



**BYLAWS of  
NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH**

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# BYLAWS of

# NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH

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# **BAPTIST ARTICLES OF FAITH**

## **I. THE SCRIPTURES**

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

## **II. THE TRUE GOD**

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

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

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

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

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

## **V. JUSTIFICATION**

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

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

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

## **VII. REGENERATION**

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

## **VIII. REPENTANCE AND FAITH**

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

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

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

## **X. SANCTIFICATION**

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

## **XI. PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **XVI. CIVIL GOVERNMENT**

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

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

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

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

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

## **RULES OF CHURCH ORDER**

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

## **THE CHURCH COVENANT**

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

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

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

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

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

# **CHURCH BYLAWS**

## **ARTICLE I. - NAME**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **2.1. The scriptural requirements include:**

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

5. Serving the Church by understanding and discovering his or her spiritual giftedness and being equipped by the pastor(s) to serve the local body, the community, the world.<sup>9</sup>

## **2.2. The Church requirements include:**

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

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

Membership in the Church is important and valuable. Membership affords certain rights, responsibilities and privileges to the members of the Church, as set forth in the current Membership Handbook. This section outlines the Church's three categories of membership. Any dispute with regard to an assigned membership category will be resolved by the Pastor(s) and Deacons.

### **3.1. VOTING ELIGIBLE MEMBER**

A "Voting Eligible Member" is qualified to vote in all business meetings of the Church, and to receive the rights and privileges from the Church as set forth in the Membership Handbook. Any individual who meets all of the following criteria shall be considered a "Voting- Eligible Member:"

1. Meets the scriptural and Church requirements for membership as outlined in Section 2 of this Article;
2. Consistently gives to the church (a minimum of \$500 within the preceding 365 days);
3. Participates in worship services, in person or remote, unless physically unable to do so; and
4. Is not a member of any church other than New Hope Baptist Church.

### **3.2. VOTING-INELIGIBLE MEMBER**

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

1. Has moved away from the community, but has not yet transferred his or her membership to another church;
2. Has for any cause, except physical inability, been absent from regularly attending worship service; or
3. Has not contributed \$500 to the Church treasury within the preceding 365 days.

### **3.3 WATCH CARE MEMBER**

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

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

### **SECTION 4. - TERMINATION OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

Church membership is deemed terminated when any one of the following occurs:

1. A member voluntarily submits written or oral notice of membership termination; or
2. When deacons and the Senior Pastor determine that involuntarily revocation of membership is warranted for cause in accordance with Section 5.2 (2) of this Article.

### **SECTION 5. - LEGAL MEMBERSHIP RIGHTS**

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

### **SECTION 6. - DISCIPLINE AND RESTORATION OF MEMBERS**

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

#### **Section 6.1. Purpose of Discipline**

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

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

#### **Section 6.2. Process of Discipline**

In accordance with Matthew 18:15-18, if any member of the Church has knowledge of another member's unbiblical beliefs or conduct, it shall be the duty of the member with

knowledge to privately approach and communicate the error to the offending member. (If the member feels uncomfortable, that member should seek guidance from a Church officer.)

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

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

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

### **Section 6.3. Confidentiality of Discipline**

All persons involved in the discipline process of an offending member are required to keep the process completely confidential, unless legally bound to disclose it.

## **SECTION 7. - TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP**

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

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

### **SECTION 1. - ANNUAL AND REGULAR CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS**

There shall be two Church business meetings every year. The annual business meeting of the Church shall take place each October or no more than 30 days thereafter, and a regular Church business meeting will take place six months following the annual business meeting. Church business meetings, if held in person, shall be held at the Church building or at any other place within the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, or via electronic means. The business that shall be conducted at the annual business meeting includes the election of officers, amendments to these Bylaws when necessary, and any other business as may be appropriate.

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

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

1. By including notice of the meeting in the Church e-bulletin ; and
2. By orally announcing the meeting to the congregation in attendance at a regular Sunday worship service.

### **Section 1.2. Notice of a Regular Business Meeting**

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

1. By including notice of the meeting in the Church e-bulletin; and
2. By orally announcing the meeting to the congregation in attendance at a regular Sunday worship service.

### **Section 1.3. Required Content of Notice for Annual and Regular Business Meetings.**

Notice of annual and regular business meetings shall include the date, time, and place of the meeting.

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

During election of officers, Voting-Eligible members will be given the choice of group or individual election of officers.

## **SECTION 2. - SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS**

A "special business meeting" is a meeting to transact business that cannot wait until a regular or annual Church business meeting. Special business meetings may be called at any time to address any business matter in either of the following ways: (1) at the request of the Senior Pastor; (2) at the request of the Executive Pastor; (3) at the request of the Deacon Board Chair; (4) at the request of the Trustee Board Chair or (5) upon a certified petition addressed to the joint board listing the names of at least twenty-percent (20%) of the Voting-Eligible members of the Church.

### **Section 2.1. Notice of Special Business Meetings.**

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

1. By including notice of the meeting in the Church e-bulletin; and
2. By orally announcing the meeting to the congregation in attendance at a regular Sunday worship service.

### **Section 2.2. Required Content of Notice for Special Business Meetings.**

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

### **Section 2.3. Special Budget-Adoption Meeting**

The Voting-Eligible members of the Church must vote on and adopt the Church budget annually. If the annual budget is not prepared for a vote by the annual business meeting, then the Voting-Eligible members of the Church will vote on and adopt the Church budget in a special budget-adoption meeting before the end of the fiscal year.

## **SECTION 3. – EMERGENCY BUSINESS MEETINGS**

An ‘emergency business meeting’ is a meeting to transact business that cannot wait until a regular, special, or annual Church business meeting. Emergency business meetings may be called at any time to address any urgent business matter in either of the following ways: (1) at the request of the Senior Pastor; (2) at the request of the Executive Pastor; (3) at the request of the Deacon Board Chair; (4) at the request of the Trustee Board Chair or (5) upon a certified petition addressed to the joint board listing the names of at least twenty-percent (20%) of the Voting-Eligible members of the Church.

### **Section 3.1. Notice and Required Content of Notice for Emergency Business Meetings.**

Notice of an emergency business meeting shall be given to the church membership no less than three (3) days prior to said meeting. Notice of an emergency business meeting shall be given in a commercially reasonable manner in light of the urgent business matters to be discussed in the meeting. Either of the following manners shall be deemed reasonable methods of notice for an emergency business meeting:

1. By orally announcing the meeting to the congregation in attendance at a regular Sunday worship service;
2. By telephonic message to the members of the congregation; or
3. By electronic message to the members of the congregations, including electronic announcements and emails.

## **SECTION 4. RIGHT TO INSPECTION IN LIEU OF A MEETING**

Rather than holding a meeting to review the budget, each Voting-Eligible Member has the right, pursuant to and in accordance with Article VI, Section 4.4.1 (b) of these Bylaws, to review the prepared financial statements of the Church.

## **SECTION 5. –WAIVER OF OBJECTION TO IMPROPER NOTICE**

Any Voting-Eligible member that attends a church business meeting for which improper notice was given, is required to raise this objection immediately after the meeting is called to order. If the objection is not raised at that time, the right to object later will be waived. If the objection is

raised in a timely manner, then the meeting will continue if there are items on the agenda that do not require a vote.

#### **SECTION 6. - VOTING ELIGIBILITY**

In order for a member to vote in a Church election, said member must meet the following requirements: (1) be a Voting-Eligible Member of the Church, and (2) be at least 18 years of age.

#### **SECTION 7. - VOTING**

Church action on each matter being voted upon shall require a concurrence of a simple majority (51%) of the Voting-Eligible members present at an annual, regular, special, or emergency business meeting, unless provided otherwise in these Bylaws. Voting-Eligible members will be allowed to vote in person or may be allowed to vote by absentee ballot on those issues which are identified prior to the meeting.

#### **SECTION 8. – QUORUM**

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

#### **SECTION 9. RULES OF ORDER TO GOVERN ALL MEETINGS**

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

#### **SECTION 10. - PRESIDING OFFICIAL**

The Senior Pastor shall moderate all church business meetings, except at a meeting called for the specific purpose of voting on matters related to the Senior Pastor. In the Senior Pastor's absence, the following order of succession shall apply: (1) the Executive Pastor, (2) Deacon Board Chair, and (3) Trustee Board Chair.

#### **SECTION 11. – SALARY LIMITATIONS**

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

### **ARTICLE IV. - DEACONS**

#### **GENERAL SCOPE**

Deacons are the servant-ministers of the Church. Their purpose is to relieve the pastor(s) of the multitude of practical duties of caring for the flock. No specific, on-going deacon roles are mentioned in Scripture, probably because service needs change, and so the role of the deacons must remain flexible. Perhaps this is why qualifications for deacons are stressed in Scripture

rather than specific tasks. Deacons are to give their primary attention toward caring for the congregation's physical welfare. Deacons have the honor of modeling, for the local Church and the lost world, God's compassion, kindness, mercy, and love. As the Church compassionately cares for people's needs, the world sees a visible display of Christ's love, which will draw some people to the Savior. Deacons are to be an example of commitment, unity, and harmony in their service.

## **SECTION 1. - QUALIFICATIONS**

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

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

Additionally, deacons must be Voting-Eligible Members of the Church and spiritually qualified to serve as a deacon by tithing at the Church, attending Sunday morning worship, and demonstrating their commitment to growing as a follower of Christ and to the fellowship of the Church by attending Sunday School or Bible Study classes.

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

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

When there is a need for deacons, as demonstrated in Acts 6:1-7, the Senior Pastor, after consultation with the Deacon Board Chair, will select a new deacon candidate.

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

A deacon cannot serve simultaneously as a trustee.

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

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

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

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

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

Prospective deacons will be ordained once the Senior Pastor, after consultation with the Deacon Board Chair, determines that the prospective deacon candidate is ready. After the completion of their training, deacon candidates will be ordained by the Senior Pastor in the presence of the membership.

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

The office term of a deacon is three years. Terms begin on January 1 and end on December 31. Consecutive terms are acceptable and encouraged for those who are fulfilling their responsibilities as deacons.

##### **5.1 - CONSECUTIVE TERMS**

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

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

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

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

- 1) Administering the benevolent fund in accordance with the current Benevolence Policy.
- 2) Assisting the Senior Pastor in the preparation and serving of the Lord's Supper.
- 3) Providing congregational care by visiting those in need.
- 4) Selecting a Deacon Board Chair.
- 5) Appointing a search committee to seek the Lord's will regarding the Senior Pastor, in the event the Church is without a Senior Pastor.
- 6) Evaluating the Senior Pastor every year.
- 7) Conducting the Church survey.

- 8) Meeting regularly to discuss the fulfillment of the duties and responsibilities of deacons. Scheduling of meetings is determined by the Deacon Board Chair.
- 9) Performing any other duties and/or responsibilities as determined by the Deacon Board Chair.

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

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

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

#### **SECTION 8. – DISCIPLINE OR DISCIPLINARY REMOVAL**

Any deacon may be removed from office if he or she becomes scripturally or spiritually unqualified as outlined in Section 1 of this Article, or his or her inability to serve is established in the minds of the deacon board and/or the congregation. The deacon board and/or congregation has the right to censure or rebuke a deacon due to a continuing sin based on I Tim. 5:19-20. The deacon board has the right to remove a deacon in a deacon board meeting with a majority vote of the deacons in attendance at the meeting. If a deacon is removed by a majority vote of the deacon board, the congregation shall be notified that said person is no longer a deacon.

The Deacon Board Chair and Senior Pastor may temporarily remove a deacon from serving while under their direction of correction and/or repentance.

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

#### **GENERAL SCOPE**

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

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

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

Trustees must be Voting-Eligible Members of the Church. The scriptural qualifications for trustees are the same as those for deacons as noted in Article IV, Section 1. Additionally, trustees must be spiritually qualified to serve as a trustee by tithing at the Church, regularly attending Sunday morning worship, and demonstrating their commitment to growing as a follower of Christ and to the fellowship of the Church.

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

When there is a need for a trustee, the Trustee Board Chair, after consultation with the Senior Pastor, will select a new trustee candidate.

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

A trustee cannot serve simultaneously as a deacon, minister, or pastor. Any existing trustee who accepts his or her calling into the ministry, would immediately become disqualified from serving as a trustee.

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

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

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

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

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

The office term of a trustee is three years. Terms begin on January 1 and end on December 31. Consecutive terms are acceptable and encouraged for those who are fulfilling their responsibilities as trustees. Following successful completion of the training period, the new trustee will immediately begin the initial 3 year term of service.

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

The trustee board will present the names of those trustees who wish to serve consecutive terms to be voted upon by the Church membership in attendance at an annual meeting after the following criteria have been met:

1. The trustee completes a three-year service term,
2. The trustee affirms that God's leading is for him or her to continue serving as an active trustee, and

3. The trustee board votes to recommend that the trustee be presented to the church membership at the annual meeting.

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

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

- 1) Assisting the Senior Pastor in the administrative oversight of the Church. To determine and ensure that all of the administrative committees of the Church are performing their designated responsibilities.
- 2) Overseeing and developing all legal, financial and executive-related committees, which include reviewing and updating the fiscal policies, procedures, and responsibilities of these committees.
- 3) Properly exercising a fiduciary duty to the Church in all legal, financial and executive matters.
- 4) Executing all legal documents related to contracts, Church property, and other business matters as conditioned by these Bylaws.
- 5) Participating in the strategic planning of the Church.
- 6) Selecting a Trustee Board Chair.
- 7) Implementing and overseeing effective risk management policies and procedures.
- 8) Properly maintaining accurate books and financial records of the Church.
- 9) Overseeing the maintenance of accurate contribution records of contributors and preparing contribution statements for contributors.
- 10) Overseeing the maintenance of church membership records.
- 11) Overseeing the maintenance of the written minutes of all church business meetings.
- 12) Assisting the Senior Pastor in the serving of the Lord's Supper, as needed
- 13) Attending scheduled meetings as determined by the Trustee Board Chair.
- 14) Performing any other duties and/or responsibilities as determined by the Trustee Board Chair.

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

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

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

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

Any trustee may be removed from office if he or she becomes scripturally or spiritually unqualified, as outlined in previous sections of this Article, or his or her inability to serve is established in the minds of the trustee board and/or the congregation. The trustee board and/or congregation has the right to censure or rebuke a trustee due to a continuing sin based on I Tim. 5:19-20. The trustee board has the right to remove a trustee in a trustee board meeting with a majority vote of the trustees in attendance at the meeting. If a trustee is removed by a majority vote of the trustee board, the congregation shall be notified that said person is no longer a trustee.

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

The "trustee emeritus" is an honorary position conferred on a trustee who has amassed 15 years of service, or due to exceptional service in less than 15 years and is no longer willing and/ or capable of fulfilling all the responsibilities of a trustee. This honor requires a simple majority vote of the Trustee board following a recommendation by the Chair and /or the Senior Pastor. Because of his or her wisdom and valuable experience, the trustee emeritus shall continue to support the trustee board in an advisory capacity without voting rights.

### **ARTICLE VI. – JOINT BOARD**

#### **GENERAL SCOPE**

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

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

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

The Joint Board shall be led by a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary. Generally, the Deacon Board Chair will serve as Joint Board Chair; the Trustee Board Chair will serve as Joint Board Vice-Chair; the Trustee Secretary will serve as Joint Board Secretary; and the Deacon Board Secretary will serve as Joint Board Assistant Secretary. The

Joint Board shall vote annually to affirm these persons in these positions or elect others to fill these positions if it so desires.

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

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

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

### **GENERAL SCOPE**

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

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

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

The present Standing Committees of the Church are as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **SECTION 4.1. - CHURCH FINANCIAL COORDINATOR**

The Church Financial Coordinator is recommended and approved by the Joint Board annually. He or she deposits funds into the Church bank accounts, records the deposits and withdrawals from various accounts, and provides an accounting for all funds. The Church Financial Coordinator keeps a record of all disbursements, executes payments in accordance with established Church financial policies and procedures, and assists in the preparation of financial reports and audits.

### **SECTION 4.2. - CHURCH HISTORIAN**

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

### **SECTION 4.3. - CHURCH RECORDS CLERK**

The Church Records Clerk is recommended and approved by the Joint Board annually. He or she is responsible for ensuring that the official minutes of all Church business meetings are recorded, transcribed, and filed in a timely fashion as stated in Section 4.3.1 of this Article.

#### **SECTION 4.3.1. - CHURCH RECORDS**

- a. **FILING AND MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS**  
All minutes, certificates, records, reports, recordings, and any other

documents required by law must be filed and maintained at the Church office within thirty (30) days of the event.

**b. INSPECTION AND COPYING OF RECORDS**

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

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

**ARTICLE VII. - SENIOR PASTOR**

**SECTION 1. - QUALIFICATIONS**

The Senior Pastor must possess the scriptural qualifications set forth in I Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. These qualities can be characterized as:

- 1) Must desire the office of Senior Pastor and demonstrate spiritual leadership abilities among the congregation.
- 2) Ability to teach and use the Word of God with wisdom and patience.
- 3) A lover of God and takes God and His Word seriously.
- 4) The ability to manage a household in a biblical manner.
- 5) Ability to spiritually manage interpersonal relationships.
- 6) Seeks to be controlled by Christ and His word, not by worldly and fleshly desires.
- 7) If married, then to only one spouse at a time.
- 8) Not given to substance abuse.
- 9) A good reputation with the community.

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

**SECTION 2. - SELECTION PROCESS**

In the event the Church is without a Senior Pastor, the deacon board will appoint a search committee to seek the Lord's will regarding the Senior Pastor. A minimum of one deacon will be a search committee member and will act as chairperson of the search committee. When the committee is unanimous in its recognition of God's leadership towards a candidate(s), it will seek

affirmation from the members of the Church in a special meeting. A simple majority (51%) vote of the Voting-Eligible members present at the special meeting is required to select a Senior Pastor

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

The Senior Pastor shall remain in office until resignation or termination.

### **SECTION 4. - RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

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

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

The Senior Pastor will supervise direct reports as defined by the deacon board and/or the Church.

**Finances:** The Senior Pastor will not have decision-making authority regarding Church financial aspects or may not be involved in or have the authority to make disbursements of Church funds. The Senior Pastor will be given a yearly budget and may not exceed it without the approval of the finance committee.

**Absence:** The Senior Pastor will not be absent from the pulpit unless ill, on vacation, or in agreement with the majority of the deacon board for more than two consecutive Sundays within any month (four weeks). Anytime the Senior Pastor is going to be absent from the pulpit (out of town, visiting another church, etc.), the Senior Pastor must first advise the deacon board chair, or in the chairperson's absence, the vice-chair of the deacon board prior to absence and before announcing it to the congregation.

The above does not limit the responsibilities and duties of the Senior Pastor.

### **SECTION 5. – TERMINATION OF OFFICE**

**5.1. TERMINATION BY RESIGNATION:** The Senior Pastor may resign the office following a 30-day notice submitted to the Deacon Board.

**5.2. TERMINATION BY THE JOINT BOARD:** Upon a finding of egregious and/ or unlawful conduct (such as sexual misconduct, violent felony, fraud, etc.) by the Senior Pastor, as determined by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote of the deacon board and supported by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote of the Joint Board, the Senior Pastor shall be terminated effective immediately.

**5.3. TERMINATION BY THE JOINT BOARD AND THE CHURCH:** For matters that do not rise to level of egregiousness stated in the previous section, the decision to terminate the Senior Pastor must further be approved by a simple majority (51%) of the Voting-

Eligible members present at a meeting called for the specific purpose of voting on matters related to the Senior Pastor.

## **ARTICLE VIII. EXECUTIVE PASTOR**

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

The Executive Pastor must possess the scriptural qualifications set forth in I Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. These qualities can be characterized as:

- 1) Must desire the office of Executive Pastor and demonstrate spiritual leadership abilities among the congregation.
- 2) Ability to teach and use the Word of God with wisdom and patience.
- 3) A lover of God and takes God and His Word seriously.
- 4) The ability to manage a household in a biblical manner.
- 5) Ability to spiritually manage interpersonal relationships.
- 6) Seeks to be controlled by Christ and His word, not by worldly and fleshly desires.
- 7) If married, then to only one spouse at a time..
- 8) Not given to substance abuse.
- 9) A good reputation with the community.

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

The Executive Pastor is an administrative position that reports directly to the Senior Pastor.

## **ARTICLE IX - INDEMNIFICATION**

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

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

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

To the extent that a pastor, deacon, trustee, employee, or agent has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit, or proceeding referred to in this Article, or in defense of any claim, issue, or matter in that action, suit, or proceeding, he or she may be indemnified

against expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and reasonably incurred in connection with the action, suit or proceeding.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **SECTION 6. – INSURANCE**

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

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

Sexual harassment and/or discrimination (“SHD”) is prohibited. Everyone is to be treated fairly in all aspects of the Church and/or related activities.

Sexual harassment is un-welcomed (physical, verbal, written) sexual advance or inappropriate sexual action (gestures, jokes, etc.).

Discrimination is speech or action against anyone based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, physical or mental handicap.

Any person who feels that he or she is a victim of SHD (“the claimant”), should immediately discuss the matter with a member of the Personnel Committee. All allegations will be investigated. The identity of the claimant will remain confidential unless further investigation is needed.

Incidents of SHD may result in disciplinary or counseling action, denial of attendance at Church activities, revocation of Church membership and/or reporting to the police.

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

Fundraising activities at the Church must be approved in advance. To obtain approval from the Joint Board, the individual or organization must submit a written fundraising proposal to the Church office. The proposal must include the proposed use of the funds, a detailed description of the fundraising activity, and supporting documentation if the funds are to be used for a charitable purpose.

The Church will not be held liable for any action or events resulting from fundraisers that have not been authorized by the Joint Board. There will be no indemnification for any action arising from an unauthorized fundraiser.

## **ARTICLE XII. – BYLAWS**

### **SECTION 1. – BYLAWS REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws must be reviewed a minimum of every three (3) years from the date of the last review, and shall be amended at an annual meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Voting-Eligible members present.

### **SECTION 2. – NOTICE PERIOD FOR AMENDMENTS**

When these Bylaws are up for review, the congregation will receive a notice period of at least thirty (30) days to submit proposed bylaws revisions or amendments to the Bylaws and Policy Committee or Joint Board.

## **ARTICLE XIII. – STATEMENT OF FAITH AND POLICY ON MARRIAGE, GENDER, AND HUMAN SEXUALITY**

### **SECTION 1. – INTRODUCTION**

This is a policy statement on the religious beliefs of New Hope Baptist Church (“the Church”) concerning marriage, gender, and human sexuality and our policies based upon the necessary application of our faith to life and practice.

### **SECTION 2. – WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT MARRIAGE, GENDER, AND HUMAN SEXUALITY**

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. However, when the Scriptures speak against other philosophies, belief systems and behaviors, we will be true to the Scriptures and will speak the truth, but will do so in love. Hateful and

harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual (s) are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the Church.

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning and that is: marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6).

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other (Mark 10:6-8). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, including but not limited to adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, any attempt to change one’s sex, and disagreement with one’s biological sex assigned at natural birth is sinful and offensive to God (Rom 1:20-32; I Cor 6:9, 18-20; Eph 5:1-7; Col 3:5-6; I Th 4:3-8).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Eph 2:1-5; 2 Cor 5:17).

### **SECTION 3. – OUR FAITH –BASED POLICY ON MARRIAGE, GENDER, AND HUMAN SEXUALITY**

As a result of these above-described religious beliefs, and our belief in the need for a practice of fidelity to these beliefs, it is our policy that the facilities of the Church will not be used to perform any marriage ceremony that is inconsistent with the definition of marriage found in this Policy. It is also our policy that no clergy of this Church (employee or volunteer) shall officiate a marriage ceremony that is inconsistent with the definition of marriage found in this Article. The clergy of this Church will only perform biblically based “covenant ceremonies” that bless the union between one man and one woman as biologically assigned at their natural birth.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons who are employed by this Church in any capacity, or who serve as leaders and volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement of Faith and Policy on Marriage, Gender, and Human Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

### **SECTION 4. – CHURCH PRACTICES DERIVED FROM THIS POLICY**

#### **4.1. CLERGY:**

1. Ordained clergy or licensed ministers<sup>1</sup> of this Church (employee or volunteer) shall affirm the Statement of Faith and Policy on Marriage, Gender, and Human Sexuality adopted by this church.

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<sup>1</sup> “Clergy” as used in this document means ordained clergy and licensed ministers. An ordination or ministerial license not issued by the New Hope Baptist Church must be specially approved by the Senior Pastor to be considered valid by this Church.

2. Only ordained or duly licensed clergy approved by the Senior Pastor of the Church shall officiate marriage ceremonies conducted on Church property.
3. Clergy employed by the Church shall be subject to dismissal and/or loss of ordination for violating the Statement of Faith and Policy on Marriage, Gender, and Human Sexuality or by officiating at a marriage ceremony that violates the letter or the spirit of this Policy.

#### **4.2. APPLICANTS FOR WEDDINGS PERFORMED BY THE PASTOR OR CHURCH CLERGY:**

1. Applicants wishing to have a ceremony performed by a member of the clergy employed or otherwise ordained by the Church shall affirm this Statement of Faith and Policy on Marriage, Gender, and Human Sexuality and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.
2. Applicants shall participate in premarital counseling by clergy or counselors employed by this church or other persons who, in the sole opinion of the pastoral staff of the church have the appropriate training, experience, and spiritual understanding to provide such counseling. All pastoral staff, counselors or other persons providing premarital counseling shall affirm this Statement of Faith and Policy on Marriage, Gender, and Human Sexuality.

#### **4.3. USE OF FACILITIES: APPLICANTS FOR WEDDINGS PERFORMED BY NON-CHURCH CLERGY:**

1. Applicants wishing to use the Church facilities for their wedding shall affirm this Statement of Faith and Policy on Marriage, Gender, and Human Sexuality and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.
2. Any marriage performed on Church premises shall be officiated by an ordained or duly licensed member of the clergy. Any officiant not employed or ordained by the Church shall serve at the discretion of the Church's Senior Pastor.
3. Clergy officiating marriage ceremonies on church premises, whether or not employed by the church, shall affirm their agreement with this Statement of Faith and Policy on Marriage, Gender, and Human Sexuality and conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.
4. Any clergy, church leaders, staff, or volunteers assigned by the Church to implement the procedures contained in this Policy may, in his or her discretion, decline to provide use of Church facilities for, and/or decline to officiate at a ceremony when, in his or her judgement, there are significant concerns that such a marriage would violate this Policy.

#### **4.4. MEMBERS, VOLUNTEERS, LEADERSHIP AND STAFF:**

1. All ministers and staff hired by the Church shall affirm their agreement with New Hope's Statement of Faith and Policy on Marriage, Gender, and Human Sexuality and conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.
2. All Joint Board members and ministry leaders shall affirm their agreement with this Statement of Faith and Policy on Marriage, Gender, and Human Sexuality and conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.
3. All church volunteers and members are responsible to conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with this Policy.

#### **SECTION 5. – VIOLATION OF THE POLICY**

Any member who violates this policy will be subject to the Discipline and Restoration process outlined in the Church Bylaws.

#### **SCRIPTURAL FOOTNOTES**

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