



New Hope Community Church
Constitution as of January 29, 2006,
Revised October 11, 2015.

New Hope Community Church Constitution
January 29, 2006, Revised March 7, 2010

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PREAMBLE

The Word of God demands that a Christian organization not only conform to the Word of God in doctrine and practice (*Psalm 119:105, Galatians 1:6 - 8, 2 Timothy 4:1 - 5*), but also that all things be done decently and in order (*I Corinthians 14: 40*). Therefore, we, New Hope Community Church of Brentwood, TN, do set forth this present document. Our congregational affairs, spiritual and material, shall be conducted in accordance with this Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE I – Name, Purpose, Doctrinal Statement

Section A – Name

The legal name of the church is New Hope Community Church, Inc. of Brentwood, TN (the “Church”). Unless required by circumstances, commonly it shall be referred to as New Hope Community Church.

The Church was organized and registered with the Tennessee Secretary of State as a chartered non-profit corporation on June 7, 1977. The Church Senior Pastor serves as its registered agent with the Secretary of State.

Section B – Purpose

It is the stated purpose of the Church to worship God, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to celebrate the Sacraments, to realize Christian fellowship and unity within this Church and the Church Universal, to render loving service toward all of God’s creation, to seek out and to save the lost, to nurture the saved into maturity, and to demonstrate the kingdom of God on earth by proclaiming the words and doing the works of Jesus Christ. (*Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 4:16-19*)

Section C – Doctrinal Statement

Item a - The Godhead

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence, and obedience (*Deuteronomy 6:4, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 12: 29, John 1:1-4, Acts 5:3, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Hebrews 1:13, Revelation 1:4-6*).

Item b – The Holy Scriptures

We believe that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and we understand these words apply to the whole of the book called the Bible, in the sense that the Holy Spirit breathed out the very words of the sacred writings to holy men of old; and that His Divine inspiration is not in different degrees but extends equally and fully to all parts of these writings. (*II Timothy 3:16, 17, II Peter 1: 20, 21, I Corinthians 2:13, Mark 12: 26, 13:11, Acts 1:6, 2:4*).

Item c – The Person and the Work of Christ

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men (*John 1:1, 2:14, Luke 1:35*). We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice, and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (*Romans 3:24, 25, 1 Peter 1: 3-5, 2:24, Ephesians 1:7*).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. He is also Head and Supreme Administrator of the Church, and we are confident in the ultimate victory of Christ's Church over the forces of darkness (*Acts 1:9,10, Hebrews 7:25, 9:24, Romans 8:34, 1 John 2:1, 2, I Corinthians 11:3, Matthew 16:18, II Corinthians 10:3-5*).

Item d – The Person and the Work of the Holy Spirit.

We affirm the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life. We affirm the fullness of the Holy Spirit is the empowerment of the Christian for witness and service, that the Holy Spirit provides one or more spiritual gifts to all believers, manifesting them as He wills, and all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit are operative today (*Romans 8:11-12, Acts 1:8, I Corinthians 12:7-11, John 16:13*).

Item e – The Total Depravity of Man

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; that man is totally depraved, guilty before God, and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition (*Genesis 1: 26, 27, Romans 3:22, 23, 5:12, Ephesians 2:1-3, 12*).

Item f – Ordinances / Sacraments

(i) Baptism. We affirm believers' baptism by immersion in obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ; however, the mode of baptism is not a condition of membership or covenant (*Mark 1:9-10, Matthew 28:19*).

(ii) The Lord's Supper. We believe that Communion was instituted by the Lord as a remembrance of His sacrificial death, and it is the responsibility and privilege of every believer to partake thereof (*Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:14-23, I Corinthians 11:13-31*).

Item g – The Eternal State

We affirm the resurrection of both the saved and the lost, those that are saved to the resurrection of life and those that are lost to isolation from the Living God in hell (*I Thessalonians 4:13-18, Revelation 20:1-15*).

Item h – Salvation

We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the remission of our sins (*Ephesians 1:7, 2:8-10, John 1:12, I Peter 1:18,19*).

Item i – Purpose

We affirm the Church's purpose as offering worship to God, fellowship and instruction to itself, and evangelism and service to the world. We affirm the five-fold ministry of the body of Christ as outlined in Ephesians 4:11 as the Church's divinely-established order and government. We affirm the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. (*Ephesians 4:1-16, Acts 2:42-47, I Corinthians 12:12-13*).

Item j – Spiritual Gifts

We affirm that the Bible teaches that both women and men are called to develop their spiritual gifts and to use them as stewards of the grace of God. Both men and women are divinely gifted and empowered to minister to the whole Body of Christ, under His authority (*I Peter 4:10-11, Acts 1:14, Acts 21:9, Romans 16:1-16, Philippians 4:2-3, Colossians 4:15, John 20:17-18*).

Item k – Marriage

We believe marriage was instituted by God to be between a man and woman, joined together as one for life, and that no man should separate them. This institution of marriage has also been confirmed by our Lord Jesus Christ through his teaching, to be between a man and a woman as God had commanded it from the beginning. (*Genesis 2:4-25, Matthew 19:4-6 and Ephesians 5:22-23*)

Item l – Tithes and Offerings

We affirm the grace of giving in conformity to the Apostle Paul's instruction to the churches. We affirm the privilege of sharing in the service to the saints and the funding of the various ministries of the Church. We believe tithing as spoken of in the Old Covenant is a godly pattern which believers are encouraged to follow. Although tithing is not mandatory for salvation, we are confident the Lord blesses a cheerful giver, and all members are encouraged to give as the Lord leads them. (*II Corinthians 8:1-7, II Corinthians 9:6-15*)

ARTICLE II – Membership

Section A – Admission

Item a – Definition

A member is a person who has publicly been received into the Church (item b of this section) and whose name has been placed upon the roll of the Church. Membership in a local assembly is good and proper in that it is the expression of fellowship with a group of believers in the furtherance of the Gospel. It should not be confused with salvation in any aspect.

We feel that, beginning with the sixteenth (16th) year of life, a person should be able to make the decisions involved with responsible church membership and shall be allowed a vote in all congregational meetings.

Item b – Union with the Church

- (i) Confession. Persons desiring to unite with the Church, upon confession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, shall complete the new members class.
- (ii) Letters. Persons coming with letters of recommendation from some other church shall present these letters to the Senior Pastor. Such persons shall be examined as to their salvation and Christian experience and shall complete the new members class.
- (iii) Acceptance. When the Senior Pastor is satisfied as to a person's faith in Christ, and upon evidence of a consistent, godly life and Christian attitude, he shall be accepted as a member of the Church.
- (iv) Welcome. All new members shall be publicly welcomed into the fellowship on a designated Sunday following their acceptance by the Senior Pastor.

Item c – Resignation and Removal of Members; Church Discipline

- (i) Letter of referral. Members resigning from membership may request a letter of referral. Any such request shall be made in writing to the Church office. Letters shall be granted upon approval by the Senior Pastor.
- (ii) Removal. A person's name shall be removed from the Church roll for cases of disorderly conduct or heretical doctrine so opposed to the Church's life and faith that it destroys the possibility of fellowship.

The procedure in such cases shall be as follows:

First the instruction of Matthew 18:15-18 shall be used.

If that does not lead to restoration, then charges shall be made to the Eldership in writing.

The accused shall be heard by the Eldership in the presence of the accuser.

If the decision of the Eldership is that the accusation is just, the accused may be disciplined by the Eldership, and that discipline may include removal from the Church roll and fellowship.

Should the accusation prove unwarranted, the accuser may be disciplined by the Eldership, and that discipline may include removal from the Church roll and fellowship.

Should the accused not appear before the Eldership within a reasonable length of time, the Eldership shall examine the situation and arrive at a decision based on the testimony received.

Public disclosure of discipline shall be made at the discretion of the Eldership.

Section B – Commitment

Members shall commit to attend the regular worship of the Church, to celebrate the Lord's Supper, to live the Christian life, to share in the life and work of the Church, to contribute to its support and benevolences, and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and community.

ARTICLE III – Governance

Section A – Leadership and Followership: The Congregation

New Hope Community Church celebrates the redemptive reality that we are a kingdom of priests (*1 Peter 2:9*). Thus we believe in the priesthood of all believers. Therefore, each member of the congregation is infinitely important to the corporate ministry of New Hope Community Church. In fact, all leadership comes from the congregation as elders and deacons are raised up from the congregation and elders, deacons and the Senior Pastor are affirmed by the congregation

New Hope Community Church shall humbly seek to walk out for Christ and His Kingdom (*Ephesians 4:2-3*).

Section B – Leadership: Elders

The governing body of New Hope Community Church shall be an Eldership, composed of godly men who meet biblical qualifications. The elders shall be nominated by the active members, selected by the then-present Elders following the receipt of counsel from the apostolic counsel, and thereafter affirmed by the congregation. Elders shall be chosen from among those men in the congregation who are recognized for their spirituality and leadership in matters pertaining to the Word of God and conduct of life (*1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:19, 20, Romans 12:7-8, Titus 1:7-9, 1 Peter 5:1-5, Exodus 20*). Novice or unknown men shall not be considered. Only members of the congregation shall be considered.

It shall be the sole responsibility of the Eldership to determine the number of positions to be filled, to qualify the nominees, and make the final selection of those nominees appointed to the Eldership.

The elders will provide leadership by:

- Leading exemplary lives in Christ,
- Providing counsel to the pastors,
- Serving as the decision-making body for the congregation,
- Shepherding people the Holy Spirit brings into their lives, and
- Ministering the word and prayer as their gifts enable (*Acts 15:22-29*).

Elders shall serve three-year terms, on a rotational basis. After a one year sabbatical, candidates may be considered for the office again, and if affirmed, serve again gladly.

No Elder shall be paid a salary for services rendered solely in such capacity.

Elders Review: The performance of the Elders shall be reviewed annually in a joint conference between the Senior Pastor, the Elders, and the Deacons a month before the Annual Business Meeting. Respecting the confidentiality of this conference, a written record may be kept by the Secretary if agreed upon by all parties.

Section C – Senior Pastor

The mantle leader (Chairman of the Congregation) shall be the Senior Pastor, who shall preside at all meetings of the elders and/or congregation and shall be responsible for execution of the elders' decisions.

He shall be an ordained minister of the Gospel (ordination may be made by the Church if so desired).

The Senior Pastor is to pray for and with the congregation; to spiritually feed the congregation by reading, expounding and preaching the Word; to administer, or oversee the administration of, the Sacraments; to visit regularly the members of the Church with special attention given to the sick, elderly and troubled.

The Senior Pastor will provide leadership by:

- Leading an exemplary life in Christ,
- Providing vision for the overall direction of the ministry,
- Moderating elders meetings,
- Overseeing administrative decisions, and.
- Serving ex officio with all deacon mission teams seeking to serve alongside the team and to connect them to other ministries.

Pastoral Review: The relationship of the Senior Pastor and congregation shall be reviewed annually in a conference between the Senior Pastor and the elders, a month before the Annual Business Meeting. Respecting the confidentiality of this conference, a written record may be kept by the Secretary if agreed upon by all parties. The elders, in consultation with the Senior Pastor, shall conduct an annual review of the Senior Pastor's compensation package and make adjustments in it as deemed appropriate.

The pastors, elders, and deacons shall model loving one another with the love of Christ!

Section D – Leadership: Deacons

Deacons shall be nominated by the active members, selected by the Elders, and affirmed by the active members. Deacons shall be chosen from among those men and women in the congregation who are recognized for their spirituality and leadership in matters pertaining to the Word of God and conduct of life. Novice or unknown persons shall not be considered. Only members of the congregation shall be considered.

As the deacons in the early church freed the Shepherds to focus on the ministry of the word and prayer, our deacons shall minister effectively in evangelism, helps, administration, and implementation of the strategies and decisions of the Eldership. Deacons shall serve three-year terms, on a rotational basis. After a one year sabbatical, candidates may be considered for the office again, and if affirmed, serve again gladly,

The Vice Chairman shall serve as the chairperson of the council of Deacons (*Acts 6:1-4, 1 Timothy 3:6-13*).

Deacons Review: The performance of the Deacons shall be reviewed annually in a joint conference between the Senior Pastor, Elders, and Deacons, a month before the Annual Business Meeting. Respecting the confidentiality of this conference, a written record may be kept by the Secretary if agreed upon by all parties.

Section E – Vacancies: Elders or Deacons

Any vacancy outside the normal term shall be filled as provided for in Sections B and D of this article and shall be affirmed at the next quarterly congregational meeting following the appointment.

ARTICLE IV – Apostolic Counsel

Apostolic Counsel is one of the foundational offices found in Ephesians 4:11. These are godly men and women whose call, ministry experience, and relationship with our congregation enables them to give counsel to our Pastors and Elders. This relationship gives them a spiritual objectivity which helps the Pastors and Eldership in areas in which they, as a body, seek counsel.

The Senior Pastor and Elders shall seek and recommend the Apostolic Counsel to the congregation. A two-thirds (2/3) favorable vote of those active members present and voting by secret ballot at a congregational meeting is required for a call to be extended to Apostolic Counsel.

ARTICLE V – Dissolution

In the event that two-thirds (2/3) of the elders believe the Church should be dissolved, the elders will call a meeting of the congregation to affirm the dissolution. A two-thirds (2/3) favorable vote of those active members present and voting by secret ballot at such a congregational meeting is required to proceed with dissolution. Upon the dissolution of the Church, the Elders, and Deacons, acting as a single body, shall, after the payment of all the liabilities of the Church, dispose of all of the remaining assets of the Church exclusively for the purposes of the Church in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for the purposes of the Church in such manner, or to such organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable and religious (Christian evangelical in nature) purposes as shall qualify as an exempt corporation or organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended (or of the corresponding provisions of any future United States Revenue Law) as the elders and deacons shall determine.

No part of the assets of the Church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributed to, its members, officers, or any person except that the Church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered, and to make payments in the furtherance of the Church.

ARTICLE VI – Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution may be made at any duly called congregational meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the active members present, public announcement of the text of the proposed amendment(s) having been made prior to the meeting as set forth in Article V, Section C of the Bylaws.

Amendments to the Bylaws may be made by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the eldership. Any proposed changes shall be announced to the membership at least 2 weeks prior to any action by the eldership.

A vote YES is defined as (for) and a vote NO is defined as (against). All other votes will not be counted (*Matthew 5:37*).