

Hickory Bible Church

By-Laws and Common Beliefs

This is **Hickory Bible Church**, herein called Hickory Bible Church (HBC) bringing together the common beliefs and practices of a church family. It is our hope that as we grow together in wisdom over the years that our understanding concerning matters of belief will deepen and that our decisions and our practices will reflect God at work among us.

Harvest Bible Church
Ratified Constitution
April 2009
Amended May 1, 2019

Article I: Name

The name of this church is, and shall be, Hickory Bible Church.

Article II: Purpose

To glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) in the spirit of the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-39). The commission is fulfilled as disciples of Jesus Christ are made. God is glorified as we manifest His presence in doing so. (2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Corinthians 10:31).

Article III: Core Values

Hickory Bible Church has established four core values as the biblical priorities for this ministry. A fuller statement is available upon request.

Christ-Exalting: Proclaiming the Glory of Jesus Christ over everything.
(Colossians 1:28-29)

Word-Centered: Trusting the Bible as the inerrant and authoritative Word of God.
(2 Timothy 4:2)

Mission-Driven: Seeking to rescue sinners through the good news of the Gospel.
(Matthew 28:19-20)

Disciple-Making: Helping believers to mature in their relationship with Jesus Christ.
(Ephesians 4:11-16)

Definitions:

“Articles” – the Articles of Incorporation originally filed by Church with the State of North Carolina.

“Auditors” – Any independent firm chosen by the Elders to provide third party verification of integrity and conformity to ‘best practices’ in all financial matters related to Hickory Bible Church

“Bible” – the Bible referred to in these Bylaws is the collection of sacred writings of the Christian Faith, comprising the sixty-six books comprising the Old and New Testaments. References to “Scripture,” “Scriptural,” “the Scriptures,” “biblical,” the “Word of God,” and other similar references in this document refer to the same Bible.

“Church” – Hickory Bible Church and any subsidiary organizations falling under Hickory Bible Church’s 501(c)(3) exemption with the Internal Revenue Service.

“Code” – the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or corresponding provisions of any subsequent federal tax laws or regulations.

“Elder” – a natural born male member of the Church recognized by the Elder Board as possessing those qualities of Eldership as defined by Scripture. Only those Elders currently sitting on the Elder Board (“Elder Board Member”) may perform the governing functions of the Elder Board as defined in this document. Men called Elders but not actively serving on the Elder Board may assist in a ministerial capacity as needed as long as they are approved to do so by a majority of those currently sitting on the Elder Board.

1. “Lay Elder” – an individual who serves on the Elder Board who is not an employee of the Church.
2. “Staff Elder” – an individual who serves on the Elder Board and is also an employee of the Church (e.g., Senior Pastor).

“Elder Board” also referred to as “Board of Elders or Board” – a group of elders who serve Christ and who meet to govern and pray for the Church. It is composed of both Lay Elders and Staff Elders. It consists of the Preaching Pastor and all elders who have been approved by majority vote of the Elder Board. Upon convening, the Chairman who must be a Lay Elder is chosen by majority vote. He is responsible to run the meetings of the Elder Board and to work with the Preaching Pastor concerning the Agenda.

“Deacon Board” also referred to as “Board of Deacons” or “Board” – a group of deacons and deaconesses who meet to serve the various needs of the church.

“Independent Person” – an individual who (a) is not Staff; (b) does not derive their income by sourcing business from the Church or Members of the Church; (c) does not report to, and is not subordinate to, other Elder Board Members; and (d) is not the Auditors, related by blood or marriage to any Auditors, or employed by the Auditors.

“Policies” – various policies created to establish the boundaries of Staff authority under the Elder Board and the expectations for their actions and accountability, as well as other Church policies, as they may be amended from time to time.

Article IV: *Doctrinal Statement*

The Scriptures

We believe in the Scriptures of the Old Testament and New Testament as verbally inspired by God and inerrant in the original writing. We believe the 66 books of the Old Testament and New Testament are God’s completed and sufficient revelation for the total well-being of mankind.

God

We believe in the only true God (John 17:3), the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20). He created all things (Revelation 4:11) and upholds all things by the Word of His power (Hebrews 1:3). In Him we live and move and have our being (Acts

17:28). He is a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He (Deuteronomy 32:4) and He shall judge the world (Psalm 9:8).

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and that these three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfection’s, and worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence, and obedience (Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4; Matthew 29:19-20; Acts 4:3-4).

Jesus Christ

We believe in the total deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe He is the manifestation of God in the flesh. We believe He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. We believe Him to be true God and true man (John 1:1, 14, 18; John 14:8-9; 1 Timothy 3:16).

Holy Spirit

We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ during this age. He convicts us of sin and regenerates the sinner upon believing on Christ, baptizing the believer into one body of which Christ is the head. He indwells, guides, instructs, fills, comforts, and empowers the believer for godly living and service through individually bestowed spiritual gifts. While the Scriptures do not teach that certain gifts have ceased, it does seem to indicate that their usage would vary according to the need that each gift is designed to meet. Hickory Bible Church does not encourage the use of the ‘sign gifts’. Instead we choose to emphasize the more excellent way of love and zeal for the more edifying gifts (John 16:8; 13:15; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 1:22; 4:11-12; Romans 8:9-17; 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 12:4-5, 11-13, 19; Galatians 5:25; Hebrews 4:1-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12). A fuller statement of our position on the charismatic movement is available upon request.

Man

We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners; not only by constraint, but by choice and therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse. We believe that without exception every man is totally depraved and needs a Savior (Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 3:10-19; Romans 1:18, 32).

Salvation

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice. We believe that all who by faith receive Him as their personal Savior are justified on the basis of His blood shed on Calvary. They are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become eternally secure as children of God. We believe the Holy Spirit baptizes a person who believes into the body of Christ at the moment of salvation (Romans 8:37-39; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

Resurrection

We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ, His ascension into heaven, and His present life for us as High Priest and Advocate (Acts 1:3, 9; Hebrews 7:25-26).

Return of Christ

We believe in “that blessed hope”, the personal, premillennial, and imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ. His return has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Baptism and Communion

We believe that Christian baptism is a public declaration of and identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection signified by immersion in water.

The Lord’s Supper is the commemoration by believers of Christ’s death until He comes and should be preceded by a careful self-examination (Acts 4:13; Romans 6:3-6; 1 Corinthians 11:20-29).

The Church

Upon accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, all believers have therefore become part of His body, the church. There is one church universal, composed of all those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The Scriptures command believers to gather together to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, observance of the ordinances (baptism and communion), fellowship, service to the body through the development and use of talents and gifts, and outreach to the world in fulfillment of the command of Christ to make disciples of all believers (Ephesians 5:23; Romans 12:1; Acts 2:42-46; 1 Corinthians 14:26; Matthew 28:18-20).

Wherever God's people meet regularly in obedience to this command there is the local expression of the church—under the watch care of Elders and other supportive leadership. Its members are to work together in love and unity, intent on the one ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ (Ephesians 4:16).

Statement on Missions

Realizing that the cause of Christ extends beyond any one local fellowship, we commit ourselves to an ongoing ministry of extending the call of Christ to make disciples around the world. To this end a Missions Leadership Team will meet regularly under the direction of the Missions Pastor. The purpose of the Missions Leadership Team will be to administer and develop the Missions Ministry of the Church in agreement with the Missions policy statement, which is available upon request.

Christian Living

Concerning Conduct

The Bible teaches that all believers are saints, set apart unto God and are thus responsible to live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord (Romans 21:1-2; 1 Peter 1:14-19; 2 Timothy 2:19; Titus 2) lest the Word of God be blasphemed (1 Timothy 6:1; Titus 2:5). As Christians we should obey the Word of our Lord, seek the things, which are above, walk as He walked, and accept as our responsibility the duty and privilege of bearing the Gospel to a lost world (1 John 2:3; Colossians 3:1; Ephesians 5:23; Matthew 29:19-20).

A victorious and fruitful Christian life is possible only for those who have presented themselves wholly to Christ and walk by the power of the Holy Spirit, which all believers are called to do (Romans 12:1,2; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18; Romans 6, 7).

“I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” Romans 12:1

“Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.” Galatians 5:16

“Be not drunk with wine...but be filled with the Spirit.” Ephesians 5:18

Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

God created and sanctioned marriage to bring together men and women, the complementary halves of humanity, by joining them in “one-flesh” unions. (Gen 2:18-25.) Marriage between one man and one woman for life uniquely reflects Christ's relationship with His Church. (Eph 5:21-33.) It provides the best chance that children will grow up in the same home with both their mom and their dad. Gender, likewise, matters. God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female, and these distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27.)

Statement on the Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or

mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Ps 139:13-18.)

Final Authority: Matters of Belief and Conduct

The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Hickory Bible Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Board of Elders is Hickory Bible Church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application. The Book of Acts reveals that the authority for the direction of the affairs of the church was vested in the Elders. The Elders are responsible to be sensitive to the leadings of the Holy Spirit and to discern on behalf of the congregation the Holy Spirit's direction. When the Elders believe an issue is sufficiently significant to require congregational input, the Elders will present the pertinent information to the congregation. The congregation will have opportunity to give input to the Elders. It is the responsibility of the Elders to discern direction of the Holy Spirit through the truth of Scriptures, prayer, and understanding of the pertinent issues at hand and input from the congregation.

Article V: Property Usage, Organization, Structure and Governance Stewardship of Facilities, Assets and Resources.

1. *Scriptural Duties Regarding Stewardship.* Scripture is clear that God gives resources to His church to advance His kingdom until His return, and believers will be accountable to God for their use of His resources (1 Chronicles 29:12,14; Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 16:10-11; Luke 19:11-27; Romans 14:12; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; Hebrews 4:13; 1 Peter 4:10-11). Hickory Bible Church is determined to use its God-given resources for His glory.
2. *Commitment.* As a result, the property and other assets of the Church, including any facilities, buildings, campuses, real assets, personal assets, intangible property, intellectual property, or any other property or asset of any kind that is subject to the direction or control of the Church (together, the "Property"), is irrevocably dedicated to the fulfillment of the Great Commission and the Church's religious, charitable, and educational purposes set forth in Article 4, for as long as they are owned by the Church. These Bylaws prohibit any policy, act or omission that would permit any of the Property to be used in a manner that is—or, in the sole determination of the Elder Board of the Church (the "Elder Board"), could be perceived to be—inconsistent with the Church's Purposes. Any person may enter Church Property to attend scheduled worship services or receive religious instruction or counseling without pre-qualification or categorical restriction of any kind; however, the Church's senior employees and staff (together, the "Staff"), under the governance of the Elder Board, (a) shall not permit any Property to be reserved or used (including for conferences, weddings, funerals or other events) by any person that will or may use such Property in a manner (or to convey, intentionally or by implication, a message) inconsistent with the Purposes and (b) are authorized to prohibit or restrict any individual's access to Church facilities.

Membership

The New Testament clearly indicates that groups of people who were followers of the Lord Jesus Christ identified themselves with and committed themselves to a particular local body. In order to implement the principles of accountability and commitment to the local body of Christ, as refined in the New Testament and practiced in the early churches, Hickory Bible Church recognizes the need for formal membership. Membership at Hickory Bible Church is for all who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ; have visibly demonstrated that commitment through believer's baptism; and, have completed the Membership Process described in these Bylaws.

Membership Commitment

The effectiveness of our joining together will be determined by the level of the commitment we make. In a society where so few make commitments and fewer still keep them, Hickory Bible Church is seeking a group of people who are determined to know the joy Christ intended for His body, the church. To this end, members of Hickory Bible Church must be willing to live in submission to our doctrinal statement. Further, they must be willing to abide by the entire Membership Covenant given to each prospective member.

Procedure for Membership

1. Prospective members must attend all the sessions of our Membership Class. These classes are a clear and concise overview of the history of our church, who Christ is, how one becomes a Christian, and how to be meaningfully connected to the church.
2. Upon completion of the Membership Class, any person who desires to become a member must complete the Hickory Bible Church Membership Application. Each applicant is asked about their personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and if they have been baptized by immersion, expressing that faith. A pastoral staff person reviews the applications.
3. The pastoral staff will set up an interview for each applicant desiring membership with an elder and or a pastor. During that interview, each person is asked to agree to the church Membership Covenant and to sign it indicating agreement. When they sign, they are members.
4. If a person who desires membership has never been baptized by immersion, they can be considered members as they pursue baptism.

Concerning Church Discipline

Because of God's holy nature and the believers' high calling, Scripture teaches and commands personal and ecclesiastical separation from religious apostasy (2 John 7-11; Romans 16:17; Titus 3:10), from all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations (1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:1-5), and from professing believers living in willful disobedience to the Word of God (2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6, 14, 15; 1 Corinthians 5). The following are examples of Scriptural directions regarding those church members who refuse to adhere to what is commanded of those who follow Christ.

“...note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned and avoid them.” Romans 16:17

“... that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.” 2 Thessalonians 3:6

“And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him that he may be ashamed.” 2 Thessalonians 3:14

Based upon the previous verses as well as the direction Jesus gives in Matthew 16:18-19, the elders will enforce the Membership Covenant. Those members who refuse to follow the clear commands from God’s Word as well as what they have agreed to do in signing their Membership Covenant, will be placed under church discipline, overseen by the elders of the church. The process of church discipline is described in Matthew 18:15-18. First, the person finding a brother or sister in sin will go and confront them. If they refuse to repent, the person will get other witnesses to go with them to confront the offending brother or sister. Should the offender continue in sin, the church will be told and asked to reach out to the offender as a final resort to draw them back to commitment to Christ and His Word. If they still persist in their disobedience, the Elder Board, by majority vote, will remove them from membership in the church and they will be asked not to attend any church meetings until they repent. This process does not include separation from unbelievers who need the Word of God to penetrate their world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Church Government

Two Church Offices

The biblical teaching on the subject of two church offices is found in 1 Timothy 3:1-16 and Titus 1:5-9. Though there are three terms used for the offices of the church, i.e. bishop, elder, and deacon/deaconess, a careful analysis of these terms indicates that bishop and elder are used interchangeably, with the bishop simply being the ‘ruling’ or leading elder. According to Acts 20:17-38 and I Peter 5:1-5, the elders have responsibility over the spiritual and governmental aspects of the church.

Elders

Selection

First Timothy 3 and Titus 1 lists the qualifications and characteristics a man must possess in order to be qualified to serve as an elder. All potential candidates will make their aspiration to serve known to the Board of Elders. In keeping with the clear biblical injunctions regarding authority structures within the church, only men will be considered for the office of elder. Following this declaration, an in-depth process will ensue to determine if the nominee is biblically qualified as set forth in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. After the Board of Elders has determined that the candidate meets these standards, they may, by majority vote, recommend the nominee to the congregation. This will be done at least 30 days prior to installation on the Elder Board as a final step in the selection process. During this final step, the congregation will be

asked to review the biblical qualifications and provide feedback to the Elder Board (both positive and negative) to help determine if the nominee is qualified to serve. If a church member knows something that may disqualify a candidate, they should first make that known to the candidate for discussion or clarification. Should this step not resolve the matter satisfactorily, both the church member and candidate will make this known to the Board of Elders who will be the final authority in determining the validity of the charge against the candidate. Following the 30 day period of review, the Board of Elders will by majority vote approve or reject each candidate. If approved, the Board of Elders will announce the new elder to the congregation.

Term

Since Scripture indicates no fixed term for elders, unless one becomes unqualified biblically, there is no specific term limit for the office of elder. Instead, each elder, upon appointment by the Board of Elders, shall be asked for a six-year commitment. At the end of three years, the commitment will be reviewed, along with a possible recommitment and reaffirmation by fellow elders for another three year period. During the review, both the individual and the other elders shall evaluate his continued service as an elder, again considering the biblical qualifications, as well as any personal factors that might affect his service. After six years of service, all elders will be advised to take at least a one year sabbatical. Following this sabbatical, or any other period of time when an elder rotates off of the Elder Board, if he again aspires to serve and continues to meet all the biblical qualifications, the Elder Board may, by majority vote, appoint him to serve again on the Elder Board. However, the Elder Board will only approve his service after following the 30 day congregational evaluation period described in the selection process above. An individual's service as an elder may be discontinued, at any time, by his own decision or by a majority decision of the Board of Elders. Should an elder become unqualified biblically, he will be removed by majority vote of the Board of Elders. A person leaving the Board of Elders would not preclude his service as a future elder, unless he becomes biblically unqualified.

Duties

The Scriptures are clear that the elder's responsibility is the spiritual oversight of the congregation. The elder's responsibility can be broken down into three main areas:

- a) Ensuring that the doctrine of the church remains purely biblical; all doctrinal issues in the church will be settled by the Board of Elders.
- b) Ensuring that the direction of the church remains consistent with our statement of purpose and the four pillars statement as outlined in the Constitution.
- c) Administering in love and humility the biblical process of church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-20 and Galatians 6:1-4. These Bylaws in the section entitled "Concerning Church Discipline" describe the process the elders will use for issues of church discipline for all church members including elders and deacons.

All decisions affecting the overall doctrine, direction, and discipline of the church will be the responsibility of the Board of Elders.

Structure

All elders will have equal authority and responsibility. The Elder Board has developed a policy that describes the relationship between the elders and the Preaching Pastor. This document is attached to the Bylaws for convenience, but is not a part of the Bylaws. However, it does communicate how the Preaching Pastor and the Elder Board will work together for the progress of the gospel at this church. The policy may be changed at any time by a majority vote of the Board of Elders. The Preaching Pastor will work in cooperation with the Elder Board Chairman to ensure healthy ministry development and strong accountability. Agenda items for the elder meetings must be submitted to the Elder Board Chairman prior to the elders' meeting. The Elder Board will meet on a regular basis as determined by the Board of Elders. Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Chairman or by at least two other elders on the Board. All special meetings will be announced so as to provide a reasonable amount of time to allow as many elders as possible to attend the meeting. An elders' meeting may not be held without a majority of the elders present and the entirety of the elders informed. The Elder Board Chairman will be selected by majority decision of the Board of Elders with no fixed term and may not be one of the pastors. The Elder Board will consist of the Chairman, the Preaching Pastor, and additional elders, who will assume responsibility as agreeable and necessary.

Qualifications (Titus 1:6-9)

Above reproach
Able to teach
Husband to one wife
Not addicted to wine
Temperate
Not antagonistic
Prudent
Uncontentious
Respectable
Free from the love of money
Hospitable
Manage own household
Not a new convert

Pastors

Selection

All members of the pastoral staff will be chosen by the Board of Elders. The Preaching Pastor will automatically be a member of the Board of Elders. The elders may nominate additional member(s) of the pastoral staff to serve on the Board of Elders.

Term

All pastoral staff members will serve for an indefinite period of time. The Preaching Pastor is responsible and accountable in the performance of his duties to the Board of Elders. All other

staff members are responsible to the Board of Elders through the Preaching Pastor. A staff member may only be dismissed by a majority decision of the Board of Elders.

Duties

The responsibility of the Preaching Pastor will be to faithfully preach God's Word and model the priority of discipleship within the church. He will give oversight and direction to all ministry staff and work with the Board of Elders in carrying out the overall vision of Harvest Bible Chapel.

Qualifications

The qualifications are equivalent to the biblical qualifications of an elder.

Additional Pastoral Staff

Ministry descriptions for the remaining pastoral staff will be established by the Board of Elders in keeping with the giftedness of the individual and agreed upon at the time of hiring.

Deacons/Deaconesses

The office of deacon/deaconess is one that exists biblically to give leadership to the serving functions of the church (Acts 6). The qualification for deacons/deaconesses are the same as elder in the area of character, but different in aptitude. The elders are to be "apt to teach" while the deacons/deaconesses are to be "able and proved as servants".

Selection

When the need arises for additional deacons/deaconesses, the Board of Elders will recommend nominees. Following an independent interview to determine if the nominee is biblically qualified, the congregation will be reminded of the biblical requirements for deacons/deaconesses and given 30 days to speak personally with the nominee if they are aware of any disqualifying characteristics. If the matter remains unresolved, the nominee or church member should approach the Board of Elders and request that their name be withdrawn from consideration.

Term

Since Scripture indicates no fixed term for deacons/deaconesses, no specific term of office is recommended. Instead, each deacon, upon appointment, shall be asked for a four-year commitment. At the end of two years the commitment will be reviewed, along with a possible recommitment and reaffirmation. During the review, both the individual and the other deacons shall evaluate his continued service as a deacon, again considering the biblical qualifications as well as any personal factors that might affect his service. An individual's service as a deacon/deaconess may be discontinued by his/her own decision or by the decision of the majority of the Deacons' Board. All deacons are expected to maintain adherence to the qualifications in I Timothy 3. Should anyone accuse a deacon of failure to follow these qualities, they should approach the Deacon Board Chairman with this information. There must be affirmation by at least two witnesses to affirm the misconduct. The Deacon Board will examine the merits of the

accusations and decide whether the deacon/deaconess will be removed from office. Upon the request of the Deacon Board, the elders will have the opportunity to participate in either the review or in the examination process. A person leaving the Board of Deacons would not preclude his service as a future deacon, subject to the regular selection process. Deacons/deaconesses, if nominated to do so, may serve for an additional term (four years) as long as they take one year off between two consecutive terms. A deacon/deaconess may also be dismissed by a majority decision of the Board of Elders.

Duties

The Board of Deacons will be responsible for the following church ministries: Prayer, Missions, Worship and Work, Connection, Launchgroups, and Outreach. As other needs arise within the church, the deacons, as directed by the Board of Elders, will assume oversight of those.

Structure

Each church ministry (Prayer, Missions, etc.) shall have at least one deacon who serves as its leader. This deacon shall serve on The Board of Deacons. The remainder of the deacons/deaconesses will assume responsibilities as agreeable and as needed.

Qualifications

(1 Timothy 3:8-12)

Individual of dignity

Above reproach

Not double tongued

First tested as servants

Not addicted to wine

Spouses must be faithful

Dignified

Temperate

Not fond of sordid gain

Holding to the mystery of faith with a clear conscience

Husband of one wife

Manages household well

Church Secretary: The Board of Elders will choose the Church Secretary who will be any member of the church with the qualities of faithfulness, spiritual maturity, and a reputation for keeping confidences. The Church Secretary, having no fixed term, will attend board meetings and business meetings of the church and record the minutes of these meetings. The minutes will then be formally prepared by the Church Secretary and distributed to the appropriate people one week before their next meeting.

Church Treasurer: The Board of Elders shall choose one person to serve as **Church Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall have direct oversight over all the church's money handling aspects, including but not limited to, collections, deposits, and dispersals. The Treasurer will

work with the staff to ensure that all financial statements including church budgets are accurate and timely.

Full Board

At the discretion of the Board of Elders, a Full Board meeting may be called. The Full Board consists of the three divisions of church leadership: the pastoral staff, the deacons, and the Elders. The Elders may also include, when needed, small group coaches and/or leaders or other key ministry leaders who are not on staff in a Full Board meeting. All are to be under the authority of, and in submission to, the Board of Elders.

Women in Ministry

At Hickory Bible Church, we affirm the significant and God-ordained role that women are to play in the establishment and leadership of the local church. We believe that every opportunity of leadership is open to women except those that are excluded by Scripture. We do not feel any pressure to re-examine the clear biblical teaching on the exclusion of women from the office of elder simply because the unregenerate world is clamoring for the church to do so. We stand with the 2,000-year-old historical consensus on the teaching of Scripture that women are not to be placed in positions within the church where they would exercise authority over the male leadership or where they would teach doctrine to the adult male members of the congregation. We do not see this as an issue of equality, for men and women are equal under God in every way. We see this as an issue of sameness. Men and women are not the same. The Bible makes that very clear. Just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are different in function and responsibility yet equal, so it is with the relationship between men and women. While we reject the movement within Christianity to see men and women as the same, we do stand against the other extreme, which de-emphasizes the significant leadership role of women in the church. We want to see female leadership when qualified candidates are available, in any leadership position other than elder.

Business Meeting of the Membership

1. A business meeting of the membership can be called at the discretion of the Elders, as they see the need. Attendance at the business meetings of Hickory Bible Church will be open to all who regularly attend the church. Participation (i.e. speaking publically, asking questions, affecting consensus, etc.) shall be limited to the members in good standing. A member in good standing will be one who is not under the discipline of the Board of Elders and who gives clear evidence of seeking to fulfill the membership commitment. Any item of business that a member wishes to raise at any business meeting that is not part of the published agenda (which will be published 14 days prior to the business meeting) must be given in writing to one of the Elders at least seven days before the business meeting.
2. The Board of Elders shall inform the church of its financial condition at least yearly in the form of an annual report to be distributed to every member. The annual report will include a full financial statement of the previous year and a proposed budget for the coming year. Should a member request this type of financial information at any time

during the year, the church will provide it to them in a timely manner. The church commits itself to a program of fiscal responsibility that precludes over-budget spending.

Ownership and Distribution of Property.

1. The Church shall hold, own, and enjoy its own personal and real property, without any right of reversion to another entity, except as provided in these Bylaws.
2. "Dissolution" means the complete disbanding of the Church so that it no longer functions as a congregation or as a corporate entity. Upon the Dissolution of the Church, its property shall be applied and distributed as follows: (i) all liabilities and obligations of the Church shall be paid and discharged, or adequate provision shall be made therefore; (ii) assets held by the Church upon condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance, which condition occurs by reason of the Dissolution, shall be returned, transferred, or conveyed in accordance with such requirements; (iii) assets received and not held upon a condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance by reason of the Dissolution, shall be transferred or conveyed to one or more domestic or foreign corporations, societies, or organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Code, and are engaged in activities substantially similar to those of the Church; any such distribution shall be done pursuant to a plan adopted by the Elder Board; and (iv) any assets not otherwise disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the Church is then located, for such purposes and to such organizations as such court shall determine, provided such organizations are in agreement with the Church's Statement of Faith and basic form of Government.

Books and Records

Required Books and Records. The Church shall keep correct and complete books and records of account. No Member or other person shall have the right to examine any personnel, financial, medical or other information that would invade the personal privacy of the Staff, Members, contributors, attendees or guests.

Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Church shall begin on the first day of January and end on the last day of December in each year.

Financial Statements. The Church shall have its financial statement reviewed each year by a certified public accounting firm selected by the Treasurer or the Board of Elders. Upon completion, this review will be made available to the congregation via web site or other appropriate means consistent with other similar organizations.

Indemnification; Standard of Care

Indemnification. The Church may provide a trust fund, insurance, or other arrangement to effectuate this Article. As described herein, requests for indemnification shall not be unreasonably withheld.

1. *Mandatory Indemnification.* To the maximum extent permitted by the Act (provided, however, that if an amendment to the Act in any way limits or restricts the indemnification rights permitted by law as of the date of adoption of these Bylaws, such amendment shall apply only to the extent mandated by law and only to activities of persons subject to indemnification under this Section which occur subsequent to the effective date of such amendment), the Church shall indemnify and advance expenses to any person who is or was an Elder, Pastor, ministry director (“Director”), Deacon, Officer, ministry leader or Staff of the Church, or to such person’s heirs, executors, administrators and legal representatives, for the defense of any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, and whether formal or informal (the “Proceeding”), to which such person was, is or is threatened to be made, a named defendant or respondent, which indemnification and advancement of expenses shall include counsel fees actually incurred as a result of the Proceeding or any appeal thereof, reasonable expenses actually incurred with respect to the Proceeding, all fines, judgments, penalties and amounts paid in settlement thereof, subject to the following conditions:
 - i. The Proceeding was instituted by reason of the fact that such person is or was an Elder, Pastor, Director, Deacon, Officer, ministry leader or Staff of the Church; and
 - ii. The Elder, Pastor, Director, Deacon, Officer, ministry leader or Staff conducted themselves in good faith, and he **or she** reasonably believed (A) in the case of conduct in their official capacity with the Church, that their conduct was in its best interest; (B) in all other cases, that their conduct was at least not opposed to the best interests of the Church; and (C) in the case of any criminal proceeding, that they had no reasonable cause to believe their conduct was unlawful. The termination of a proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent is not, of itself, determinative that the church leader did not meet the standard of conduct herein described.
2. *Permissive Indemnification.* The Church may, to the maximum extent permitted by the Act (provided, however, that if an amendment to the Act in any way limits or restricts the indemnification rights permitted by law as of the date of adoption of these Bylaws, such amendment shall apply only to the extent mandated by law and only to activities of persons subject to indemnification under this Section which occur subsequent to the effective date of such amendment), indemnify and advance expenses in a Proceeding to any person who is or was an Elder, Pastor, Director, Deacon, Officer, ministry leader or Staff or volunteer of the Church, or to such person’s heirs, executors, administrators and legal representatives, provided that the Proceeding was instituted by reason of the fact (or allegation) that such person is or was an employee or agent of the Church and met the standards of conduct set forth in these Bylaws. The Church may also indemnify and advance expenses in a Proceeding to any person who is or was an Elder, Pastor, Director, Deacon, Officer, ministry leader, Staff or volunteer of the Church to the extent doing so is consistent with public policy or as may be provided by these Bylaws, by contract, or by

general or specific action of the **Elder Board**.

3. *Good Faith Reliance.* The Elders may in good faith rely on information, opinions, reports, or statements, including financial statements and other financial data, concerning the Church or another person that were prepared or presented by a variety of persons, including Staff of the Church, professional advisors or experts such as accountants or legal counsel. An Elder Board is not relying in good faith if they have knowledge concerning a matter in question that renders reliance unwarranted. No Elder Board member shall have personal liability for actions taken or omitted by an advisor if the advisor was selected in good faith and with ordinary care.
4. *No Duties as Trustees.* No Elder Board members shall be deemed to have the duties of a trustee of a trust with respect to the Church or with respect to any Property held or administered by the Church, including property that may be subject to restrictions imposed by the donor or transferor of the property.

Conflict of Interest

Purpose. The Church seeks to operate, at all times and wherever possible, in its own fiduciary interest and in the best interest of its Members. The Church's Elder and Deacon Conflict of Interest Policy is intended to allow the Church to operate in a manner that is free from both real and perceived conflicts of interest, and where such conflicts cannot be avoided or are desirable, to protect the Church by assuring a mechanism for maintaining the Church's interest above the interests of those serving in leadership roles. This policy is intended to supplement, but not replace, any applicable state and federal laws governing conflicts of interest, or fiduciary responsibility applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

Definitions.

1. *Interested Person.* Any staff or non-Staff individual in a leadership or decision making position (elder, deacon, pastor, lifegroup leader, church leader, etc.) who has a potential direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an Interested Person.
2. *Potential Conflict of Interest.* A person has a potential direct or indirect conflict of interest if the person or their immediate family has or receives, directly or indirectly, through business investment, any of the following:
 - (i) An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Church has or is considering a business relationship or transaction;
 - (ii) A financial compensation, including direct or indirect remuneration, as well as any gifts or favors that are not insubstantial, from any entity or individual with which the Church has or is considering a business relationship or transaction;
 - (iii) Is a member of the board or senior executive in any entity which has a like or similar religious mission; or
 - (iv) Is a member of the board or senior executive in any entity with which the Church has or is considering a partnering or ministry relationship or transaction.
3. *Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest.* An Interested Person is required to make voluntary, proactive, written representation to the Elder Board, of the full and exact nature of all Potential Conflicts of Interest.

4. *Procedures.*

1. *Duty to Disclose.* In connection with any Potential Conflict of Interest, an Interested Person must disclose the existence of the Potential Conflict of Interest and all relevant facts to the Elder Board, in writing at the time any potential business relationship or transaction is contemplated involving an Interested Person.
2. *Process for Evaluating Potential Conflicts of Interest and Making Final Determination of Conflicts of Interest.* The Elder Board, shall be the entity responsible for reviewing disclosure information and determining whether a real or perceived Conflict of Interest exists and if so, whether and how the parties shall work to:
 - (i) Wherever possible, eliminate the Conflict of Interest; or,
 - (ii) Where in the best interests of the Church, limit the effects of the Conflict of Interest.
3. *Procedures for Appealing a Conflict of Interest Decision.*
 - (i) An Interested Person may make a presentation to the Elder Board, but after the presentation, he or she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of the transaction or arrangement involving the Potential Conflict of Interest
 - (ii) The Elder Board, may, if appropriate, appoint a non-Interested Person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement and recommend for Elder Board approval a solution in order to accept the conflicted party that mitigates the Conflict of Interest or choose an alternate solution, vendor or course of action.
4. *Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy.* If the Elder Board has reasonable cause to believe a member of the Elder Board, or Deacon Board has failed to disclose actual or potential Conflicts of Interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose and the Elder Board shall take appropriate action, if any, as the circumstances warrant, including up to immediate dismissal from the relevant board or committee.

Amendments

Amendments to these Bylaws will be made on an as needed basis by a majority vote of the Board of Elders. However, prior to any changes to the Bylaws, the elders will inform the church membership of the proposal for input and feedback. Once feedback has been received, the elders will vote on the proposal and notify the church membership of the change(s) at the next quarterly Members Meeting.