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Hope Community Church Constitution

Article One: Name, Incorporation and Affiliation:

The name of this organization will be Hope Community Church. Hope Community Church was organized and incorporated in Hennepin County of the State of Minnesota on May 13th, 1996.

Hope Community Church is an independent church voluntarily affiliated with the Minnesota Baptist Conference and the Baptist General Conference, as well as the North Central District of the Evangelical Free Church of America and the Evangelical Free Church of America. As appropriate, we may likewise cooperate with interdenominational fellowships on a voluntary independent basis.

Article Two: Foundation, Purpose and Calling:

The foundation of this church is the Lord Jesus Christ, and its code of guidance in all its affairs is the Bible, which we believe is the Word of God. We affirm that it is only by God's incredible grace expressed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that our sins can be forgiven and that we can now have hope. We also affirm that Jesus Christ is the only guide for lasting joy. We desire to put our full hope in Christ as we wait for His return.

The overall purpose of this church and reason for its existence is to glorify God. We believe that God is most glorified in us as we learn to hope and be satisfied in Him alone. We long to glorify God by putting our trust in Him, following His ways, and to gather together as many new worshippers of Him as possible. We aim to treasure Him in corporate and private worship, know Him better through the Bible, and communicate with Him in prayer. We also want to extend His love to others through fellowship, support, discipleship and outreach. We rely on God Himself to bring change, growth, healing and maturity.

We affirm that God has uniquely called Hope Community Church to minister to the students, faculty and residents of the University of Minnesota community. We also desire to serve the natural network of relationships we have through our daily situations, wherever they may be.

Article Three: Statement of Faith

1. The Word of God

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31,32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32

2. The Trinity

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons, that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption. Gen. 1:1,26; Isa 44:6-8; John 1:1,3; Matt. 28:19; John 4:24; Rom. 1:19,20; Eph. 4:5-6

3. God the Father

We believe in God, the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of each person, that He hears and answers prayer, and He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. Luke 10:21,22; Matt. 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Rom. 1:7; 1 Tim. 1:1,2; 2:5,6; 1 Peter 1:3; Rev. 1:6

4. Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth. Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1, 20:28; Rom. 9:5; 8:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30,31; Matt. 20:28; Eph. 1:4; Acts 1:11; Rom. 5:6-8; 6:9,10; Heb. 7:25; 9:28; 1 Tim. 3:16

5. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, empower, and gift all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the

1 Holy Spirit indwells all who believe in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. John 14:16-17,
2 26; 15:26,27; 16:9-14; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Gal. 5:22-26
3

4 **6. Regeneration**

5 We believe that all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe
6 that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Gen. 1:26;
7 5:2; Gen. 3; 2:17; 3:19; Eccl. 2:11; John 3:14; 5:24; 5:30; 7:13; 8:12; 10:26; Rom. 9:22; 2 Thes. 1:9; Rev. 19:3, 20; 20:10;
8 14:15; 21:18; Psa 51:7; Jer. 17:9; James 1:14; Rom. 3:19; 5:19; Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:9; 3:16; John 1:13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom.
9 8:1
10

11 **7. The Church**

12 We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons
13 are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a
14 credible confession of faith, and associated for worship, work and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon
15 the members of the local church the primary tasks of living a life of worship, nurturing the body of believers and
16 giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. Eph. 2:19-22; Acts 1:8; Eph. 5:19-21; Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:23-25
17

18 **8. Christian Conduct**

19 We believe that Christians should live for the glory of God and the well-being of others; that their conduct should
20 be blameless before the world; that they should be faithful stewards of their possessions; and that they should seek
21 to realize for themselves and others the full stature of maturity. 1 Cor. 10:31; Rom. 12:1-3; Heb. 12:1-2; John 14:15,
22 23-24; 1 John 2:3-6; 2 Cor. 9:6-9; 1 Cor. 4:2; Col. 1:9-10
23

24 **9. The Ordinances**

25 We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism and the Lord's
26 Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the public declaration of a believer's faith in Christ alone for the
27 forgiveness of their sins. We believe that immersion of the believer in water in the name of the triune God is the
28 richest expression of the New Testament example. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for
29 commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until
30 the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 11:23-26
31

32 **10. Religious Liberty**

33 We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of
34 faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by an ecclesiastical political authority;
35 that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free
36 from dictation or patronage of the other. 1 Tim. 2:5; Rom. 14: 7-9, 12
37

38 **11. Church Cooperation**

39 We believe that local churches can effectively promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in
40 a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and
41 functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time.
42 Churches may likewise cooperate with interdenominational fellowships on a voluntary basis. Acts 15:36, 41; 16:5; 1
43 Cor. 16:1; Gal. 1:1-3; Rev. 1:4, 10, 11
44

45 **12. The Last Things**

46 We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His
47 kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous, and
48 the endless suffering of the wicked. Matt. 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts. 1:11; Phil. 3:20; 1 Thes. 4:15; 2 Tim. 4:1;
49 Titus 2:13; 1 Cor. 4:5; 1 Cor. 15; 2 Thes. 1:7-10; Rev. 20:4-6, 11-15
50

51 **Article Four: Church Covenant**

52 We believe God has called Hope Community Church to glorify His name by helping as many people as possible
53 become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ in the University of Minnesota area and anywhere else He provides
54 the opportunity. We believe God has called us to be a local community of believers who celebrate God's presence
55 in worship, unleash God's power in prayer, utilize God's Word as the ultimate source of truth for every aspect of
56 life, and do whatever is necessary to go into the kingdom of darkness and bring Christ's message of love and
57 forgiveness. He has called us to live in Biblical community through loving relationships and accountability to one

1 another. We believe He has called us to live out the obedience of faith and that we grow in Christ through loving
2 God and serving in His work on earth - being good stewards of the time, talents, finances and other resources God
3 has entrusted to us. God has also called us to demonstrate His grace and love in all we do. Together as a church,
4 we covenant together in carrying out His vision for this church.
5

6 **Article Five: Church Membership**

7 There are two main types of membership at Hope Community Church: Positional Members and Church Members.
8

9 **“Positional Members”**

10 Hope Community Church acknowledges that every individual who has made a personal profession of faith in
11 Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is a “Positional Member” of the universal Body of Christ and should be given
12 opportunity to use their God-given gifts and resources to serve Him and further the Kingdom of God. There are
13 many ways that members of the Body of Christ can use their gifts at Hope Community Church (1 Corinthians
14 12:12-13, Ephesians 2:13-22; 4:3-6). “Positional” membership is eternal and unchanging.
15

16 **“Church Members”**

17 We also believe that God calls “Positional Members” to grow by becoming “Church Members” in a specific, local
18 fellowship united with common Biblical beliefs and a common sense of mission (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians
19 12:25-31; 14:12,26 Hebrews 10:24,25). We cannot see the invisible bond of a “positional member” in Christ, but we
20 can identify those who are the “Church Members” at Hope Community. We invite and require those wishing to
21 join our community of faith to become Church Members if they agree with this Constitution and its Bylaws and
22 are willing to go through the membership process to become Church Members of Hope Community Church. The
23 terms “Covenant Member” and “Church Member” are synonymous for purposes of the Constitution and Bylaws
24 of Hope Community Church.
25

26 The procedure for becoming a Church Member, as well as the termination, privileges, responsibilities and
27 discipline of Church Members are found in the Bylaws of this Constitution.
28

29 **Article Six: Church Government**

30 The Overseer Team, Governance Team, and Executive Staff will be responsible for the general operation of the
31 affairs of the church in accordance with the constitution and bylaws. Confirmation of Overseer and Governance
32 Teams, as well as major items of business will be brought before the Church Membership to be voted upon.
33

34 **Article Seven: Congregational meetings**

35 **Worship**

36 The church will meet regularly on Sundays for corporate worship.

37 **Business meetings**

38 The church will hold an annual meeting, where the budget for the next year will be presented. In
39 addition, we will hold special business meetings scheduled as needed, called by the procedure in Hope
40 Community Church Bylaws, Article 14.
41

42 **Article Eight: Amendments**

43 This document, known as the Hope Community Church Constitution, contains the principles and beliefs of the
44 church. Amendments to this constitution will be by two-thirds vote of Church Members present at any properly
45 called business meeting of this church having a quorum, provided each amendment will have been presented in
46 writing, posted, and announced at least 3 months in advance of the meeting. At no time will any amendment or
47 changes be adopted that would be determined to be contrary to the teachings of the Bible.
48

49 **Article Nine: Acquisition and Disposition of Real Property**

50 In a case of division of the Church Membership, church property will belong to those Church Members who abide
51 by Hope Community Church’s constitution, to be determined by the Minnesota Baptist Conference, if necessary.
52 The Minnesota Baptist Conference has sole authority and complete discretion to determine which members abide
53 by Hope Community Church's constitution. In a case of discontinuance of the church, the church property and
54 debt will be transferred to the Minnesota Baptist Conference, excluding the real property at 707 - 10th Avenue
55 South, Minneapolis, MN and the real property at 711 - 10th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN. These pieces of real
56 estate, excluding all contents, are to be transferred to the North Central District of the Evangelical Free Church.
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Hope Community Church Bylaws

Article 1: Vision of Hope Community Church

9 Hope Community Church exists to honor God by helping as many people as possible become fully devoted
10 followers of Jesus Christ.
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Article 2: Core Values

12 Our core values flow from a commitment to see our vision happen in our specific location, the University of
13 Minnesota area and natural network of relationships. Our seven core values are:

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1. For God's Glory

In all the universe, there is nothing more important than God. God's glory is the radiance of all that He is, and is what we are created to enjoy. Therefore, all of our ministries and efforts are about glorifying God and we will aim to worship God in all that we do, not just in our corporate worship alone, but through the rest of our lives as well.

"It ain't about us, it's about God."

2. By God's Grace

The grace of God shall permeate all that we do. We acknowledge that our only hope for a restored relationship with God is through the grace given to us at the cross of Jesus Christ. We will operate in a spirit of grace and humility, and will allow ourselves to be broken over our own sin.

"We are all poster children for grace."

3. Through the Truth of The Word of God

The Bible is our source of truth and our guide for living. Real life change happens only when it brings our lives into alliance with the God-inspired words of Scripture. We value teaching, preaching, studying and meditating upon God's Word.

"God's Word changes lives!"

4. Depending on God through the Holy Spirit.

We have no desire to have the ministry of this church be powered on our own strength. We will rely on the Holy Spirit to lead, empower, and comfort us as we eagerly learn how to personally and corporately pray and worship.

"Be a sailboat, catching the wind of the Spirit - not a speedboat, under your own power."

5. Because All People Matter to God

The reason we desire to minister to others is because people, all people, matter to God. No matter how far away from God they may seem, they all matter to God (Luke 15). Therefore we will be relevant by being contemporary and removing any unnecessary obstacle to help people see Jesus Christ. We want to honor where each person is at in their personal spiritual journey, while encouraging them to go farther. We will do this all in a God honoring manner.

"People matter to God."

6. Therefore, We Hope to Make Disciples

Through loving relationships and the community created at Hope Community Church, we aim to make fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ who would engage in knowing Jesus Christ through study and service. We highly value the smaller groups (mentorship relationships, small and cell groups, etc.) that can help facilitate these kind of life long, authentic, God-centered friendships.

"Community is our middle name" & "Make fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ"

7. And, Ultimately, Spread the Kingdom of God

We believe that as believers, we are on the offensive in a spiritual battle and therefore we will seek to go into the kingdom of darkness to do as much damage as we possibly can. We value kingdom of God related prayer, outreach, children's ministry, community service, church planting, and leadership development to accomplish this.

"Go into the kingdom of darkness and trash the joint."

Article 3: Definition of Church Membership

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54 All people who have chosen to accept Christ's work on the cross for their sins and now follow Him in an intimate
55 relationship as Lord and Savior are members of the universal church. They are "positional members" of the
56 world-wide church. Those Christ-committed followers who have chosen to align themselves with Hope
57 Community Church in its ministry, worship, and purposes may become "Church Members" of Hope as further

1 defined in Article Five of the Constitution.
2

3 **Article 4: Procedure for becoming a Church Member**

- 4 1. Declare a personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, publicly proclaimed through
5 believer baptism by immersion¹, and display evidence of a maturing, active, love relationship with Jesus;
- 6 2. Be in full agreement and practice with the Hope Community Church Statement of Faith, Vision, Core Values,
7 and Church Covenant;
- 8 3. Agree to abide by the Hope Community Church constitution and bylaws, including the policies on church
9 discipline (Bylaws, Article 7);
- 10 4. If the individual is a member of another congregation, a written communication from the new member to the
11 previous congregation is required to be sent indicating that membership is to be discontinued at the previous
12 church.
- 13 5. Prior to acceptance as a Church Member, each person will complete the introductory membership process,
14 which explains Hope Community Church's vision, values, beliefs, ministries and expectation of being a
15 Church Member.
- 16 6. A person interested in membership will meet with a group of Church Members appointed by the Governance
17 Team to determine that he/she agrees to uphold the conditions of membership. Upon approval of this group
18 of Church Members, as well as the fulfillment of 1-5 above, the person will become a Church Member.
19

20 **Article 5: Privileges of Church Membership**

- 21 1. It identifies a person as a Christ-committed follower (Ephesians 2:9, Romans 12:5).
- 22 2. It provides a spiritual family to support and encourage a person in a walk with Christ (Galatians 6:1-2,
23 Hebrews 1:24-25).
- 24 3. It places a person under the spiritual protection and guidance of Christ-centered leaders
25 (Hebrews 13:17, Acts 20:28-29).
- 26 4. It gives a person the accountability needed to grow (Ephesians 5:21).
- 27 5. It provides the opportunity to hold offices in the church (Elder and Deacon).
- 28 6. It gives the person the privilege of voting on Church matters if of legal voting age (18).
29

30 *Note - We do not require Church Membership in order to be in non-office positions of service or leadership. The only*
31 *requirement is that the individual must be a committed follower of Jesus Christ.*
32

33 **Article 6: Responsibilities of Church Membership**

34 With the privilege of membership comes certain responsibilities. As they are enabled by God to do so, members
35 will:

- 36 1. Pray regularly for other members and the church pastor(s) and leadership;
- 37 2. Adhere to the vision of the church covenant (See Hope Community Church Constitution, Article Four) and
38 regularly participate in the ministries of Hope Community Church;
- 39 3. Care for others in the Body of Christ and prayerfully consider ministry within the church;
- 40 4. Seek to follow Christ and His example in attitude and activity;
- 41 5. Share the good news of forgiveness in Christ with those who do not know Him; and
- 42 6. Give regularly and intentionally of God's financial provision to support the work of the church.
43

44 **Article 7: Discipline of Church Members**

45 If a Church Member of Hope Community Church is found to be in persistent, unrepentant sin, action will be
46 initiated to correct the sinning member. This will be done with a concern for redemption and reconciliation rather
47 than punishment and ostracism.
48

49 Biblical authority for church discipline is founded upon the following two principles:
50

- 51 (1) Believers are directed to not "...continue in sin..." (Romans 6:1); and

51

Baptism means to totally cover or immerse. The original Greek word in the New Testament for baptism is *Greek*, which has a literal definition of "to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water." Jesus directed His followers to be baptized which would show them to be totally covered with the Holy Spirit. His disciples made a conscious decision to be baptized. They displayed this by being immersed into water. We believe that this example of baptism holds the richest connection to biblical example and testifies most accurately to others that we are Christ's and have chosen to humbly identify ourselves with His death and return to life. Other methods of believer's baptism are not practiced except in extremely rare instances where a total water immersion would be dangerous or unavailable.

1 (2) Sin in the Christian's life is to be confessed and forsaken (I John 1:9; Proverbs 28:13).

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3 Disciplinary action toward a member who persists in sin will be initiated only after it is clear that the member has
4 been approached:

- 5 (A) individually (according to Matthew 18:15); and if they do not respond then
6 (B) with 1 or 2 other mature believers (Matthew 18:16; Galatians 6:1)
7

8 If, after both of these actions, the member continues in the sin, a written complaint should be submitted by the
9 "witnesses" (see above (B)) to the Overseer Team. The Overseer Team will carefully investigate the complaint,
10 attempting to bring about clarity and restoration. If all reasonable efforts fail to resolve the issue, the Overseer
11 Team will decide on further action, which could include public warning to other Church Members and attenders
12 (Matthew 18:17).
13

14 Sins requiring discipline that may eventually result in exclusion from membership and leadership include:

- 15
16 1) *Sins of human character that obscure the holiness of God.* Examples would be unrepentant sexual sin,
17 unlawful business practices, or using alcohol or drugs in a way that would bring unwarranted harm
18 upon the body. (1 Corinthians 5:11);
19 2) *Sins of divisiveness that bring confusion to the work of the church.* Examples would be gossiping about
20 church attenders, staff, and leadership, slandering others, or not keeping confidential issues secret.
21 (Romans 16:17); and
22 3) *Sins that violate the truth of God by promoting false doctrine.* Examples would be promoting universalism,
23 denying the deity of Christ, or any other teaching contrary to the Hope Community Church Statement
24 of Faith (2 Peter 2:1-3).
25

26 **Article 8: Procedure for terminating Church Membership**

- 27 1. A Church Member requesting a letter of transfer to another church will be granted a letter stating their
28 Church Membership status at Hope Community Church.
29 2. When a Church Member joins another church, their membership at Hope Community Church is
30 terminated without further action. Hope community Church Members who are missionaries and join
31 another church where they are serving may retain their membership in Hope Community Church.
32 Church Members may also retain their membership when they are temporarily relocated to another city
33 for their job or education and choose to join a local church in that community.
34 3. A Church Member may terminate their membership upon request.
35 4. A Church Member desiring to remain active in their membership will be asked to reaffirm their
36 covenantal commitment annually within 4 weeks of the Annual Meeting. Those who fail to keep their
37 membership active in this manner, will have their membership moved to an inactive list for 6 months and
38 then will be terminated from Church Membership.
39 5. A Church Member whom the Overseer Team determines to be propagating teachings contrary to Hope
40 Community Church's statement of faith (Constitution, Article Three), and/or is involved in activity that is
41 determined to be divisive to the vision, core values or church covenant (Bylaws, Article 1 and 2) and/or is
42 guilty of gross misconduct contrary to the church covenant (Article 4 of Hope Community Church's
43 Constitution), will be removed from the Church Membership by a unanimous vote of the Overseer Team.
44 That action will be taken only after reasonable efforts, as outlined in the preceding Discipline of Church
45 Members section (Bylaws, Article 7).
46

47 **Article 9: Church Leadership**

48 The Leadership of Hope Community Church is based on four leadership groups:

- 49 1. The Overseer Team (Elders)
50 2. The Deacon Team
51 3. The Governance Team
52 4. The Executive Staff Team
53

54 I. The Overseer Team

55 A. Definition and Responsibilities

56 The **Overseer Team** will consist of Elders who will be ultimately responsible for the welfare and spiritual
57 direction of Hope Community Church. They will direct matters of overall vision of the church, keep

1 spiritually attuned to where the Holy Spirit is leading Hope Community Church, devote themselves to
2 keeping Hope Community Church theologically pure and culturally relevant, handle matters of church
3 discipline, visitation of the sick, teaching when appropriate, and be upholders of this church in prayer.
4 They will be in direct communication with the Governance Team, Executive Staff Team and Deacon Team
5 with their decisions regarding theological directions, vision, values and spiritual direction for Hope
6 Community Church. There will be a minimum of 4 meetings per year, with special meetings as needed.
7

8 B. Qualifications for being a member of the Overseer Team (Elders):

- 9 1. An attender of Hope Community Church for at least 1 year;
- 10 2. A Church Member of Hope Community Church;
- 11 3. An active member of one of the ministries of Hope Community Church and a regular participant in
12 public worship at Hope Community Church;
- 13 4. Has a passion for the Vision and Core Values of Hope Community Church;
- 14 5. Models an understanding that biblical leadership is to be a servant to those who are being led
15 (Matthew 20:20-28);
- 16 6. A man (1 Timothy 2:12, Titus 1:6) of at least 18 years of age who fulfills the following additional
17 biblical qualifications for being an Overseer (Elder) primarily found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
18 The Elder must:
 - 19 1. have a deep abiding faith in Christ, and be theologically astute (1 Timothy 3:9, Titus 2:9)
 - 20 2. have demonstrated leadership and giftedness in ministry, and have a willingness to serve (1 Peter
21 5:2-3);
 - 22 3. be spiritually mature, i.e., not a new believer (1 Timothy 3:6);
 - 23 4. be able to communicate biblical knowledge in the Overseer's specific area of ministry (1 Timothy
24 3:2);
 - 25 5. possess a good reputation within and outside the church (1 Timothy 3:2,7; Titus 1:6);
 - 26 6. demonstrate self-control and appropriate biblical attitudes in relationships (1 Timothy 3:2-3; Titus
27 1:6-7); and
 - 28 7. demonstrate a measure of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

29 C. Selection

30 New Overseer Team members will be selected by the following process
31 (c.f. Acts 14:23, Titus 1:6)

- 32 1. The Overseer Team will welcome suggestions for potential Overseer Team members from the
33 congregation and current Overseer Team members.
- 34 2. The Overseer Team will discuss candidates and upon conditional approval will start the Elder-in-
35 training process, which is established by the Overseer Team members. After training and testing
36 candidates, the Overseer Team will tentatively select new Overseer Team members and announce
37 them to the congregation.
- 38 3. If Church Members have an objection to a proposed leader, they may present that objection to the
39 Overseer Team (c.f. I Timothy 5:19).
- 40 4. The Overseer Team will appoint Overseer Team members by unanimous agreement.
- 41 5. Church Membership will confirm the appointment of new Overseer Team members by simple
42 majority vote at an annual or special business meeting.
- 43 6. We will strive for a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 12 Overseer Team members at any one time.
- 44 7. The Senior Pastor will automatically be an Overseer Team member upon his hiring. Other pastoral
45 staff will become Overseer Team members as they complete the process.
46

47 D. Terms of Service

- 48 1. The term of appointment of an Overseer (Elder) is 5 years from the date of Church Membership
49 confirmation.
- 50 2. Overseer Team members will continue indefinitely if they are willing to serve and if they are
51 reconfirmed in that position at the end of their each five (5) year term by the Overseer Team.
- 52 3. Overseer Team members are elected to renewable 5 year terms. At the end of the 5 year term, the
53 Overseer Team member may either resign from the position or continue with another 5 year term. In
54 order to continue as an Overseer Team member, the remaining Elders must unanimously vote to
55 reconfirm that person and the congregation must reconfirm that person by majority vote at an annual
56 meeting or special meeting held for such purposes. Each Elder will take a 3 to 6 month sabbatical
57

- 1 break before rejoining the Overseer Team after each 5 year term.
2 4. An Overseer Team member can be removed at any time by a three-fourths vote of the remainder of the
3 Overseer Team.
4

5 II. The Deacon Team

6 A. Definition and Responsibilities

7 The Deacon Team will consist of leaders of the different ministries of Hope Community Church according
8 to the direction of the Overseer Team. The Deacon Team has no legal, fiduciary, or decision-making
9 authority in the business affairs of the church, but is responsible for the leadership of individual ministry
10 endeavors. The Deacon Team will meet at least 3 times per year for encouragement, fellowship, teaching
11 and to foster good communication among each other.
12

13 B. Qualifications for Deacon Team members:

- 14 1. An attendee of Hope Community Church for at least 6 months;
- 15 2. A Church Member of Hope Community Church;
- 16 3. A regular participant in public worship at Hope Community Church;
- 17 4. Displays a passion for the Vision and Core Values of Hope Community Church;
- 18 5. A strong, capable leader in a ministry of Hope Community Church approved by the Overseer
19 Team;
- 20 6. Displays an understanding and commitment to model biblical servant leadership (Matthew 20:20-
21 28);
- 22 7. A man or woman (Romans 16:1, 1 Timothy 3:11) who fulfills the following biblical qualifications
23 for leadership as a Deacon, primarily found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13). The Deacon must:
 - 24 a. have Christ centered integrity (1 Timothy 3:8);
 - 25 b. honor others in word and deed (1 Timothy 3:8, 11);
 - 26 c. show signs of leadership (1 Timothy 3:12);
 - 27 d. have a deep abiding and theologically sound faith in Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 3:9);
 - 28 e. be spiritually mature and faithful in all things, having a good reputation with those inside
29 and outside the church (1 Timothy 3:10,11); and
 - 30 f. demonstrate a measure of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

31 C. Selection of new Deacons (see Acts 14:23, Titus 1:6)

- 32 1. The Executive Staff Team will review the ministries of Hope Community Church, seeking to add or
33 delete ministries as the Overseer Team deems appropriate.
- 34 2. The Executive Staff Team will tentatively select new Deacons to lead these ministries, as well as
35 reaffirm those who have previously been a Deacon over a ministry and announce the decision to the
36 congregation.
- 37 3. If a Church Member has an objection to a proposed Deacon, that person must present that objection to
38 the Overseer Team prior to the proposed Deacon's appointment (c.f. I Timothy 5:19).
- 39 4. The Overseer Team may then confirm the Deacons approved by the Executive Staff Team.
- 40 5. Each Pastoral and Ministry Staff member becomes a Deacon upon hiring, and for the duration of that
41 person's employment at Hope Community Church.
42

43 D. Terms of Service

- 44 1. The Term of service for a Deacon is 1 year.
- 45 2. A Deacon may continue service as a Deacon Team member if that person is willing to serve and if the
46 Executive Staff and Overseer Teams reconfirm that person as a Deacon Team member annually.
47

48 III. The Governance Team

49 A. Definition and Responsibilities

50 The Governance Team will consist of Elders, Deacons and Church Members, and will have full authority
51 to run the business affairs of Hope Community Church. The Governance Team will be responsible to set
52 the budget, procure property, confirm and dismiss staff, and make decisions regarding implementation of
53 vision, values, and spiritual direction set by the Overseer Team. They ultimately have all fiduciary,
54 business, and legal authority in the decision-making of this organization. The Governance Team will meet
55 at least quarterly.
56
57

1 B. Qualifications Governance Team members:

- 2 1. An attendee of Hope Community Church for at least 6 months;
- 3 2. A Church Member of Hope Community Church;
- 4 3. An active member of one of the ministries of Hope Community Church and a regular participant
- 5 in public worship at Hope Community Church;
- 6 4. Displays a passion for the Vision and Core Values of Hope Community Church;
- 7 5. A strong, capable leader in a ministry of Hope Community Church approved by the Overseer
- 8 Team;
- 9 6. Displays an understanding and commitment to model biblical servant leadership (Matthew 20:20-
- 10 28);
- 11 7. A man or woman (Romans 16:1, 1 Timothy 3:11) who fulfills the following biblical qualifications
- 12 for leadership as a Deacon, primarily found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13). The Deacon must:
- 13 a. have Christ centered integrity (1 Timothy 3:8);
- 14 b. honor others in word and deed (1 Timothy 3:8, 11);
- 15 c. show signs of leadership (1 Timothy 3:12);
- 16 d. have a deep abiding and theologically sound faith in Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 3:9);
- 17 e. be spiritually mature and faithful in all things, having a good reputation with those inside
- 18 and outside the church (1 Timothy 3:10,11); and
- 19 f. demonstrate a measure of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

20 C. Members of the Governance Team

21 The Governance Team will consist of 3 Elders, 3 Deacons and 2 at-large Church Members. The Senior

22 Pastor will be one of the Elders represented, and the Executive Administrator will be one of the Elders or

23 Deacons represented. There must be at least 1 non-vocational Elder and 1 non-vocational Deacon on the

24 team. The 2 at large members cannot be Elders or Deacons and the Deacons cannot be Pastoral Staff who

25 are also Elders. At least 6 members of the Governance Team must be present in order to conduct a

26 meeting.

27

28 C. Special Officers of the Governance Team

29 There are three offices of Hope Community Church:

- 30 1. Church Chairperson, who will act as moderator for the meetings, or will appoint another Governance
- 31 Team member to conduct this role as appropriate. The Church Chairperson is authorized to sign legal
- 32 documents on behalf of the Governance Team and Hope Community Church as appropriate.
- 33 2. Treasurer, who will oversee the financial affairs of Hope Community Church, delegating financial
- 34 matters to reliable people and staff as appropriate.
- 35 3. Secretary, who will keep accurate and appropriate minutes of Governance Team meetings as well as
- 36 all church business meetings, noting all decisions and actions items. These minutes will be public
- 37 documents for anyone to review upon request.

38

39 All officers are members of the Governance Team. The Governance Team will select these officers

40 using a nomination process and by majority vote of the Governance Team members. Overseer Team

41 members, Deacon Team members, or staff members may hold any office. The term of service for these

42 offices will be 1 year and renewable as long as the officer is a Governance Team member.

43

44 E. Selection

45 New Governance Team members will be selected by the following process (see Acts 14:23, Titus 1:6)

- 46 1. The Governance Team will accept nominations for potential Governance Team members from the
- 47 congregation.
- 48 2. The Governance Team will unanimously and tentatively select new Governance Team candidates and
- 49 announce them to the congregation.
- 50 3. If a Church Member has an objection to a proposed leader, that person must present that objection to
- 51 the Governance Team prior to that candidate's confirmation (I Timothy 5:19).
- 52 4. Church Members will confirm the appointment of new Governance Team members by simple
- 53 majority vote at an annual or special business meeting.
- 54 5. There will be a maximum of 8 people on the Governance Team at any one time.
- 55 6. The Senior Pastor will be a member of the Governance Team upon hiring, and for the duration of his
- 56 Pastoral employment at Hope Community Church.
- 57 7. The Executive Administrator (or a person occupying a similar ministry staff position) will be a

1 member of the Governance Team upon hiring, and for the duration of that person's employment at
2 Hope Community Church.
3

4 F. Terms of Service

5 The Term of service for a Governance Team member is 2 years. Governance Team members will continue
6 in service if willing to serve and if reconfirmed in that position annually by the Governance Team. A
7 Governance Team member may be removed at any time by a three-fourths vote of the remainder of the
8 Governance Team. Governance Team members may not serve for more than 4 consecutive years (with the
9 exception of the Senior Pastor and Executive Administrator), but may be reappointed after a 1-year
10 absence.
11

12 III. The Executive Staff Team

13 A. Definition and Responsibilities

14 The Executive Team will consist of selected staff of Hope Community Church and are authorized to
15 manage the daily operations of this organization within the boundaries set by the Overseer Team and
16 Governance Team. They will plan, organize, lead, and evaluate the overall ministries, operations, normal
17 business and personnel matters of Hope Community Church. The Executive Staff Team will meet at least
18 monthly.
19

20 B. Qualifications for Executive Staff Team members:

- 21 1. A Church Member of Hope Community Church;
- 22 2. A Staff Member of Hope Community Church working at least 20 hours per week;
- 23 3. Displays a passion for the Vision and Core Values of Hope Community Church;
- 24 4. Understands and commits to model biblical servant leadership (Matthew 20:20-28);
- 25 5. A man or woman (Romans 16:1, 1 Timothy 3:11) of at least 18 years of age who fulfills the
26 following biblical qualifications for being a leader (Deacon) primarily found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13).

27 The Executive Staff Member must:

- 28 a. have Christ centered integrity (1 Timothy 3:8);
- 29 b. honor others in word and deed (1 Timothy 3:8, 11);
- 30 c. show signs of leadership (1 Timothy 3:12);
- 31 d. have a deep abiding and theologically sound faith in Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 3:9);
- 32 e. be spiritually mature and faithful in all things, having a good reputation with those inside
33 and outside the church (1 Timothy 3:10,11); and
- 34 f. demonstrate a measure of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).
35

36 C. Selection

37 The Senior Pastor will select Executive Staff Team members and the Overseer Team and Governance
38 Teams will confirm the selections by simple majority vote.
39

40 D. Terms of Service

41 The Term of service for an Executive Staff Team member is 1 year. Executive Staff Team members will
42 continue in service if willing to serve and if reconfirmed annually by the Senior Pastor, Overseer Team,
43 and Governance Team.
44

45 **Article 10: Pastors**

46 A. Definition

47 A Pastor is simply a vocational Elder. Pastors are compensated for their work so they have the freedom to
48 devote the majority of their time into the ministry of Hope Community Church. Pastors, therefore, are
49 Elders first and foremost. The Senior Pastor is a member of the Overseer Team and functions as the "first
50 among equals", i.e., he is the leader of leaders. Associate Pastors have more specialized gifting, and are
51 also Elders as well.

52 B. Qualifications

53 1. Senior Pastor

54 Same as those for the Overseer Team (Bylaws, Article 9, I. B - with the exception of #1, 2, and 3
55 may be delayed until the next opportunity to fulfill these requirements arises) as well as
56 possession of gifts, abilities, educational and professional qualifications.

57 2. Other pastoral staff

1 Same as those for the Overseer Team (Bylaws, Article 9, I. B - with the exception of #1, 2, and 3
2 may be delayed until the next opportunity to fulfill these requirements arises) as well as
3 possession of gifts and abilities which qualify them for their specified area of ministry.

4 C. Responsibilities

5 Position descriptions and titles will be presented at the time of call by the Overseer and Governance
6 Teams. The Senior Pastor will be a member of the Overseer Team and the Governance Team.

7 D. Selection

8 1. Senior Pastor

9 The Overseer Team will appoint a Call Committee, the Executive Staff and Governance Teams will
10 confirm the committee, and the Church Membership will ratify the committee's appointment.
11 This committee will include at least 2 current Overseer Team members. The committee will
12 present a candidate to the Overseer Team for unanimous approval. Then the committee will
13 present the candidate to the Governance Team for approval by an 80 percent majority. Finally, the
14 committee will present the candidate to the congregation. Church Members may call the Senior
15 Pastor by an affirmative vote of 80 percent of Church Members present at a special business
16 meeting. The vote will be by written, secret ballot.

17 2. Other pastoral staff

18 The Senior Pastor will recommend to the Overseer Team any additions to the pastoral staff. Upon
19 their approval, the Executive Staff Team and the Governance Team will confirm the candidate by
20 majority vote. Upon confirmation, the Governance Team will consider the recommendations and
21 extend a call if deemed appropriate.

22 E. Term

23 1. Resignation

24 Pastors will serve indefinitely. Pastors must submit resignations to the Governance Team. The
25 Governance Team, Senior Pastor, and the resigning pastor will establish the time and terms of the
26 resignation.

27 2. Termination

28 A. Senior Pastor

29 The termination of employment of the Senior Pastor will be handled with the same spirit as
30 discussed in guidelines for discipline of Church Members (see Bylaws, Articles 7). The Overseer
31 Team will make a reasonable effort to resolve grievances before any recommendation for
32 termination occurs. The Overseer Team may initiate a recommendation for the termination of the
33 Senior Pastor by a majority vote of the Overseer Team, in a non-secret vote on the Overseer Team.
34 Church Members must then vote on the termination recommendation, with a 80 percent vote
35 needed to remove the senior pastor at a special meeting called for the purpose of termination
36 following the special meeting procedures (Bylaws, Article 12). The vote will be by written, secret
37 ballot. A quorum of at least 50 percent of Church Members must participate in the vote. If the
38 vote does not result in the termination of the Senior Pastor, all Overseers who voted to remove the
39 Senior Pastor shall automatically relinquish their office of elder and membership on the Overseer
40 Team. In addition they shall not be eligible for any office or staff position in the church for a
41 period of 2 years thereafter.

42
43 In addition, Church Members may call for the termination of the Senior Pastor by signing a
44 petition for the dismissal of the Senior Pastor. If the petition has at least 15% of Church
45 Membership, a special business meeting will be called for the purpose of acting upon the
46 recommendation. Church Members must then vote on the termination recommendation, with a 80
47 percent vote needed to remove the senior pastor at a special meeting called for the purpose of
48 termination following the special meeting procedures (Bylaws, Article 12). The vote will be by
49 written, secret ballot. A quorum of at least 50 percent of active Church Members must participate
50 in the vote. If the vote does not result in the termination of the Senior Pastor, all Overseers,
51 Deacons, Pastors, Executive Staff, Ministry Staff and Support Staff who signed the petition to call
52 for the removal of the Senior Pastor shall automatically relinquish their office or employment and
53 shall not be eligible for any office or staff position in the church for a period of 2 years thereafter.

54
55 The Governance Team will determine the terms of the Senior Pastor's termination if the Church
56 Membership votes to terminate the Senior Pastor.
57

1 B. Other pastoral staff

2 The Governance Team may terminate pastoral staff employment, other than the Senior Pastor,
3 after careful consideration and consultation. The Governance Team will make a reasonable effort
4 to resolve grievances before any termination occurs.
5
6

7 **Article 11: Staff**

8 A. Ministry staff

9 1. Qualifications

10 The same as for the Deacon Team (Bylaws, Article 10, II. B - with the exception of #1, 2, and 3 may
11 be delayed until the next opportunity to fulfill these requirements arises).

12 2. Responsibilities

13 The staff person's immediate supervisor will establish position descriptions in consultation with
14 the Executive Staff Team and Governance Team. The supervisor will present the position
15 description at the time of hiring and annually at the staff person's review.

16 3. Selection

17 The staff supervisor will hire all ministry staff within budgetary appropriations. The supervisor
18 will present a candidate for hire to the Executive Staff for confirmation.

19 4. Term

20 Ministry staff will serve indefinitely. Ministry staff must submit resignations first to their staff
21 supervisor and then to the Governance Team. The Executive Staff Team will establish the time
22 and terms of the resignation. The Executive Staff Team will make a reasonable effort to resolve
23 grievances before any termination occurs. The Governance Team will terminate the staff member's
24 employment after careful consideration and consultation.
25

26 B. Support staff

27 Staff supervisors may hire other staff members to carry out the church's ministry within budgetary
28 appropriations. The supervisor will present the position description at the time of hiring and annually at
29 the staff person's review. The Executive Staff Team may terminate support staff's employment after
30 careful consideration and consultation. The Executive Staff Team will make a reasonable effort to resolve
31 grievances before any termination occurs.
32

33 **Article 12: Terms and Church Business Meetings**

34 A. Fiscal and Appointment Year Designation

35 1. The fiscal year of the church will be from January 1st to December 31st.

36 2. The Appointment Year of the 5-year term of the Overseer Team is based on the date of Church
37 Membership Approval for the individual Overseer Team Member.

38 3. The Appointment Year of the Governance Team (along with the offices of Church Chairperson,
39 Treasurer and Secretary) will be February 1st to January 31st except in the special cases where
40 Governance Team members are replaced in mid-year due to an absence. In this case the
41 appointment year will be from the date of replacement until January 31st. This partial year of
42 replacement would not constitute a year of service and they are eligible to serve 2 more
43 consecutive 2-year terms after the replacement term is served.

44 4. The Appointment Year of the Deacon and Executive Staff Teams will be June 1st to May 31st
45 except in the special cases where Deacon and/or Executive Staff Team members are replaced in
46 mid-year due to an absence or growth in the ministry. In this case the appointment year will be
47 from the date of replacement until May 31st.
48

49 B. Annual meeting

50 The annual meeting of the church will be held during January each year. At this meeting, the budget and
51 other major items of business will be presented. In preparation for the meeting, the Executive Staff Team
52 will provide Church Members with written reports from key ministries, together with a financial report,
53 budget, and a report from the Senior Pastor at least 1 week prior to the annual meeting. In addition,
54 confirmation of the Governance Team (as well as the offices of Church Chairperson, Treasurer and
55 Secretary) will be announced and commissioned for service at the annual meeting.
56

57 C. Special meetings

1 Special meeting of the members of the church may be called by the Governance Team, the Senior Pastor, or
2 by 15 percent of the Church Members submitting a petition to the Governance Team for the purpose of the
3 stated call of the meeting. All meetings of the church will be conducted in an orderly and gracious
4 manner.
5

6 D. Notice of meetings

7 Notice of date, hour, and reason for special meeting will be publicized 2 consecutive Sundays in advance
8 of the meeting. Exceptions to this include mortgaging, conveying, or encumbering of real property of the
9 church which require written and verbal announcements for 4 consecutive Sundays and changes to the
10 constitution (which can only be changed at annual or special business meetings following 3 months
11 notification).
12

13 E. Quorum

14 25 percent of the active Church Membership will constitute a quorum of any duly called meeting for the
15 purpose of transacting business, with the exception of a business meeting duly called to discuss and vote
16 upon termination of the Senior Pastor which requires a 50 percent quorum.
17

18 F. Voting

19 Each Church Member, 18 years of age and older present at the meeting, will be entitled to 1 vote in each
20 matter. The vote of the majority of the members present and those voting by absentee ballot will
21 constitute the act of all members unless otherwise specified in the constitution or bylaws.
22

23 A written ballot vote will be required for:

- 24 · Senior Pastor Call Committee
 - 25 · Calling and Employment Termination of a Senior Pastor
 - 26 · Acquiring, selling, or building upon real property
 - 27 · Changes in the constitution/bylaws
- 28

29 **Article 13: Amendments**

30 Changes to the bylaws must be presented to the church by the Governance Team and then passed by a simple
31 majority vote of the Church Members present at any business meeting. A copy of the proposed change(s) will be
32 presented in writing, posted, and announced 2 consecutive Sundays in advance of the meeting. No bylaw may
33 alter any part of the constitution.
34

35 **Article 14: Encumbrance of Real Property**

36 The Church Membership must approve any expenditure involving the purchase of real property, any new
37 construction (excluding improvements or renovations to existing real property not to exceed an amount equal to
38 the current annual budget), or mortgaging real property at a business meeting called for that purpose. In the case
39 of an emergency financial matter as determined by the Governance Team, the Governance Team may approve an
40 expense of up to 10% of the annual budget including procuring a mortgage against real property not to exceed
41 10% of the annual budget without calling a special business meeting. In addition, the Church Membership must
42 approve any sale, purchase, lease, transfer, or disposition of all of the church property and assets at a business
43 meeting called for that purpose before any transaction can occur; except that the decision must comply with the
44 Shared Usage Plan with North Central District of the Evangelical Free Church and the laws of the State of
45 Minnesota.