two consecutive three-year terms, he may only be elected to the office of elder after at least one year.

An elder's term may be terminated by resignation or dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a two thirds vote of the members present at any member's meeting of the church.

The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, visit the sick and shut-ins, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the members for the work of the ministry (including helping to organize and execute community outreach), encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, provide private counsel when needed, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for missions. The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions outlined in this constitution.

The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding new paid staff positions such as administrative assistants. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of the elders who shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members.

Each year the elders, after consultation with the deacons, deaconesses, and the membership, shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at the annual business meeting and shall be approved by a two thirds majority vote. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders.

The elders shall elect a chairman of the elders' meetings and shall also elect one of their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings.

Amendment (18 March 2018):

In the event that there be less than three elders in the eldership, the elders may, upon approval from the congregation, recall an elder (who has served two consecutive terms and is serving his one-year sabbatical) to serve as an elder until another man is raised up who satisfies the qualifications of elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, and this constitution.

B. Pastor

The pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, A above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to full time gospel ministry of preaching and teaching.

In addition to performing the duties of an elder, he shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, act on behalf of the church by officiating weddings and funerals, and perform other such duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution.

In the absence or incapacity of the pastor the elders shall assume responsibilities for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

C. Associate Pastor(s)

The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the pastor is that of associate. An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, A above and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to full time gospel ministry of preaching and teaching.

He shall assist the pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in this constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the elders.

In the absence or incapacity of the pastor for defined periods of time, such as sabbatical or illness, the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the elders.

Section 3 – Deacons and Deaconesses

The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on election of office bearers, men and women who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons and deaconesses. They shall be elected to one term lasting for a maximum of three years and may only be elected to another term after one year.

A deacon or deaconess's term may be terminated by resignation or dismissal. Any action of dismissal shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21. Any of the deacons or deaconesses may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any member's meeting of the church.

Deacons and deaconesses shall be responsible for specific areas of service within the church as directed by the elders. Areas of service will focus on care for the temporal needs of members; attending to the accommodations for public worship, encouraging and supporting those able to help others, and encouraging and supporting those with the gift of administration.

In addition, deacons and deaconesses shall receive hold, and disperse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only.

The Deacons and Deaconesses, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

Section 4 – Clerk

The clerk shall be a member of this church and can also hold the office of elder, deacon, or deaconess. It shall be the duty of the clerk to record minutes of all regular and special member's meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, to ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution shall be available for all members, and to render reports as requested by the elders, deacons or the church.

The clerk shall be nominated by the elders and elected by a majority vote of the members at a duly called members' meeting to serve a term of one year and may be elected to successive terms.

In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church clerk.

Section 5 – Treasurer

The treasurer shall be a member of the church and can also hold the office of elder, deacon, or deaconess. The treasurer shall not be a paid church staff member.

The treasurer shall be responsible to ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall be responsible for presenting an annual report of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at the annual business meeting.

The Treasurer shall ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the elders quarterly, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.

The treasurer shall be nominated by the elders and elected by a majority vote of the members at a duly called members' meeting to serve a term of one year and may be elected to successive terms.

In the absence or incapacity of the treasurer, the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church treasurer.

Section 7 – Nomination and Election of Office Bearers

A. Principles

The appointment of office bearers within the local church is the responsibility of the local church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Lord's appointment is recognized by the inward conviction of the individual involved, by the approval of the church leadership, and by the congregation observing the possession of those gifts and graces required by Scripture for the office concerned.

The recognition of office bearers is a matter of such importance that it should never be dealt with without much prayerful waiting upon God, an honest perusal of the relevant passages of Scripture, and a frank evaluation of those who are considered as potential office bearers.

B. Procedures

Elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. The elders may request nominations in writing from the general membership. The elders shall examine all potential nominees according to the relevant passages of Scripture. Nominees will be questioned by the elders as to their own qualifications for the office and the inward conviction to bear the office. The eldership will seek to understand the individual's growth in grace and qualification for the office. Nominations will be made to the congregation upon unanimous approval of the elders.

The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. Names of nominees to serve as elders, deacons, deaconesses, clerk, or treasurer shall be presented by the elders at regular worship services on a minimum of two consecutive Sunday's immediately prior to the meeting.

Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible of the relevant church member's meeting.

For the office of elder, the moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a 75% majority vote of all votes cast by secret ballot. Abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. The man elected shall assume his responsibilities upon the laying on of hands by the elders.

For the office of deacon and deaconess, the moderator shall declare elected all men and women receiving a 75% majority of all votes cast by secret ballot. Abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

For the offices of clerk and treasurer, the moderator shall declare elected all men and women receiving a simple majority of all votes cast by secret ballot. Abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

C. Calling of the Pastor

In calling any man to this position a Pastoral Search Committee shall be formed. It shall consist of three elders (chosen unanimously by the elders) and three members of the congregation in good standing. The three members of the congregation shall be nominated by the congregation and elected by a simple majority vote at a duly called congregational meeting. Names of nominees shall be presented by the elders at regular worship services on a minimum of two consecutive Sunday's immediately prior to the meeting

The pastoral search committee shall carefully investigate all possible candidates by getting good recommendations from reliable sources, and if possible visiting the prospective candidate in his present field of service and listening to recorded sermons, if available.

The pastoral search committee shall recommend prospective candidates to preach on at least two consecutive Sundays. Advance notice will be given to the congregation when a prospective candidate is preaching.

The pastoral search committee shall meet with the candidate at least once to thoroughly examine him as to his life, previous ministry experience, preaching and teaching gifts, wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant, agreement with this constitution, and his general attitude and vision for the church. Consideration will be given to salary and benefits at that time.

After careful examination of any prospective candidates that the pastoral search committee deemed appropriate to pursue, they shall make a recommendation to the congregation of one prospective candidate. Upon the notification of the congregation, the candidate will then preach on two consecutive Lord's Day services, after which a question and answer time will take place between the congregation and the candidate.

If it deems wise, the pastoral search committee shall then recommend to the church the name of one candidate as pastor and shall call for a special meeting of the church for a vote.

Notice of the nomination of a man to be called as pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of him and his wife if he is married) must be given at three Sunday morning services prior to the vote at a duly called member's meeting.

Upon written request to the elders, an absentee ballot will be made available. All absentee ballots not submitted prior to the vote will not be counted as votes cast.

The moderator shall declare the candidate elected upon receiving an 80% majority vote of all votes cast by secret and absentee ballots. Abstentions will not be considered cast votes.

D. Calling of Associate Pastor(s)

In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed, with the exception of the membership requirement of one year. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential associate pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith, the Church Covenant, and agreement with this constitution.

Notice of the nomination of a man to be called as associate pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of him and his wife if he is married) must be given at three Sunday morning services prior to the vote at a duly called member's meeting.

Upon written request to the elders, an absentee ballot will be made available. All absentee ballots not submitted prior to the vote will not be counted as votes cast.

The moderator shall declare the candidate elected upon receiving an 80% majority vote of all votes cast by secret and absentee ballots. Abstentions will not be considered cast votes.

E. Termination of the Pastor or Associate Pastor(s)

If at any time a Pastor or Associate Pastor shall desire to be released from his office, he shall do so by a written resignation giving sixty days notice, unless a shorter time limit is mutually agreed upon.

If the relations between a Pastor or Associate Pastor and congregation become detrimental to the welfare of the church, the Elders shall have the authority to consider this matter and make recommendations to the congregation at a duly called congregational meeting. Members of the church shall also have the right to call for such a congregational meeting by presenting to the Board of Elders a petition with one-third of the membership signed in favor of such a meeting.

If the Pastor's life and/or preaching shall violate the standards of Hope Community Church, and the board of elders so recommends, the services of the Pastor or Associate Pastor may be terminated immediately following a duly called member's meeting. Dismissal of a Pastor or Associate Pastor shall require a two-thirds majority vote of all votes cast by secret ballot. Abstentions shall not be considered cast ballots.

Section 8. Installation of Elders

In the regular worship service of the church, the Pastor shall question newly elected Elders as follows:

1. Do you reaffirm your faith in Jesus Christ as your own personal Lord and Savior? Answer: I do.
2. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, totally trustworthy, fully inspired by the Holy Sprit, the supreme, final, and only infallible rule of faith and practice? Answer: I do.
3. Do you sincerely believe the Statement of Faith and Covenant of this church contain the truth taught in the Holy Scripture? Answer: I do.
4. Do you promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the statements in the Constitution, Statement of Faith and Covenant you will on your own initiative make known to the pastor and other elders the change which has taken place in your views since your assumption of this vow? Answer: I do.
5. Do you subscribe to the government and discipline of Hope Community Church? Answer: I do.
6. Do you promise to submit to your fellow elders in the Lord? Answer: I do, with the Lord's help.
7. Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to accept the office of elder from love of God and sincere desire to promote His glory in the Gospel of His Son? Answer: I have.
8. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in promoting the truths of the Gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise to you on that account? Answer: I do, with God's help.
9. Will you be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as elder, whether personal or relative, private or public, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before this congregation? Answer: I will, by the grace of God
10. Are you now willing to take personal responsibility in the life of this congregation as an elder, and will you seek to oversee the ministry and resources of the church, and to devote yourself to prayer, the ministry of the word and the shepherding of God's flock, relying upon the grace of God, in such a way that Hope Community Church, and the entire Church of Jesus Christ will be blessed? Answer: I am, with the help of God.

The pastor shall then question the congregation as follows:

1. Do you, the members of Hope Community Church, acknowledge and publically receive these men as elders, as gifts of Christ to this church? Answer: We do.
2. Will you love them and pray for them in their ministry, and work together with them humbly and cheerfully, that by the grace of God you may accomplish the mission of the church, giving them all due honor and support in their leadership to which the Lord has called them, to the glory and honor of God? Answer: We will.

Upon the laying on of hands and prayer by the pastor and elders, newly elected elders shall assume their office.

ARTICLE 8 MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship Meetings

Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

Section 2. Member's Meetings

A. Basic Principles

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Scripture clearly sets forth the pattern and necessity of the whole church being of one mind in responding to the directives of the Holy Spirit. We understand this to mean the unreserved commitment and support of the whole body in responding to decisions of the church. We do not believe it means that there must be a total intellectual agreement at every point, but rather a willingness to submit to one another in the fear of God, as the Lord's will is expressed in the valid decision making process adopted by this church. A refusal to be so committed and guided will break the unity of the Spirit. Harmony will be sought according to the principles of Matthew 18:15-20.

B. Notice of Meetings

Notice of all members' meetings shall be given at regular worship services on a minimum of two consecutive Sunday's immediately prior to the meeting. In an emergency, a meeting may be called on shorter notice by notifying members of the time, place, and purpose of the congregational meeting.

Due to the sensitive nature of some issues, meetings may be restricted to attendance by only church members at the discretion of the Elders.

C. Method of Calling Meetings

Member's meetings may be called by the Elders or when a need is expressed to the elders by members of the congregation.

D. Eligible Voters

Any member of the church eighteen years of age or over, not under corrective church discipline, shall have the right to vote on any question properly brought before the congregation.

E. Annual Business Meeting

An Annual Business Meeting shall be held within the first three months of every calendar year. At this meeting, the following matters may be presented or considered, along with any other items affecting the church: financial report of treasurer, deacon and deaconess' report, elder's report, reports of any special committees, presentation of office bearers, and matters related to church membership.

**ARTICLE 9
PROPERTY AND FINANCES**

Section 1. Summary

The work of this church is financially dependent solely upon the voluntary gifts of God's people. The budget approved each year at the annual business meeting shall be the basis for current liabilities. No committee or board is authorized to make major changes in its provisions without the consent of the congregation.

The church shall have the right to own, buy, or sell tangible properties, both real and personal, in its name and through properly elected and delegated officers.

No profit shall ever accrue to the benefit of any person or persons from the assets, holdings, or other transactions in which this corporation may become involved.

No financial claim or lien upon the church shall be incurred by any member, official, or organization of the church without the authorization of the membership made by a two-thirds majority vote. Any single expenditure over \$5000 shall require approval by two thirds of the members present at a duly called member's meeting

The fiscal year of the church shall begin January first and end December thirty-first.

Section 2. Auditing Committee

This committee shall consist of two members elected by the congregation at the annual meeting by a simple majority vote. As soon as possible, following the close of the fiscal year and before the annual meeting, the committee shall carefully audit the church financial records, receipts, and vouchers of the Treasurer.

An audit may also occur at the request of the board of elders at any time.

The Committee shall provide a written report to the Elders prior to the annual business meeting. The Committee shall present their findings to the congregation at the annual business meeting.

Section 2. Dissolution

Upon dissolution of the Corporation assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes (of like faith and practice of Hope Community Church) within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or to a state or local government for a public purpose. All decisions in this event shall be made by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly called member's meeting. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas 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 exempt purposes within the meaning of the code.

**ARTICLE 10
MISSIONS**

The board of elders shall determine missionaries that may be supported by this church, using as guidelines the degree of doctrinal agreement with this church and the amount of church-planting emphasis in their ministry. There shall be no distinction made between home and foreign missions, however it is our desire to promote works to unreached people groups.

The amount of money designated for missions shall be determined by the elders each year in the annual itemized budget. Persons desiring to give a special gift to missions (regularly or occasionally) may designate their gift to missions and all of that money shall be used for the missions supported by Hope Community Church.

**ARTICLE 11
AMENDMENTS**

Amendments of the Constitution and By-Laws may be adopted by a three-quarter majority of the members present and voting at a congregational meeting, provided that such amendment shall be distributed in a written form to the membership at least two weeks prior to the members meeting.