

# **The Constitution and Bylaws of Hope Community Church**

January 24, 2007

## **Preamble**

The Evangelical Covenant Church is a communion of congregations gathered by God, united in Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to obey the great commandment and the great commission. It affirms its companionship in faith with other church bodies and all those who fear God and keep God's commandments.

The Evangelical Covenant Church adheres to the affirmations of the Protestant Reformation regarding the Bible. It confesses that the Holy Scripture, the Old and the New Testament, is the Word of God and the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine, and conduct. It affirms the historic confessions of the Christian Church, particularly the Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed, while emphasizing the sovereignty of the Word of God over all creedal interpretations.

In continuity with the renewal movements of historic Pietism, the Evangelical Covenant Church especially cherishes the dual emphasis on new birth and new life in Christ, believing that personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is the foundation for our mission of evangelism and Christian nurture. Our common experience of God's grace and love in Jesus Christ continues to sustain the Evangelical Covenant Church as an interdependent body of believers that recognizes but transcends our theological differences.

The Evangelical Covenant Church celebrates two divinely ordained sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Recognizing the reality of freedom in Christ, and in conscious dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit, we practice both the baptism of infants [non-salvific] and believer baptism. The Evangelical Covenant Church embraces this freedom in Christ as a gift that preserves personal conviction, yet guards against an individualism that disregards the centrality of the Word of God and the mutual responsibilities and disciplines of the spiritual community.

The Evangelical Covenant Church has its roots in historical Christianity, the Protestant reformation, the biblical instruction of the Lutheran Church of Sweden, and the great spiritual awakenings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These influences, together with more recent North American renewal movements, continue to shape its development and distinctive spirit. The Evangelical Covenant Church is committed to reaching across boundaries of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, age, and status in the cultivation of communities of life and service.

This document, which is in harmony with the above preamble, is the Constitution and Bylaws of Hope Community Church, an Evangelical Covenant Church, of Detroit, MI.

# **The Constitution of Hope Community Church**

## **Article I**

### **Name**

The name of this church shall be Hope Community Church, an Evangelical Covenant Church, of Detroit, Michigan.

## **Article II**

### **Affiliation**

The church is a member of the Evangelical Covenant Church [ECC] and its Great Lakes Conference. It is pledged to work in harmony with the ECC and GLC and to faithfully support the mission, ministries and policies of each.

## **Article III**

### **Confession of Faith**

We believe in God, the almighty Father  
And in the Messiah Jesus, His only begotten Son,  
Who is ruler over us,  
Who was born of the Holy Spirit and of Mary, the virgin,  
Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried,  
And on the third day rose from the dead,  
Who ascended into the realms of heaven  
And sits at the right hand of the Father,  
From where He will come to judge the living and the dead,  
And in the Spirit, who is holy,  
One holy church,  
Forgiveness of sins,  
And the resurrection of the flesh.

We also believe that both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible are the inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original manuscripts and our primary rule for faith and practice.

Finally, we believe that sinful humanity is justified before God by faith alone in Jesus Christ, through His atoning death, and not through any good works.

## Article IV

### Purpose

Our mission is to *reconcile all people to God and to one another in Jesus Christ.*

[II Cor. 5:17-21; Eph. 2:14-18]

Our values are:

- **Prayer** - To talk to God about everything. [Philippians 4:6-7]
- **Surrender** - To surrender our wills to the Holy Spirit. [Romans 8:1-17]
- **Word** - To long for and live the teachings of the Bible. [II Timothy 3:16-17]
- **Community** - To live in intimate and authentic community. [Col. 3:12-17; Acts 2:40-47]
- **Equality** - To live out equality. [Eph. 2:19-22; Col. 3:11; Acts 17:26-31]
- **Justice** - To love mercy and do justice. [Mic 6:8, Matt 25:34-40; James 1:27]

Our vision is:

“Hope is a church family centered on Jesus Christ,  
Where we value all people  
Where we serve one another  
Where we pursue maturity in relationships and  
Where we believe love will draw non-believers to Jesus,  
To the glory of God.”

## Article V

### Membership

Membership in the church is granted as provided in the Bylaws to those who through faith in God’s Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, have been born anew to a living hope through the Holy Spirit, desire to live a life of following this same Jesus, promise to faithfully support the mission, ministries and policies of the church and to share in its fellowship and obligations.

## Article VI

### Governance

The authority of the government of this church is vested in its membership acting through duly called congregational meetings. The management, administration and oversight of business and spiritual affairs are delegated by the membership to appropriate leadership as delineated in the Bylaws.

## **Article VII**

### **Officers**

The officers of the church shall be a chair and a vice-chair. All officers shall be members of the Leadership Team [hereafter known as the Deacon Board].

## **Article VIII**

### **Congregational Meetings**

An annual meeting shall be held as near the first of the fiscal year as feasible. At the annual meeting, written progress reports shall be submitted by the pastor[s], ministry staff, officers and ministry teams. Reports on an independent examination of financial records shall be submitted by the treasurer for the church and each of its organizations. Election for offices shall be held. The church budget shall be submitted for action.

Additional congregational meetings shall be held not less than semiannually. Items as required by the Constitution and Bylaws shall be submitted for membership action.

## **Article IX**

### **Assets of the Church**

1. The membership shall hold title to its own assets.
2. In the event of schism within the church, in which there are competing claims to the assets by various factions of the membership, the title of all church property, real or personal, shall remain with the group which abides by the Constitution and Bylaws, as determined by the executive board of the Great Lakes Conference.
3. No action for the sale or transfer of assets may be taken when the closure of the church is under consideration without the prior approval of the Great Lakes Conference executive board. In the event the membership votes to cease, the property and all assets of the church shall become and be the property of the ECC and the Great Lakes Conference, shared equally for the furtherance of the mission of both in that region, primarily through church planting.

## **Article X**

### **Amendments**

Amendments in harmony with this Constitution, the model constitutions for local ECC churches, non-profit law as of Michigan and not in conflict with ECC principles and policies may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting in an annual meeting of the membership, providing the proposed amendment was presented in written form at the preceding annual meeting. Articles IX and X may be amended only with the approval of the Great Lakes Conference executive board of the regional conference.

# The Bylaws of Hope Community Church

## Article I

### Membership

**Section 1. Purpose.** The purpose of membership is to join with other followers of Jesus Christ in building a community of worship committed to prayer, the preaching and study of the Word of God, lives lived in a manner consistent with the Scripture, reflecting in all our relationships the servant love of our Lord, the celebration of the sacraments and fellowship across gender, race, age, culture and class. In so doing, the membership covenants together to equip loving, giving, growing followers of Jesus to reach out with His good news - reaching the lost, serving those in need and seeking justice for the oppressed.

**Section 2. Responsibilities.** The members of this church do covenant together by God's grace to live lives in a manner consistent with the standards of biblical teaching, including the support of this congregation in attendance, prayer, service and giving, to live lives in word and deed that are an encouragement to others and to know and be like Jesus Christ, to reflect in all our relationships the servant love of our Lord and to support the broader mission of Jesus Christ through the ECC and Great Lakes Conference. Only members of Hope Community Church may lead a ministry.

**Section 3. Procedure for becoming a member.**

- a. Membership in the church is granted to those who through faith in God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, have been born anew to a living hope through the Holy Spirit, desire to live a Christian life, promise to faithfully support the mission, ministries and policies of this church and to share in its fellowship and obligations. While not a condition for membership, we strongly encourage water baptism as a profession of personal faith in Jesus Christ.
- b. Upon completion of a membership class [explaining the beliefs, mission, values and vision of Hope Community Church], persons desiring membership shall meet with the Senior Pastor and/or one or more of the Deacons to give testimony to personal faith in Jesus Christ, their desire to follow Christ as a part of HCC, and be encouraged in their walk of faith.
- c. The interviewing Deacon[s] shall submit their recommendations to the Deacon Board who shall notify the membership of the church of the recommendations. Any member objecting to or having concerns over the granting of membership to an applicant shall communicate in writing such objection or concern to the Deacon Board within ten days after notification.
- d. Final action on candidates for membership shall be taken by the Deacon Board within sixty days of receiving the recommendations from the interviewing Deacon[s].
- e. Applicants received into membership by the Deacon Board shall be welcomed at a service and encouraged to make public confession of their faith in Jesus Christ.

**Section 4. Children.** Children of the church shall be nurtured under its spiritual care. They shall receive instruction in the Word of God, Christian doctrine and the history of the church. At age 16, they may apply for church membership as outlined under Section 3 of this article.

**Section 5. Discipline.**

- a. Discipline of members. The Deacon Board shall be responsible for admonishing members who willfully neglect their responsibilities to the church or who err in doctrine or conduct.
- b. Erring members. Any member known to err in doctrine or conduct shall be counseled according to the procedure outlined in Matthew 18:15-18 and Galatians 6:1. Any member having knowledge of such error shall, in the spirit of Christian love, seek to restore the erring member. If he or she does not heed this counsel, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Deacon Board in writing, which shall in meekness and gentleness seek to restore the member. The Deacon Board may recommend taking the matter to the church to seek repentance and/or restoration.
- c. After the above process has been completed, dismissal of a member remaining in gross error in doctrine or conduct may result by a 75% vote of all current Deacon Board members. Such action may be appealed by the member to the congregation for consideration at the next congregational meeting.
- d. This difficult process shall be lived out, when necessary, in a spirit of humility and gentleness with a desire to seek restoration of the member to full fellowship in the body of Christ. This will include, whenever possible, a specific course of restorative action communicated in love to the member under discipline.
- e. The above is intended to guide Hope Community Church in the application of the teachings of Christ concerning unconditional love, grace and reconciliation as well as taking responsibility for and dealing with the consequences of our actions and decisions.

**Section 6. Withdrawal and removal of membership.** Any member desiring to transfer or withdraw from membership shall make such request in writing to the Pastor or Deacon Board. No membership shall be terminated except such action is requested in writing by the member or other[s] with legal standing. The church may, after due notice, hearing and effort to make such action unnecessary, terminate the membership of those who for the time of 1 year are absent from weekly church services and functions.

**Section 7. Recording.** The names of those joining and terminating membership shall be duly recorded and reported to the congregational meeting following action.

## Article II

### The Deacon Board

**Section 1. Purpose.** The Deacon Board shall be responsible for building, maintaining and overseeing the spiritual welfare of the congregation and for directing and overseeing all ministries and business affairs of the church.

**Section 2. Composition.** The Deacon Board, male and female [cf. I Timothy 3:8-13] shall be comprised of not less than 5 nor more than 10 members, [not including the Senior Pastor who is an ex officio member] and shall be reflective of the diversity of the body of believers at Hope Community Church. [A husband and wife may not serve on the Deacon Board at the same time.]

**Section 3. Qualification.** A Deacon Board member shall be a member of HCC, affirm the historic, orthodox Christian faith as stated in the HCC confession of faith, affirm the mission, values and vision of HCC and shall meet the biblical standards of character for church leaders as outlined in passages such as I Timothy 3:8-13, Acts 6:1-4, Mark 10:42-45 and Galatians 5:22-25. More specifically, they shall especially be known for and have evidenced:

- Humility and the spirit of a servant
- Sacrificial love for Christ and people
- Compassion, especially for the wounded and those in need of justice
- An ability to encourage and nurture
- Wisdom
- Faith
- A prayerful spirit and life
- The fullness of the Holy Spirit [demonstrated by the fruit of the Spirit]
- Passion and ability to handle the Scripture with accuracy, skill and care
- Leadership by example
- Maturity evidenced in a lifestyle of self-awareness and self-examination
- Emotional and spiritual depth forged by the wounds and storms of life

**Section 4. Election** – Deacon Board members shall be nominated by a nominating committee and then elected by a 75% vote of those members voting at a meeting of the congregation called for that purpose.

**Section 5. Term of office** – Due to the nature of the qualifications and call for this office, there are no stated term limits. However, because of the stress of ministry, and possibly for other personal reasons, a periodic sabbatical (start and end date defined) for Deacon Board members will be encouraged at the discretion of the Senior Pastor, the Deacon Board and/or the individual Deacon Board member.



**Section 6. Vacancies** – A Deacon Board member may resign. If a Deacon Board member resigns, their name may be submitted for re-election at a later date. A Deacon Board member may also be removed from office by a 75 % vote of congregational members voting at a meeting called for that purpose. The recommendation for such removal may come from the Pastor[s], other Deacon Board members or the congregational members according to the spirit and guidelines of I Timothy 5:19. [A member of Hope Community Church may request a congregational meeting for this purpose by submitting a petition signed by 20% of the membership.] Vacancies created by resignation or removal may be filled by appointment through the 2/3 vote of the Deacon Board. A Deacon Board member so appointed shall not be precluded from being nominated and elected thereafter according to the procedure outlined in Article II, Section 4 above.

**Section 7. Meetings**

- a. A majority of Deacon Board members shall constitute a quorum.
- b. A Deacon Board member shall excuse himself or herself from the discussion or vote on an issue involving conflict of interest. Deacon Board members may also be asked to remove themselves on an issue involving conflict of interest by a 75% vote of the Deacon Board.
- c. Every effort will be made to make sure all members are present when the Deacon Board takes any action and that all decisions are made in such a way that a spirit of unity is maintained on the Deacon Board.

**Section 8. Notification of Meetings.** All Deacon Board members shall receive a minimum 3 day advance notification of any meeting, including time and place of the meeting. In emergency situations, the 3 day notice may be waived by the 2/3 vote of the entire Deacon Board.

**Section 9. Decisions.** The Deacon Board shall strive for unanimity. Matters shall be determined by a majority vote of a Deacon Board quorum, unless on a matter in which the Constitution and Bylaws require a different percentage.

**Section 10. Organization.** The Deacon Board shall elect from among themselves a chair and a vice-chair.

- a. The chair shall preside at all business meetings of the church and of the Deacon Board. The chair shall confer with the senior pastor in preparing the agenda for such meetings, and shall utilize the counsel that the senior pastor can give by virtue of training, experience and calling.
- b. The vice-chair shall assume the duties of the chair in the chair's absence and assist in the chair's duties.

**Section 11. Responsibilities of the Deacon Board.** In being responsible to the congregation for building, maintaining and overseeing the spiritual welfare of the church and for directing and overseeing all ministries and business affairs of the church, the Deacon Board shall:

- a. Be responsible for working together to shepherd, build, maintain and oversee the

spiritual welfare of the local body and for the shepherding and oversight of those directing the ministries of the church. This shall include:

- Insuring that the sick, shut-in, oppressed, needy, orphans and widows, and those in need of justice are ministered to with compassion and strength.
  - Praying with and for believers in the body of Christ for physical, emotional and spiritual needs.
  - Dealing with any doctrinal issues that arise.
  - Dealing with members who err in doctrine and conduct, doing so in such a manner as to restore such members to full and complete fellowship, if possible. [Cf. Article I, Section 5]
  - Hearing and responding appropriately to the concerns of members.
  - Determining ministry teams needed to carry out the church's mission and then appointing appropriate leadership.
  - Presenting yearly ministry goals and objectives to the congregation.
- b. Be responsible to oversee the business affairs of the church and shall act as the trustees of the church and its assets and shall be responsible for the maintenance of the same.
- All property of the church, real or personal, shall be taken, held, sold, transferred or conveyed by the church in its incorporated name.
  - No real or personal property of the church, valued at more than \$10,000, shall be sold, leased or mortgaged unless approval has been authorized by a 2/3 majority of votes cast at any regular or special business meeting.
  - The Deacon Board shall designate those Deacon Board members and any other members of the church who shall be authorized to sign legal documents on behalf of the church.
- c. Be responsible for overseeing the preparation and submission of a proposed budget for each fiscal year to the membership for approval.
- Upon approval of the budget by the membership, the Deacon Board shall be responsible for seeing that the budget is carried out as approved.
  - The Deacon Board shall have the authority to appropriately adjust budget items and amounts where ministry objectives necessitate but in no event shall total expenditures exceed the total authorized budget or available funds without prior approval of the membership.
  - The Deacon Board shall appoint a member of the church as financial secretary and/or treasurer who is not a Deacon Board member. The secretary/treasurer shall accurately account for all monies received and disbursed in accordance with an established policy that ensures a segregation of duties. [Two signatures shall be required on all legal documents as well as checks payable of \$10,000 or more.] The secretary/treasurer shall prepare the church financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and regularly report such figures to the congregation. Financial records shall be archived and kept according to all federal, state and local guidelines and be available for public review at all times.
  - The Deacon Board shall annually hire or appoint an independent, qualified person outside the congregation who will annually examine and adjust the

church financial statements to comply with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. In the event that the examiner finds any significant unusual activity, the LT shall report such findings to the congregation.

- d. The Deacon Board shall be responsible for representing the congregation in certain staff relationships. This shall include:
  - The encouragement of the Senior Pastor and other ministry staff and their families.
  - Annual appraisal of the ministry of the Senior Pastor and the ministry of the other staff, providing Godly counsel or discipline as required.
  - Annual review and approval of staff compensation and approval of compensation for new staff, plus approval of other personnel expenses for any staff member or activity, all subject to overall budget approval.
  - Establishment of personnel policies.
  - Approval of changes in staff job descriptions and approval of job descriptions for new staff positions.
  - Maintenance of current job descriptions for all staff members.
  - Hiring of support staff.

**Section 8. Communication** – The Deacon Board will communicate through various venues with the congregation. This will include the following:

- a. Any church member may come to and sit in on the business portion of a Deacon Board meeting.
- b. The Deacon Board will communicate with the pastoral staff on a regular basis. This may include the pastoral staff attending Deacon Board meetings as needed for the proper function of their ministry.

**Section 9. Unity** – Action by the Deacon Board shall be taken in such manner as to preserve the unity of the Holy Spirit in the bond of peace.

- a. In case of impasse or disunity, the Deacon Board shall search the Scripture, pray and fast in a search for a spirit of unity.
- b. When necessary the Deacon Board shall seek appropriate outside training and counsel in order to facilitate authentic relationships and unified action. A 75% vote of the Deacon Board shall mandate the pursuit of appropriate outside counsel and help.

## **Article III**

### **Ministry Teams**

**Section 1. Purpose.** Ministry Teams shall be formed as required to implement the varied ministries of the church.

**Section 2. Establishment.** Ministry Teams shall be established by the Deacon Board to implement specific ministries. The configuration of Ministry Teams shall be reviewed regularly by the Deacon Board, upon recommendation of the church staff, in accord with the church's purpose, strategies and objectives for mission and ministry.

**Section 3. Duties.** The duties of Ministry Teams shall be to:

- a. Meet as required to plan and execute specific mission and ministry objectives.
- b. Recruit and train ministry personnel.
- c. Define and provide the necessary materials required for ministry.
- d. Submit annually to the Deacon Board proposed budgets and objectives for the forthcoming year and manage consistent with approved budgets.
- e. Report as requested to the Deacon Board.

**Section 4. Leadership.**

- a. The leader of a Ministry Team shall be approved by the Deacon Board in consultation with the pastor[s]. The team leader will serve as liaison to the Deacon Board to provide reports and information when requested and to forward requests to the Deacon Board when necessary.
- b. Ministry Team members may be selected by the Ministry Team leader. The Deacon Board may remove a Ministry Team member.
- c. Each Ministry Team shall organize itself as required to perform its ministry.
- d. The Deacon Board may appoint one of its members to be an ex officio member of any Ministry Team, who may also serve as that Ministry Team's leader.

## **Article IV**

### **Pastor and Ministry Staff**

**Section 1. Purpose.** Pastoral and additional ministry staff servant-leadership positions are created to help the congregation fulfill Christ's purposes in the world and among its members.

**Section 2. Pastoral qualifications** – Pastors of the church shall meet the character qualifications set forth in the Scripture [cf. I Timothy 3:1-7]. Each candidate should also have the gifts, call, experience, education and training that equips them for the specific pastoral position. [The experience, education and training may vary among candidates and will be evaluated by the nominating committee.] A master's degree in theology or divinity is highly desirable for the position of Senior Pastor but may be negotiable in certain situations. The Senior Pastor shall be an ordained pastor in good standing with the ECC. Other pastors shall be credentialed by the ECC in accordance with their qualifications and duties. A pastor shall be a member of the church by virtue of the call to serve the church.

**Section 3. Call of the Senior Pastor** – The Senior Pastor shall be called at a regular or special congregational meeting, the purpose of which shall be announced two weeks in advance. A pastoral search committee shall nominate the Senior Pastor. A congregational meeting shall elect this committee. It shall be representative of the congregation and have five to nine members, including the Deacon Board chair. The Senior Pastor shall be called by ballot with a 75% vote required for a call. The call shall be for an indefinite period of time with a minimum of six weeks notice required by the church or the Senior Pastor for termination of pastoral duties except as provided in Section 9. When the church receives aid from the conference and/or denomination through appropriations, the call shall be with the approval of the GLC.

**Section 4. Call of Additional Pastors and Credentialed Ministry Staff.** Other pastors may be called by a 75% vote of the membership at a congregational meeting upon recommendation of the Deacon Board. It is the responsibility of the Deacon Board to make sure the congregation has had sufficient opportunity to get to know the candidate before the meeting called for the purpose of voting. The duration of a pastor's tenure and the notice required for termination of service shall be set forth in the letter of call. When the church receives aid from the conference and/or denomination through appropriations, the call shall be with the approval of the GLC.

Other staff, including full and part-time support and ministry staff, may be called by a unanimous vote of the Deacon Board. However, the Deacon Board shall give notice to the congregation of the recommendation of particular staff hire 10 days prior to the issue of a call. If the Deacon Board receives written objections or concerns, the recommendation of the call of that particular staff position shall be submitted to a membership vote at a meeting called for that purpose and the staff person shall be called with a 75% vote of the membership. The duration of a staff person's tenure and the notice required for termination of service shall be set forth in the letter of call.

**Section 5. Duties of the Senior Pastor** – The Senior Pastor shall preach and teach the Bible and generally shepherd the congregation primarily by ministering directly to the Deacon Board, the associate pastors and the staff. All pastors and staff are responsible to the Senior Pastor, working in conjunction with the Deacon Board. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex officio member of the Deacon Board and all ministry teams and committees and in such capacity shall strive to establish and accomplish objectives and strategies in conjunction with the mission and values of the church. [For a more specific description of the duties of the Senior Pastor, see the job description available from the Deacon Board.]

**Section 6. Duties of Additional Pastors and Ministry Staff Members.** Other pastors and staff shall carry out specific areas of ministry for which they have been called under the direction of the Senior Pastor in conjunction with the Deacon Board.

**Section 7. Cooperation.** The pastor[s] shall, both in word and precept, work in harmony with the ECC and the GLC.

**Section 8. Resignation of a Pastor or Ministry Staff Member.** A pastor or ministry staff member may resign by submitting a letter of resignation to the Deacon Board. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, six weeks notice should be observed.

**Section 9. Charges Against a Pastor.** Charges against a pastor [e.g. a serious offense such as indiscretion, immorality, doctrinal error, unethical behavior, etc.] shall first be brought personally to the pastor by the persons making the charge according to the two step process of Matthew 18:15-18. If unresolved, the charges should be submitted in writing to the Deacon Board and the Superintendent of the Great Lakes Conference [I Timothy 5:19-20], charging a pastor with indiscretion, immorality, doctrinal error, unethical behavior or disloyalty to the ECC. The superintendent shall confer with the ECC executive minister of the ordered ministry. These two officers shall confer and determine the order of responsibility in pursuing the matter according to the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Ordered Ministry of the ECC regarding discipline, prior to further action by the church. A pastor or staff member credentialed by the ECC may be suspended by the ECC during this process. However, any minister who fails to become credentialed with the ECC may be suspended or recommended for dismissal at any time without prior notice by the Deacon Board.

**Section 10. Dismissal.** The dismissal of a pastor or ministry staff member should be undertaken only after avenues of remediation have been pursued.

- a. **Dismissal of the Senior Pastor.** The dismissal of the senior pastor shall be by a membership vote at a special meeting called for that express purpose. Such an agenda item cannot be a part of, or added to, the agenda of any other meeting. The congregational meeting for such a vote may be called by the 2/3 action of the Deacon Board or through the request of the congregation accomplished by a petition for such a meeting signed by 20% of the membership. The quorum for such a meeting shall be 50% of the membership. The grounds for dismissal shall be presented. Members shall be allowed to speak to the matter. The pastor shall be allowed to speak to the matter. The vote shall be by written ballot. A majority vote of members present and voting is necessary to dismiss the senior pastor. This difficult process shall be lived out, when necessary, in a spirit of humility and gentleness with a desire to seek restoration of the pastor to full fellowship in the body of Christ, if not to his or her former position. The above is intended to guide Hope Community Church in the application of the teachings of Christ concerning unconditional love, grace and reconciliation as well as taking responsibility for and dealing with the consequences of our actions and decisions.
- b. **Dismissal of Additional Pastors and Ministry Staff.** Additional pastors and ministry staff called by the membership may be dismissed by the 2/3 vote of the Deacon Board. A meeting to overturn the action of the Deacon Board may be called through the request of the congregation, accomplished by a petition signed by 20% of the membership. The quorum for such a meeting shall be 50% of the membership. The grounds for dismissal shall be presented. Members shall be allowed to speak to the matter. The pastor or ministry staff member in question shall be allowed to speak to the matter. The vote shall be by written ballot. A

majority vote of the members present and voting is necessary to overturn the action of the Deacon Board.

## **Article V**

### **Committees**

#### **Section 1. Nominating Committee.**

- a. **Composition.** The nominating committee shall consist of one Deacon Board member designated by the Deacon Board, the Senior Pastor, and at least 4 [four] members at large elected by a majority of the members voting at a meeting called for that purpose.
- b. **Term.** The terms of the member from the Deacon Board shall be at the pleasure of the Deacon Board. The at large members shall serve two-year terms. The initial terms of the at large members shall be alternated so that at least 2 [two] at large members shall be elected each year.
- c. **Quorum.** A majority of members shall constitute a quorum of the nominating committee. Also, the Senior Pastor must be present.
- d. **Responsibilities** – The nominating committee shall be responsible for nominations to fill the offices of the Deacon Board, the at large members of the nominating committee and any other positions assigned to it either by the Deacon Board or the membership.
- e. **Procedure** – A nominee for any position should be spiritually and emotionally qualified to fill that position. Specifically, the slate of leaders for the position of Deacon [male or female] shall be nominated based upon the following criteria:
  - Character – each nominee shall be growing in the character of Jesus Christ [cf. Article II, Section 3]
  - Gift – each nominee shall have displayed an ability to shepherd and lead others within the body of Christ.
  - Call – each nominee shall sense personally that it is God’s direction for him or her to be a part of the Deacon Board at Hope Community Church at this time.

- f. **Accountability** – Any active member who meets the qualifications of character, gift and call [e. above] shall be able to be nominated for the Deacon Board. Thus, on some occasions there may be members of HCC who will be serving in more than one position in the church. The following steps are designed to prevent burnout and/or ministry ineffectiveness as a result of overload:
- The Deacon Board shall conduct an annual check to evaluate the impact of multiple ministry positions on each leader involved.
  - If the Deacon Board prayerfully determines that the leader, the leader’s family or the ministry is suffering due to overload, the leader will be asked to consider eliminating one or more areas of service in order to produce more focus and balance in their life and ministry.
  - For the ability of the membership to provide input into this process in a spirit of humility and gentleness, see Article I, Section 5.
- g. **Guidelines** – The nominating committee must also be committed to and intentional about prayerfully nominating a slate of leaders who reflect the rich diversity of Hope Community Church. Race, gender, socio-economic status and other distinguishing traits obviously do not qualify an individual for leadership. Nevertheless, if character, gift and call are present, then it is the fervent and passionate desire of Hope Community Church to glorify God by having a Deacon Board [and other leaders] that mirrors the makeup of its membership and constituency.

**Section 2. Pastoral Search Committee.** The Senior Pastor shall be nominated by a pastoral search committee. The nominee shall meet the criteria set out in Article IV, Section 2 of these Bylaws. This committee shall be elected at a congregational meeting. It shall be representative of the membership and have five to nine members, including the Deacon Board chair. It shall work closely with the regional conference superintendent.

**Section 3. Mutual Ministry Committee.** The mutual ministry committee shall work toward a vital, healthy, mutually beneficial relationship between the congregation and the pastors and ministry staff. The mutual ministry committee shall have four main areas of responsibility:

- a. Care and encouragement for the pastors, ministry staff and their families.
- b. Receiving the perspectives and concerns of each pastor and ministry staff member relative to the congregation and ministry.
- c. Communicating the perspectives and concerns of the congregation to each pastor and ministry staff member relative to that person’s ministry
- d. A periodic review of personal and church goals.

The mutual ministry committee shall be made up of the vice chair, a member of the Deacon Board selected by the Deacon Board and two congregational members elected by the membership at a congregational meeting. Elected at large members shall serve a two year term and may not succeed themselves.



**Section 4. Other Special Committees.** The Deacon Board or the membership may establish a committee to address a specific task. The committee shall report back to the body which formed it unless otherwise instructed by its founding body. The committee shall terminate upon the completion of its task.

## **Article VI**

### **Meetings**

**Section 1. Congregational meetings.** Congregational meetings shall be held at stated intervals, but not less than semiannually. One meeting shall be held as near the first of the fiscal year as feasible. At this meeting, at least three items of business shall be considered:

- a. The Deacon Board shall submit a church budget to be voted on by the church membership. Two thirds of those members in attendance [representing a quorum] shall pass the budget.
- b. The treasurer shall submit an audited or reviewed financial report for the church and each of its ministry teams.
- c. Election of Deacons and Deaconesses [Deacon Board members] shall take place.

**Section 2. Other meetings.** Other meetings may be called by the Deacon Board or by written request signed by 10% of the membership.

**Section 3. Notification of meeting.** All meetings shall be announced verbally and in writing to the membership of the church at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.

**Section 4. Conduct of meetings** – The chair of the Deacon Board or such other person as may be designated by the Deacon Board in his or her absence shall serve as chair of any meeting of the membership.

**Section 5. Voting** – Each member, and only members, shall be entitled to cast one vote at any election or on any subject on the floor for a vote at any meeting of the membership. Such votes must be cast in person. Vote by proxy shall not be allowed. Voting may be by secret ballot or by open balloting when there is no objection.

**Section 6. Quorum.** 10% percent of the membership shall constitute a quorum for any special meeting, unless otherwise noted by these Bylaws. 20% of the membership shall constitute a quorum for the annual budgetary meeting.

**Section 7. Rules of order.** All business meetings of the church shall be conducted according to Robert’s Rules of Order.

**Section 7. Minutes.** Minutes of each business meeting will be made available within two weeks of any business meeting.

## Article VII

### Assets

**Section 1. Title.** The membership shall hold title to its own assets.

**Section 2. Acquisition.** Assets acquired through budgetary provisions do not need additional congregational approval. Assets acquired beyond budgetary provisions, particularly land or facility acquisition, require the approval of the congregation by majority vote of the membership.

**Section 3. Disputed Assets.** In the event of schism within the church, in which there are competing claims to the assets by various factions of the membership, the title of all church property, real or personal, shall remain with the group which abides by the Constitution and Bylaws, as determined by the executive board of the GLC.

**Section 4. Assignment of Assets.** No action for the sale or transfer of assets may be taken when the closure of the church is under consideration without the prior approval of the GLC executive board. In the event the membership votes to cease, the property and all assets of the church shall become and be the property of the ECC and the GLC, shared equally for the furtherance of the mission of both in that region, primarily through church planting.

## Article VIII

### Closure

**Section 1. Action Needed.** The congregation may terminate its existence by a majority vote of the membership present and voting at a congregational meeting called for that purpose.

**Section 2. Meeting Provisions.** The decision on whether to close the church cannot be a part of, or added to, the agenda of any other meeting. The congregational meeting for such a vote may be called by the Deacon Board or through the request of the congregation, accomplished by a petition for such a meeting signed by 20% of the membership.

**Section 3. Notification.** All members of record must be notified of the meeting through first class mail at least two weeks in advance.

**Section 4. Quorum.** The quorum for such a meeting shall be all members of record who are present at the meeting.

**Section 5. Asset Distribution.** Upon the vote to close, the assets of the congregation shall be transferred according to Article VII, Section 4 of these Bylaws.

**Section 6. Collaboration.** Should congregational attendance stand below 25, the conference executive board may appoint an ex officio member to the Deacon Board.

**Section 1. Property** – Should this church become legally dissolved, all of its remaining assets shall be given to any other not-for-profit corporation which subscribes to the same purpose and beliefs as are contained in this Constitution and Bylaws. No part of the distribution of the assets of this corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, member, director or officer of the corporation or to any private individual.

## **Article IX**

### **Liability**

**Section 1. Indemnification** – No member of Hope Community Church shall be personally responsible for any action or omission related to his/her responsibility as a member unless he/she has breached or failed to perform the duties of his/her office as prescribed by law. “Member” as mentioned above is broadly defined to include, but not be limited to, members of the Deacon Board, Pastors, Associate Pastors, Staff and other church group participants. Hope Community Church may, by resolution adopted by a majority of the members of the Deacon Board then in office, indemnify any member who was or is a party to any actual or threatened or completed action, suit or proceeding as a result of their actions as a member. This indemnity may be provided with respect to any action, suit or proceeding whether civil, criminal or merely investigative, and may include expenses including attorney fees in addition to judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement, even if the claim indemnified against be of doubtful validity. Once an indemnitee shall be determined by a statutory court of the United States or of any state to have committed willful misconduct involving theft, dishonesty or criminal sexual conduct in the matter for which indemnity was provided or promised, all further indemnity shall be cancelled and of no further effect. For the purposes of carrying out the power to provide indemnity, Hope Community Church may, by resolution adopted by a majority of the members of the Deacon Board then in office, set aside any funds, make and reserve and/or purchase and maintain any insurance to the full extent permitted under Michigan law.

## **Article X**

### **Amendments**

**Section 1. Procedure** – These Bylaws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose. A proposed amendment to the Bylaws must be presented in writing to the membership not less than 90 days prior to the meeting called for the purpose of voting on bylaw’s changes. Article VII, Sections 3 and 4, Article VIII and Article X may only be amended with the prior approval of the GLC executive board.