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NEW HOPE FELLOWSHIP  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION

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## **PREAMBLE**

Believing it is in accordance with the revealed will of God that His Church should be a regularly organized institution, and that all things should be done decently and in order that we may more readily help each other in our Christian service, we the members of New Hope Fellowship Christian Church declare and establish this constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

## **ARTICLE 1 NAME AND PURPOSE**

### **SECTION 1.01 NAME**

This congregation of believers shall be known as New Hope Fellowship.

### **SECTION 1.02 PURPOSE**

(A) This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law), including, but not limited to, for such purposes, the establishing and maintaining of religious worship, the building, maintaining and operating of churches, and any other ministries the church may be led of God to establish. The New Hope Fellowship Christian Church is incorporated.

(B)The church shall also ordain and license men to the Gospel ministry; evangelize all men by the proclaiming of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; educate believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture, both in regular Sunday and weekday studies as part of Christian education; maintain missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country; and engage in any other ministry that the church may decide, from time to time, to pursue in obedience to the will of God.

## **ARTICLE 2 STATEMENT OF FAITH, MEMBER AFFIRMATION OF FAITH, AND CHURCH COVENANT**

### **SECTION 2.01 – STATEMENT OF FAITH AND PRACTICE**

*A declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us. (Luke 1:1)*

*But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets. (Acts 24:14)*

#### **(A) INTRODUCTION**

The only complete and infallible source of truth in the universe is contained in God's holy Scriptures. This statement of faith represents a brief summary of many of the aspects of the truth that God has

revealed to us in His Word over time. Being the work of men, we know that this writing will contain errors, though none are put here intentionally. As God gives us more light in the future, we expect and plan to add to and revise this document so as to accurately represent our knowledge of His divine will for us.

## **(B) THE SCRIPTURES**

We believe that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the 66 books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-14; 2 Peter 1:20-21). We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Timothy 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed. We teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We believe that God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual authorship. The Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's Word to man (2 Peter 1:20-21) without error in the whole or in the part (Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16).

We believe that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently studies and applies the Word under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20). It is the responsibility of believers to ascertain carefully the true intent and meaning of Scripture, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations. Yet the truth of Scripture stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it.

We believe that the divine record is total and complete in its revelation of God's will to His creatures (Deuteronomy 29:29), so that what is necessary for our knowledge of how to serve and please Him is conveyed to us within the pages of Scripture (Ecclesiastes 12:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17), by precept or by example, and that anything not specifically so imparted is not to be taught as God's will. (The argument from silence, e.g. what the Scripture does not teach, it does not teach, Hebrews 7:12-14.)

## **(C) GOD**

### **1. Attributes of God**

We believe that there is only one (Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6) living and true God (1 Thessalonians 1:9; Jeremiah 10:10), who is infinite in being and perfection (Job 11:7-9), a most pure spirit (John 4:24), invisible (1 Timothy 1:17), immutable (Jam 1:17; Mal 3:6), immense (1 Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23-24), eternal (Psalms 90:2; 1 Timothy 1:17), incomprehensible (Psalms 145:3; Isaiah 40:28; Romans 11:33), almighty (Genesis 17:1; Daniel 4:34-35; Revelation 4:8), all wise (Psalms 147:5; Romans 11:33-34; 16:27; Jude 25), most holy (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8), totally

independent ([Psalm 115:3](#); [135:6](#); [Isaiah 46:10](#)), most absolute ([Exodus 3:14](#)), working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will ([Ephesians 1:9](#), [11](#)) for His own glory ([Proverbs 16:4](#); [Romans 11:36](#)).

We believe He is most loving ([1 John 4:8](#), [16](#)), gracious ([Exodus 22:27](#); [Nehemiah 9:17](#), [31](#)), merciful ([Psalm 86:5](#); [103:8-13](#)), long-suffering ([Psalm 86:15](#); [2 Peter 3:9](#)), abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin ([Exodus 34:6-7](#)). He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him ([Hebrews 11:6](#)), and is most just and terrible in His judgments ([Nehemiah 9:32-33](#)), hating all sin ([Psalm 5:5-6](#)) and who will by no means clear the guilty ([Nahum 1:2-3](#); [Exodus 34:7](#)).

We believe that He has all life ([Psalm 36:9](#); [John 5:26](#); [1:4](#); [Acts 17:25](#)), glory, goodness, blessedness in and of Himself; He is alone and unto Himself all-sufficient and independent, not standing in need of any creatures which He has made ([Exodus 3:14](#); [Acts 17:24-25](#)), nor deriving any glory from them ([Job 22:2-3](#)), but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the sole foundation of all being, of Whom, through Whom, and to Whom are all things ([Romans 11:36](#)); and He has most sovereign dominion over them to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever He pleases ([Revelation 4:11](#); [1 Timothy 6:15](#); [Daniel 4:25](#), [35](#)).

We believe that in His sight all things are open and manifest ([Hebrews 4:13](#)), that His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent of all creation ([Romans 11:33-34](#); [Psalm 147:5](#)), so that nothing is contingent or uncertain to Him ([Acts 15:18](#); [Ezekiel 11:5](#)); that He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands ([Psalm 145:17](#); [Romans 7:12](#)), and that to this Great and August Being is due from angels, men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service or obedience that He is pleased to require of them ([Revelation 5:12-14](#)).

## 2. The Trinity

We believe that there is a Trinity of three Persons, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit ([1 John 5:7](#)), in the unity of the essence of the Godhead; that these three Persons are equal in nature, power, and glory; and that the Word and the Holy Spirit are as truly and as properly and as eternally God as is the Father.

## 3. Sovereign Rule of God

We believe that God, the great Creator of all things, upholds ([Hebrews 1:3](#)), directs, disposes and governs all creatures, actions, and things ([Daniel 4:34-35](#); [Psalm 135:6](#); [Acts 17:25-26](#), [28](#)), from the greatest even to the least ([Proverbs 21:1](#); [Matthew 10:29-31](#)), by His most wise and holy providence ([Proverbs 15:3](#); [Psalm 104:24](#); [145:17](#)), according to His own will ([Isaiah 46:10-11](#); [Ephesians 1:9](#), [11](#)), to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy ([Isaiah 63:14](#); [Ephesians 3:10](#); [Romans 9:17-23](#); [Genesis 45:7](#); [Psalm 145:7](#)).

We believe that God, in His ordinary providence, makes use of means ([Acts 27:31](#), [44](#); [Isaiah 55:10-11](#)); yet, He is free to work without ([Hosea 1:7](#); [Matthew 4:4](#)), above ([Romans 9:19-21](#)), and against them ([2 Kings 6:6](#); [Daniel 3:27](#)) at His pleasure.

We believe that the almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so manifest themselves in his providence that it extends even to the fall of man and all other sins of angels and men ([Romans 11:32-34](#); [2 Samuel 24:1](#); [1 Chronicles 21:1](#); [1 Kings 22:22-23](#); [1 Chronicles 10:4, 13-14](#); [2 Samuel 16:10](#); [Acts 2:23](#)), and not to a bare permission only ([Acts 14:16](#)), but to the complete ordering and governing of them to His own holy ends ([Genesis 50:20](#); [Isaiah 10:6-7, 12](#); [Psalm 76:10](#); [2 Kings 19:28](#)); yet the sinfulness of the acts thereof proceed only and entirely from the creatures involved and not from God Himself, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin ([James 1:13-14, 17](#); [1 John 2:16](#); [Psalm 50:21](#)).

We believe that our most wise, righteous, and gracious God does often times leave, for a season, His own children to many temptations and the corruption of their own hearts, so as to chastise them for their former sins, or to reveal unto them the hidden power of sin and the deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled ([2 Chronicles 32:25-26, 31](#); [2 Samuel 24:1](#)) and raised to a more close and steady dependence upon Him for their support, to make them more watchful against future occasions of sin, and for various other just and holy ends ([2 Corinthians 12:7-9](#); [Psalm 73; 77:1, 10, 12](#); [Mark 14:66-72](#) + [John 21:15-17](#)).

We believe that, because of their sins, God blinds and hardens wicked and ungodly men ([Romans 1:24, 26, 28](#); [11:7-8](#)), sometimes withdraws what light of understanding they have naturally ([Matthew 13:12](#); [25:29](#)), exposes them to opportunities that their corrupt natures will exploit ([Deuteronomy 2:30](#); [2 Kings 8:12-13](#)) and gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan ([Psalm 81:11-12](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:10-12](#)) whereby they harden themselves, even under the same means that God uses to soften others ([Exodus 7:3; 8:15, 32](#); [2 Corinthians 2:15-16](#); [Isaiah 8:14](#); [1 Peter 2:7-8](#); [Isaiah 6:9-10](#); [Acts 28:26-27](#)).

#### 4. Creation (By God)

We believe the Triune God, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness ([Revelation 4:11](#)), did create out of nothing ([Hebrew 11:3](#)), in six days of one hundred forty-four sixty-minute hours ([Genesis 1; 2:2-3](#); [Exodus 20:11](#)), the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, whether visible or invisible ([Colossians 1:16](#); [Psalm 102:25](#); [Isaiah 44:24](#); [John 1:3](#); [Hebrews 1:2](#)).

We believe this was accomplished with no gaps or unknown ages before, during, or between the six days; that God ceased creation upon the seventh day ([Genesis 2:2-3](#); [Exodus 20:11](#)); and that the first eleven chapters of Genesis to be actual and accurate history with the rest of Scripture.

## (D) SIN AND MAN'S FALL

### 1. Man's Creation State

We believe that God created the first man, Adam, after His own image and likeness ([Genesis 1:26-27](#)); that he was upright ([Ecclesiastes 7:29](#)), holy, innocent and possessed of undying natural life; that he was given dominion over all of the creatures of the earth ([Genesis 1:26](#); [9:2](#); [Psalm 8:4-8](#)); that he had a will able to choose to obey or disobey the commandments of his good and wise Creator; and that he enjoyed the blessing of full and joyful communion with God ([Genesis 2:8-15](#)).

## 2. Man's Fall into Sin

We believe that Adam was capable of continuing in that state of righteousness, but sinned against God, changing his nature to sinful and mortal natural life ([Genesis 2:17](#)); that his race without exception sinned in him ([Romans 5:12-18](#)), the guilt of that sin imputed to all and a corrupt nature passed unto them all who descended from him by ordinary and natural generation.

## 3. The Effects of Sin

We believe, therefore, that the entire human race are by their first birth carnal and unclean, averse to all that is good ([Romans 3:12](#)), incapable of doing any good ([Romans 3:10](#)), prone to every sin, totally unable to recover themselves, without strength, enemies of God, by nature the children of wrath ([Ephesians 2:3](#)), under a sentence of condemnation and therefore subject to physical death, involved in spiritual death, and appointed to eternal death, from all of which there is no deliverance but by the blood and works of Christ the Second Adam, and Him alone.

# (E) SALVATION

We believe that the Scripture shows five distinct divisions, aspects or phases of the work of God in the salvation of His people, and they are as follows:

## 1. Eternal Phase of Salvation: Election

We believe that before the world was created, God elected ([Ephesians 1:4](#)) a certain and invariable number of people ([Romans 8:29-30](#)), out of Adam's fallen race ([Romans 9:21](#)), to be delivered from the condemnation which they justly deserved ([Romans 6:23](#)) and to be adopted as His own children ([Ephesians 2:1-3](#)), this choice not based on any conceivable or foreseen compliance of those chosen ([Psalm 14:2-3](#); [Romans 3:9-19](#)), but simply upon the free grace and sovereign will of God ([Ephesians 1:3-11](#)).

We believe that in pursuance of this design, God the Father did determine and make a covenant with the Word and the Holy Spirit on behalf of those persons alone, wherein all the duties and necessary actions were appointed to the Godhead to perform, and all the spiritual blessings provided for the elect.

We believe that this salvation, being decreed by Him who calls those things which are not as though they were ([Romans 4:17](#)), was considered as accomplished and finished before the world began.

We believe the eternal redemption and salvation which Christ has obtained by the shedding of His blood is special and particular; it was intentionally designed exclusively for the elect of God ([Romans 8:33](#)), the sheep of Christ ([John 10:26-29](#)), and they only share the benefits and blessings of it, and that infallibly ([Romans 8:31-39](#)), the rest of fallen mankind left in the state of condemnation it received from Adam's transgression in the garden of Eden ([Romans 5:12; 9:21-22](#)).

## **2. Legal Phase of Salvation: Justification**

We believe the legal sentence of death against the elect was executed upon the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross of Calvary, His pure and sinless life being the perfect and only substitute for the filthy rags of their righteousness, and His holy blood being the only acceptable propitiation for their sins ([Romans 3:24-26](#); 2 Corinthians 5:21).

We believe that the Father received this offering of the Lamb of God ([Hebrews 10:10, 14](#)), and that He accordingly justifies the elect, seeing in them not their sins, but the spotless righteousness of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, their sins being forgotten and covered by His precious blood.

## **3. Vital Phase of Salvation: Regeneration**

We believe that those elected by God and justified by Christ's blood are, in the course of this life, given a new and sinless nature, created in true holiness, and capable of receiving and acting upon the spiritual realities taught in the Scriptures.

We believe that the same powerful Spirit that moved upon the face of the deep in the creation of the world moves on the nature of the elect to create spiritual life where there was death and corruption, that Spirit following the spoken direction of the Son of God to give life to His child, His sheep, and that the soul of the child of God is totally passive in this process, just as a natural child is passive in his conception, gestation and birth.

## **4. Practical Phase of Salvation: Conversion**

We believe that God provides the means for His elect, regenerate children to know Him and have fellowship with Him during this life through the preaching of and obedience to the Scripture, and that conversion is, accordingly, an educational process whereby the born again child of God learns of his helpless condition in Adam, of the wonderful salvation that His heavenly Father has provided through the life giving blood of Jesus Christ, and what His God requires of him to enjoy fellowship with Him in his pilgrimage of life.

We believe that God grants to the elect the opportunity to repent and acknowledge the truth, but that, repentance, having been granted, it is their responsibility to exercise their God given faith ([Philippians 2:12](#)) and repentance to obtain the blessings that He offers in this life, and that this

aspect of salvation, if they harden their hearts, can be lost and replaced by God's severe chastisement.

We believe that, in general, those whom God has chosen to be His own will believe and obey the gospel call when they hear it, though we acknowledge that God, as the Sovereign Lord of the universe, can leave some individuals in ignorance of the glorious salvation that Christ secured for them, these being a small exception.

## **5. Final Phase of Salvation: Glorification**

We believe that all of those chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and regenerated by the Spirit, shall be glorified together with Christ when He returns to judge the quick and the dead, their mortal forms clothed with immortality, and their sin wracked bodies resurrected or changed to be like the sinless body that our Lord Jesus Christ now inhabits.

We believe that God will preserve His elect unto this glorious day, and that Jesus Christ shall present them unto the Father pure and spotless, clothed in His own righteousness, regardless of their works of righteousness or lack thereof.

## **(F) GOOD WORKS**

### **1. Definition of Good Works**

We believe that good works are only such as God commands in His holy Word, and not such as are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretense of good intentions.

### **2. Source of Good Works**

We believe that the ability to do good works is something not at all of man himself, but wholly derived from the Spirit of God to do His good pleasure, and are an outgrowth of a renewed heart given by God in regeneration.

### **3. Purpose of Good Works**

We believe that good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith; and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto.

## **(G)EVANGELISM**



## 1. Purpose of True Evangelism

We believe that the gospel is the good news of salvation for God's elect, declaring salvation through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ alone, and that this salvation is the only hope of eternal life, the gospel being merely the message of this glorious event, and having no power in and of itself to give life to those who hear it, the giving of life being the sole province of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe that the preaching of the gospel will be viewed as foolishness and will be rejected by natural, unregenerate men, who thereby show their ungodly and unrepentant natures, while the same message will be viewed as the power and wisdom of God by those who have been regenerated by the grace of God.

We believe that all who hear the gospel have the responsibility to believe and obey it, and those who do not believe and obey it receive to themselves damnation, the unbelieving elect receiving the just chastisement of God while in this life, and the non-elect receiving God's judgment both now and in eternity.

## 2. Means of True Evangelism

We believe that the gospel is to be proclaimed by any and all means available to those who will hear it; the normal course of this proclamation to be through the preaching of the Word of God by means of the ministry that God has left in this world, who are to be supported in this endeavor by their congregations for this work.

We believe that the gospel is also proclaimed through the godly witness of believing saints, who are ready to give an answer of the reason of the hope that is within them to those who ask them.

We believe that public teaching of the gospel, by whatever means (i.e. seminars, home neighborhood Bible studies), are good, proper, and should be encouraged among God's people.

## (H)THE USE OF THE LAW

We believe that the law of God, as contained in the Old Testament Scripture, has relevance for the New Testament believer in the following ways:

We believe it shows man what sin is (its terrible nature and its effects) and our need of the Savior, Jesus Christ ([Galatians 3:24](#)).

We believe it shows man what God requires and forbids of His children for their sanctification, as it reveals God's moral nature, which does not change ([John 14:15](#)).

We believe it gives us examples of God's dealing with His people in all times, giving us hope of blessings for obedience and the sure knowledge of His cursing for disobedience ([1 Corinthians 10:11](#)).

We believe that it provides wise rules in dealing with men to live by while in this life.

We believe that the ceremonial law given to the Jews was filled with types and shadows of Him Who was to come, even our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Who personally and in His life and ministry fulfilled all.

We believe that the restrictions given in the Old Testament regarding foods and the observance of Jewish holy days have been done away with in the New Testament and are not binding upon Christ's saints in His churches ([Acts 15:19-31](#); [Romans 14:1-3](#); [1 Corinthians 10:23-31](#); [Colossians 2:16-23](#)).

## **(I)The Church**

### **1. Identity of the Church**

We believe that the church, as referred to most often in the New Testament, is a local congregation or assembly of disciples of Jesus Christ; that it is identified by its location and membership, and referred to under various titles and descriptions, singularly considered as the local church and collectively known as the churches of Christ and the churches of God.

We believe that a church is formed by the mutual consent and commitment of individual believers to perform their Scriptural duties. It does not require any pastor, church to ordain them as a church, though there is nothing unscriptural with a pastor or another church assisting or aiding in the forming of a new church.

We believe that this is the kingdom foretold by the Old Testament prophets, proclaimed by John the Baptist, and established by the ministry of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **2. Independence of the Church**

We believe that each church stands alone under Christ as its head, independent of any pope, cardinal, president or moderator and separate from any other association, group or organization in this world. We will fellowship with the saints of God (weak or strong) wherever and whenever we have opportunity.

### **3. Membership of the Church**

We believe that a church is composed of individuals who have professed belief in Jesus Christ as their only Lord and Savior from sin, have been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and have mutually agreed together to worship God and perform their Scriptural duties towards one another.

### **4. Government of the Church - Elder Rule**

We teach that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (also called bishops, pastors, and pastor-teachers; Acts

20:28; Ephesians 4:11) who must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

We teach that these leaders lead or rule as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17-22) and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

We believe that women in the church are not to be in positions of authority over a man and are not eligible for either the office of Bishop (Elder or Pastor) or Deacon. (1 Timothy 3:1-13)

We teach the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5). We teach that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Each local church, however, through its elders and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. The elders should determine all other matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government as well (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 13; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

We believe that they that preach the gospel should, where at all possible, be completely supported by their congregation so as to give themselves wholly to the work of the ministry, to prayer and study of the Word.

## **5. The office of Deacon**

We believe that God has given the office of deacon to the church to serve the congregation in carnal necessities; that deacons are to be nominated by the congregation, or Elder(s) and ordained to their office by the Elder(s), under whose authority they serve; and that they are to be men who are sound and exemplary in their spiritual lives and conduct before the congregation and the world in general (1 Tim 3:8-13).

## **6. Worship and Practice of the Church**

We believe that the worship of God as given by precept and example in the New Testament consists of assembling to pray, sing, praise God, offer up thanksgiving, exhort one another to our duties, make collection for poor saints and for the support of the ministry, and hear God's word taught and proclaimed.

We believe that the New Testament emphasizes the teaching aspect of God's worship, so that this is given preeminence over other forms of worship, with the aim of proper instruction being to guide members to better performance of their duties, first of all toward God, then to each other, and finally toward men with whom they associate in this world.

# **(J)THE DUTIES OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

## **1. Regular assembly**

We believe that it is the duty of every member to be in regular attendance whenever the church assembles for the comfort of our mutual faith and the exercise our duties one to another, such absences as caused by illness, performance of special acts of charity and other reasonable circumstances being excepted.

## **2. Exercise of gifts**

We believe that God has placed the members within His churches as it has pleased Him, and that He has blessed them with a variety of natural and spiritual gifts for the benefit of the entire body. Each member should be exhorted and encouraged to use the gift or gifts that he has been given for the blessing and profit of the congregation in general and the other members in particular, whether public or private.

## **3. Judgment of members in sin**

We believe that a church is responsible before God to judge those of its own who are publicly known to be living in sin or error, as the New Testament teaches that there are offense which are not to be named once among saints. Those found guilty of such offense are to be removed from the membership of the body, turned over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, and exhorted to repentance, for the glory of Christ and their own salvation. Upon demonstration of repentance such should be reinstated as members of the congregation.

We believe that it is the duty of each member to work for the recovery of any brother or sister that is privately known to have committed sin or be in error, and upon demonstration of godly repentance such matters should be covered, forgiven and forgotten, even as Christ covers, forgives and forgets our sins when we confess them to Him and forsake them.

We believe that the church has the right to judge between members in small matters of this life as they arise, and that such judgment is binding upon all; any member failing to abide by the church's judgment in such matters is to be removed from the membership, as discussed above.

## **4. Christian Liberty of Conscience**

We believe that only what the Scripture positively teaches or negatively forbids should be held and enforced upon believers, the silence of Scripture to be echoed by the church. Where the Bible speaks and declares it must be followed, but other areas are to be left to the conscience of the individual believer before God.

We believe that our liberty is not to be used as a cover for wickedness, and that it is to be limited by a charitable consideration of the conscience of others and our own faith.

We believe that liberty is to be valued and that members should be charitable one toward another, such that a stronger will bow to the weaker conscience, but we expect the weaker, out of love, not to rule in matters of liberty without growing stronger.

## **(K)SCRIPTURAL ORDINANCES**

## **1. Importance of Every Word of God**

We believe that it is an error to select certain points of doctrine and practice, or "fundamentals" for special enforcement or for establishing grounds for fellowship, and then to leave the remainder of God's revelation to the whim of the individual or congregation as to what is to be believed and practiced.

We believe that every word of God is pure and should be obeyed in its sphere of reference. While not all passages are of equal weight on every subject, yet each is to be followed and obeyed in the area of life to which it speaks, being the mind of God on that subject and an ordinance to be followed by His saints. (Whole Counsel of God)

## **2. Denial of Sacramentalism**

We believe that obedience to God's revealed commandments brings His blessing upon the life of those who are exercised therein; but it is a grievous error and heresy promulgated by the church of Rome and her offspring to believe that by keeping God's ordinances of any kind supernatural grace is imparted to the soul or life of the person, or that partaking in any observance given in Scripture makes a person holy intrinsically.

# **(L)BAPTISM**

## **1. Purpose of Baptism**

We believe that baptism is the first act of gospel obedience for the child of God; he/she publicly declares his/her allegiance to Jesus Christ and witnesses his/her dependence on Christ's death, burial and resurrection for his/her salvation, of which baptism is a symbol and picture.

## **2. Nature of Baptism**

We believe that baptism is totally figurative and emblematic in nature, no special grace or supernatural power being conferred upon the recipient; that it is simply the answer of a good conscience toward God, and not a means of imparting regeneration to a soul, as the Roman Catholics and other heretical groups maintain.

We believe that baptism is a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; a symbol of the believer's death to sin, and its power over him, and his resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ; and a figure of his hope, that being his resurrection at the last day to be with his Lord and Savior forever in glory.

## **3. Subject of Baptism**

We believe that baptism is only properly administered to a person who expresses belief and confidence in Jesus Christ for the saving of his soul, having repented of their sins.

#### **4. Mode of Baptism**

We believe that the mode dictated in Scripture (by the meaning of the words used, by the nature of what it symbolizes, and by the examples given in the New Testament) is immersion of the candidate into water and the raising of him up out of water. Therefore pouring, sprinkling or any other method is not Scriptural baptism.

#### **5. Administrator of Baptism**

We believe that baptism is only to be administered by a duly ordained minister of the gospel.

#### **6. Relationship of Baptism to Church Membership**

The position of New Hope Fellowship is that only baptism by immersion of believers will be taught and practiced by the church. Customarily, therefore, all members of the church will have been baptized by immersion as believers.

However, we believe it is fitting that membership in the local church (distinct from leadership in the local church) should have prerequisites similar to the prerequisites for membership in the universal church. In other words, we believe it is unfitting to deny membership to a person who, by faith in Christ, gives evidence of regeneration.

Therefore, our aim is not to elevate beliefs and practices that are non-essential to the level of prerequisites for church membership. This implies that Christians who have not been baptized by immersion as believers, but, as they believe, by some other method or before they believed, may under some circumstances be members of this church.

Since we believe that the New Testament teaches and demonstrates that the mode of baptism is only the immersion of a believer in water, we therefore regard all other practices of baptism as misguided, defective, and illegitimate. Yet, while not taking these differences lightly, we would not elevate them to the level of what is essential. Thus, we will welcome into membership candidates who, after a time of study, discussion, and prayer, prescribed by the Elder(s), retain a conviction that it would be a violation of their conscience to be baptized by immersion as believers. This conviction of conscience must be based on a plausible, intelligible, Scripturally-based argument rather than on mere adherence to a tradition or family expectations. The elders will make all such judgments in presenting candidates for membership to the congregation. All candidates for membership, even when holding firmly to views different from the official position of the elder(s), must demonstrate a humble and teachable disposition with respect to the church leadership, as expressed in the Church Covenant.

We will not admit into membership persons who refuse to practice any form of baptism at all, or who believe that their water baptism caused their regeneration. The former is a rejection of the Lord's commandment, and the latter is a misunderstanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. Our MEMBERSHIP AFFIRMATION OF FAITH states, "We believe that [the Holy Spirit's] work in regeneration is not the result of water baptism or any outward ritual."

In the words of our CHURCH COVENANT, the members shall all be committed to "welcome, and test biblically, instruction from the Scriptures by the elders of the church which accords with the Statement of Faith, seeking to grow toward Biblical unity in the truth."

## **(M)THE LORD'S SUPPER**

We believe that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the Lord in which gathered believers eat bread, signifying Christ's body given for His people, and drink the cup of the Lord (wine), signifying the New Covenant in Christ's blood. We do this in remembrance of the Lord, and thus proclaim His death until He comes. Those who eat and drink in a worthy manner partake of Christ's body and blood, not physically, but spiritually, in that, by faith, they are nourished with the benefits He obtained through His death, and thus grow in grace. It is totally symbolic in nature and serves to remind God's people of the price that was paid for their redemption.

We believe that the Mass, transubstantiation, consubstantiation and all other forms of Roman Catholic sacramentalism are doctrines from the father of lies himself and are to be rejected as gross heresy.

We believe that God expects His children to judge themselves and to come to His table with clean hearts, having confessed their sins to Him, and that those who come without such preparation bring upon themselves His chastisement and judgment.

## **(O)AUTHORITY**

### **1. The purpose for authority**

We believe that God, as the Supreme Lord and King of all creation, has ordained positions or offices of authority over men for the orderly functioning of society, for the good of those under them, and for His own honor and glory.

### **2. The offices God has ordained**

Husbands - We believe that God has ordained for men to rule over women in the relationship of marriage ([Ephesians 5:22-25](#); [Colossians 3:18](#); [1 Peter 3:1,5](#); [1 Corinthians 14:35](#); [Titus 2:5](#); [1 Corinthians 11:9](#)).

Parents - We believe that God has ordained parents to rule over children in the relationship of a family.

Masters - We believe that God has ordained that masters rule over servants in the business relationship. We know this as employer and employee in contemporary vernacular.

Elders - We believe that God has ordained Elders (NT) to rule over His people in the congregation.

Governors - We believe that God has ordained kings and magistrates to rule over citizens in political and national relationships.

### **3. The response to authority**

We believe that, in their proper spheres, each officer represents God directly and should be prayed for, honored, paid their appropriate tribute and dues, revered and feared as God's personal representative, and not from a motive of personal regard for the man in the office, but out of respect for the office and for God's appointment of the individual in that office; and those who disobey or resist those officers in their rightful exercise of their authority do get to themselves damnation and should be in fearful expectation of judgment for their folly.

We believe that it is right and proper for God's children, in order to maintain a godly reputation in this world and that the ignorance of foolish men be silenced, to subject themselves to every civil ordinance of man for the Lord's sake ([1 Peter 2:13-16](#)), and in particular to be ready and willing to pay taxes to the state and nation in which they reside, rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's ([Matthew 22:21](#); [Mark 12:17](#); [Luke 20:25](#); [Matthew 17:24-27](#)).

## **(P)SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT**

We teach the need of the church to cooperate with God as He accomplishes His purpose in the world. To that end, He gives the church spiritual gifts. He gives men chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:7-12), and He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each member of the Body of Christ (Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

We believe that there were two kinds of gifts given the early church: miraculous gifts of divine revelation and healing, given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the apostles' message (Hebrews 2:3-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12); and ministering gifts, given to equip believers for edifying one another. With the New Testament revelation now complete, Scripture becomes the sole test of the authenticity of a man's message, and confirming gifts of a miraculous nature are no longer necessary to validate a man or his message (1 Corinthians 13:8-12). Miraculous gifts can even be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers (1 Corinthians 13:13-14; Revelation 13:13-14). The only gifts in operation today are those non-revelatory equipping gifts given for edification (Romans 12:6-8).

We believe that no one possesses the gift of healing today, but that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted (Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; 2 Corinthians 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15).

We believe that the modern Charismatic movement with its emphasis of gifts over truth, its disdain for sound doctrine, and ungodly rejection of Scriptural guidelines for the use of tongues shows itself to be part of the prophesied lying signs and wonders of these, the last days.



# **(Q)PROPHECY**

## **1. Purpose**

We believe that prophecy is given to confirm the saints' faith when it occurs and is not given as a source for unprofitable speculation on the future; that history shows the fulfillment of the events that God foretold and His people can take comfort and strength from the fact that God has demonstrated His power in the affairs of men and that He told them about those things before they happened.

## **2. Methodology for Studying**

We believe that God has spoken in signs and similitudes, figurative and symbolic language describing spiritual realities and applications that need to be carefully interpreted; and that to engage in a totally literalistic scheme of interpretation, as the followers of C.I. Scofield, John Darby, and others of the Dispensational school do, is to wrest and pervert the Scripture.

We believe that the present gospel age contains the reality fulfilling the prophecies of the Old Testament, and that fulfillment in Jesus Christ, His life and ministry, should be sought above all else; and we believe that the Old Testament prophecies must be viewed in the light of the revelation given to the apostles and writers of the New Testament.

## **3. The place of the Jews**

We believe that the nation of Israel, called the Jews in the New Testament, was God's chosen people to convey, until the time of Christ, His worship, testimonies, commandments, and oracles to the world, and His vehicle for bringing the Son of God into the world through the lineage of David, and as such was accorded blessing and honor that no other nation or people on earth had.

## **4. The place of the Church**

We believe that the gospel church is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophets' message concerning the rebuilding of God's temple; that it is the visible portion of God's kingdom consisting of both Jews and Gentiles; and that it, as a bride adorned for her husband, will be glorified with Jesus Christ when He returns.

## **6. The 70th Week of Daniel**

We believe that the events described in [Daniel 9:24-27](#) referring to the last of the seventy weeks were fulfilled in the time from Christ's earthly ministry, beginning with His baptism and ending with His ascension to His throne on high, to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD; and that it is a Jewish fable to think that those events are yet waiting fulfillment.

## **7. The Final Judgment and the Future State of Man**

We believe that there shall be a general resurrection of the dead and a final judgment where all men shall give account of themselves and be judged by their works.

We believe that the unregenerate, being justly and righteously condemned for their wicked and abominable works, shall be cast into the lake of fire, a real and literal place of torment, which they shall inhabit with the Devil and his angels for eternity.

We believe that the elect, while some will initially be ashamed at the Lord's coming because of their slothfulness and lack of godly diligence, yet all, their sins having been fully and completely paid for by the propitiation of Jesus Christ, and being judged pure and holy through His substituted righteousness, shall enjoy everlasting fellowship with God in perfect, glorified bodies in the new heaven and new earth created for them by God.

We believe that God's saints who die before these events occur go to be with the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven and shall return with Him at the general resurrection, therefore the doctrine of soul sleep is unscriptural and damnable.

## **(R)MARRIAGE**

### **1. Statement on Marriage and Sexuality**

We believe that term “marriage” has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that man and woman are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and church (As previously stated in this document).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church.

(Genesis 2:24; Genesis 19:5, 13; Genesis 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; Romans 7:2-3; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-21; 1Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4)

## **(S) The Spirit of the Statement of Faith and the Unity of the Church**

We do not believe that all things in this Statement of Faith are of equal weight, some being more essential, some less. We do not believe that every part of this affirmation must be believed in order for one to be eternally saved.

Our aim is not to discover how little can be believed, but rather to embrace and teach “the whole counsel of God.” Our aim is to encourage a hearty adherence to the Bible, the fullness of its truth, and the glory of its Author. We believe Biblical doctrine stabilizes saints in the winds of confusion and strengthens the church in her mission to meet the great systems of false religion and secularism. We believe that the supreme virtue of love is nourished by the strong meat of God-centered doctrine. And we believe that a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ is sustained in an atmosphere of deep and joyful knowledge of God and His wonderful works.

We believe that the cause of unity in the church is best served, not by finding the lowest common denominator of doctrine, around which all can gather, but by elevating the value of truth, stating the doctrinal parameters of church or school or mission or ministry, seeking the unity that comes from the truth, and then demonstrating to the world how Christians can love each other across boundaries rather than by removing boundaries. In this way, the importance of truth is served by the existence of doctrinal borders, and unity is served by the way we love others across those borders.

We do not claim infallibility for this affirmation and are open to refinement and correction from Scripture. Yet we do hold firmly to these truths as we see them and call on others to search the Scriptures to see if these things are so. As conversation and debate take place, it may be that we will learn from each other, and the boundaries will be adjusted, even possibly folding formerly disagreeing groups into closer fellowship.

## **SECTION 2.02 MEMBERSHIP AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

The purpose of the MEMBERSHIP AFFIRMATION OF FAITH is to express what we believe a person must not deny (or, preferably, would affirm) so as not to call the genuineness of his faith into question. It is not meant to represent all that a Christian should believe, but the essential truths that a Christian must not deny.

### **I. THE TRINITY**

We believe that there is one living and true God, existing in three persons, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit; and that these are one and are equal in every divine perfection, but that they have different roles. (Genesis 1:1, 26; John 1:1, 3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19, 20; Ephesians 4:5, 6; I John 5:7)

### **II. 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 men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (Luke 10:21,22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; I Timothy 1:1,2; 2:5,6; I Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6)

### **III. 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. (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 8:46; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30, 31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; 6:9,10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28; I Timothy 3:16)

#### IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit sent into the world by God to glorify the Son of God. We believe that without his work no one would come to faith. We believe that His work in regeneration is not the result of water baptism or any outward ritual. We believe He indwells everyone who trusts in Christ, and helps them make progress in overcoming sin and in becoming more like Jesus Christ in thought, deed, and love for God the Father. (John 14:16,17,26; 15:26,27; John 16:9-14; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26)

#### V. THE WORD OF GOD

We believe that the Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the infallible Word of God, verbally inspired by God, and without error. We believe that God's will, revealed in the Bible, is the supreme and final authority in testing all claims about what is true and what is right. In matters not addressed by the Bible, what is true and right is assessed by criteria consistent with the teachings of Scripture. (II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20,21; 3:16; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 14:37; Mark 13:31; John 8:31,32; 14:26; 16:13-14; 17:17; 20:31; Acts 20:32; Matthew 22:29, 43-44; 24:35; Numbers 23:19; Proverbs 30:5; Psalm 12:6; Hebrews 6:18; Titus 1:2)

#### VI. THE HUMAN CONDITION AND SALVATION

We believe that man was created by God in His own image and for his glory; but that man sinned and fell short of God's glory, and thus incurred physical, spiritual, and eternal separation from God. We believe that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and so are under divine condemnation. We reject justification by works of the law, and we believe that only those who have Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior by virtue of His atoning death on the cross are justified, delivered from condemnation, and receive eternal life. We believe that the believer's knowledge of this salvation, through the hearing and obeying of the gospel, leads to a heartfelt turning from sin and the embracing of Him as supreme Treasure. The Christian life involves growth in grace through persevering, Holy Spirit-empowered resolve to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to Christ everyday. (Genesis. 1:26-7; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17; 3:19; Eccl. 2:11; Matt 13:44; John 1:13; John 3:14; 3:16; 5:24; John 5:30; 7:13; 8:12; 10:26; 17:3; Psalm 51:7; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14; Romans 3:19; 5:19; Phil 3:7-8; I John 1:9; II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:11; 8:1; I Corinthians 15:1-2; Hebrews 3:12-14; Hebrews 6:11-12; Hebrews 10:39; Rom 3:28)

#### VII. THE CHURCH:

We believe in one holy, universal Church made up of all who trust Jesus Christ as Savior, Lord and supreme Treasure of their lives. We believe that God calls us to unite with other believers in local churches to help each other to value Christ above all, to praise Him together, to grow in our love and knowledge of Him, to stir each other up to good works, and to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ. We believe that Christians should be baptized and regularly eat the Lord's supper. (Ephesians 1:22-23; Acts 15:36, 41; 16:5; I Corinthians 16:1; Galatians 1:1-3; Revelations 1:4,10,11; Hebrews 10:24-25; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

## VIII. THE LAST THINGS

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body and the final judgment of all people, leading to the eternal happiness of the righteous in the Lord's presence, and the eternal separation of the wicked from the presence of the Lord. (Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Phil. 3:20; I Thessalonians 4:15-8; II Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 4:5; I Corinthians 15; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20: 11-15)

## **SECTION 2.03 CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our the Lord, Savior, and, supreme Treasure of our lives, and having affirmed the MEMBERSHIP AFFIRMATION OF FAITH, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one church in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge, holiness and peace; to promote its spirituality and fruitfulness; to sustain its worship, ordinances, and discipline; to welcome, and test biblically, instruction from the Scriptures by the elder(s) of the church which accords with the Statement of Faith, seeking to grow toward Biblical unity in the truth; and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith; to support the efforts of the church to prepare the next generations to put their confidence in God; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment, to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; to seek God's help in abstaining from any practices which bring unwarranted harm to each other or jeopardize our own or another's faith.

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

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will, if possible, unite with a likeminded church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant.

## **ARTICLE 3 MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION 3.01 GENERAL PROCEDURE**

The Elder(s) shall interview all candidates for membership to discern if they fulfill the requirements.

All actions regarding membership, either of admission or dismissal, shall be conducted by the Elder(s). At any of the regular meetings for worship, the Elder(s) may, without special notice, act upon the reception of members, or upon transfer of members to other churches.

All persons uniting with this Church shall previously, by the Elder(s), be made acquainted with the Church Covenant and the Membership Affirmation of Faith. Appropriate instruction will be provided to ensure, as much as possible, that new members understand these documents. Member candidates will also be introduced to the New Hope Fellowship Statement of Faith, so that each new member is aware of what the leadership of the church believes and teaches. Then, upon joining the church, new members shall publicly affirm (before the Church) the Church Covenant and the Membership Affirmation of Faith.

Persons being received into membership in this Church shall have given evidence of regeneration by a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior, Lord, and supreme Treasure of their lives—a faith that expresses itself in

- a) sincerely affirming the foundational Membership Affirmation of Faith
- b) embracing and living consistently with our Church Covenant
- c) being baptized in accord with Statement of Faith, specially Article 2.01, Section (L) 6.

### **SECTION 3.02 PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in this church does not afford those individuals with any property, contract, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Determination of the internal affairs of this church shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures.

A member may ask and expect to have answered any question in regard to the prepared financial statements of the church and the minutes of the proceedings of the church meetings. These will be shared openly at regular conferences.

A member may not, under any circumstances, inspect or copy any record relating to individual contributions to the church.

### **SECTION 3.03 DISCIPLINE OF A MEMBER**

Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he is to go alone to the offending party and seek to restore his brother. Before he goes, he should first examine himself. When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration

If reconciliation is not reached, a second and third member, one of them being an elder or deacon, is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination, and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.

If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined, the matter will be brought before the church, and such members who refuse to repent and be restored still, shall be removed from the membership of the church by the Elder(s).

In the matter of a public offense, the matter may be brought before the church immediately and disciplinary action may begin at that level.

The procedures outlined in this section are based on [Matthew 18:15-20](#); [Romans 16:17-18](#); [1 Corinthians 5:1-13](#); [2 Corinthians 2:1-11](#); [Galatians 6:1](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:14](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:6, 10-15](#); [1 Timothy 5:19-20](#); and [Titus 3:10-11](#).

### **SECTION 3.04 TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP**

Members, not under the disciplining process of Section 3.042 may request that letters of transfer be sent to another church according to the following rules:

- (A) Request must be made in writing to the church and the name of the church with which the members wish to unite must be designated
- (B) All letters or certificates shall be sent by mail to the Elder(s) or Clerk of the church designated in the application

### **SECTION 3.05 TERMINATION OF A MEMBER**

- (A) The membership of any individual member shall be automatically terminated without notice if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the church in the preceding year. Upon good cause being shown to the Elder(s), this provision for termination may be waived in the case of any individual member at the discretion of the Elder(s).
- (B) Members who are known to be deceased and those who request in writing that their names be removed from membership will be terminated as members of the church.
- (C) A member may resign at any time, but no letter of transfer or written statement of good standing will be issued upon such resignation, except at the discretion of the Elder(s).
- (D) No member of this church may hold simultaneous membership in another church. Upon uniting with or transferring letters to another church, membership is terminated.

## **ARTICLE 4 OFFICERS – CHURCH AND CORPORATE**

### **SECTION 4.01 CHURCH OFFICERS/CORPORATE OFFICERS**

The Church officers (per Article 2, Section 2.01 (I)) are Elder(s) and Deacon(s).

The Corporate officers are treasurer and clerk.

### **SECTION 4.02 DESIGNATION OF CORPORATE OFFICERS**

As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the church, the Elder(s) shall serve as governing board of the corporation, with one designated as President (first among equals); the clerk shall serve as secretary of the corporation, the treasurer of the church is the treasurer of the corporation.

### **SECTION 4.03 ELIGIBILITY FOR CONTINUANCE IN OFFICE**

- (A) All church officers shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith (as set forth in Article 2) annually in the presence of each other.
- (B) All corporate officers must be approved initially and thereafter annually by the Elder(s) in order for them to commence or continue in their offices.
- (C) Only church members in good standing are eligible for appointment to any church office or position.

## **SECTION 4.04 TERMS OF OFFICE**

The length of terms of office shall be as follows:

- (A) The relationship between the Elder(s) and the church shall be permanent unless dissolved. The severance of the relationship between the Elder(s) and the church may be considered at any time. Disciplinary removal of an Elder from office automatically terminates his membership. A restoration to membership after disciplinary removal will be subject to the requirements set forth in Article 3, Section 3.01 (D).
- (B) The term of service for all offices and positions in the church, except Elder and Deacon, shall be two year, at the expiration of which they may be re-appointed.
- (C) A vacancy occurring in any office or board, except in the case of Elder or Deacon, shall be filled at any regular church conference.
- (D) All appointed officers shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly appointed.

## **SECTION 4.05 ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The annual election of officers by the church membership shall occur during the month of January at regular church conference.

## **ARTICLE 5 DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

### **SECTION 5.01 – THE ELDER(S)**

- (A) The Elder(s) shall preach the gospel regularly and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God as the Lord leads him/them. He/They shall administer the ordinances of the church, act as moderators at all church meetings for the transaction of church matters, supervise any teaching ministries of the church, and tenderly watch over the spiritual interests of the membership
- (B) The lead Elder (first among equals) shall serve as president of the corporation with Elders serving as the board. The Elder(s) shall publicly inform all newly elected officers of the particular function and responsibilities of their respective offices and perform such duties as generally appertain to such a position. The Elder(s) shall be free to choose the means by which he/they exercise(s) the ministry that God has given him/them, and he/they shall have direction over all ministries of the church.

### **SECTION 5.02 – THE OFFICE OF DEACON**



- (A) God has given the office of deacon to the church to serve the congregation in carnal necessities; that deacons are to be selected by the Elder(s), though they may be nominated by the congregation, and ordained to their office by the Elder(s), under whose authority they serve; and that they are to be men who are sound and exemplary in their spiritual lives and conduct before the congregation and the world in general.
- (B) Any deacon or deacons shall assist the Elder(s), in such manner as he shall request, in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in assisting with the conducting of all religious services, and in performing all other work of the church. The deacon(s) shall assist the Elder(s) in caring for the administrative needs of the church and its ministries and shall act in an advisory capacity concerning all matters of church business.

### **SECTION 5.03 – THE CLERK**

The clerk shall keep a record of church proceedings, of the membership roll, of all baptisms, of certificates of ordination, licenses and commissions as directed by the church, and preserve all documents, papers, and letters coming into his/her hands during the term of office. All records are to be kept in the office, and delivered to any successor upon leaving the office. The clerk shall keep an account of any special events in the life of the church which are of historical interest and shall give a report upon the request of the pastor annually of the status of the church membership roll in the past year. The clerk shall serve as the secretary of the corporation.

### **SECTION 5.04 – THE TREASURER**

The treasurer shall account for all funds contributed to the church and shall disburse the same as ordered by the church. The treasurer shall present a written report of the itemized disbursements at the church conferences. All expenditures of the church shall be paid by check or electronic check where applicable. The treasurer shall hold the office of the same title within the corporation.

### **SECTION 5.05 – DUTIES OF ALL OFFICERS**

- (A) All officers shall prepare a written report of their work and shall surrender any records in their possession to the deacons or their successor at the close of their term of office to be filed as a permanent record of the work of the church. All records are the property of the church and must be kept in the church office.
- (B) Any officer who neglects their duties as outlined in the constitution for a period of three months or removes their place of residence so that they cannot do the work required by the church may be removed from their office at the discretion of the pastor and another may be appointed by the pastor to serve the unexpired term.

### **SECTION 5.06 – INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS**

A public installation service in which all newly elected officers of the church are to be dedicated to their respective offices and the ordination of newly elected deacons shall be held at a public church service following their election.

## **ARTICLE 6 MEETINGS (WORSHIP & ADMINISTRATION)**

### **SECTION 6.01 MEETING FOR WORSHIP**

Unless otherwise determined, the church shall meet each Sunday for public worship in the morning and at least once during the week for Bible Study and prayer. Except when circumstances forbid it, the ordinance of the Lord's Supper (Communion) will be observed at least once per quarter.

### **SECTION 6.02 MEETING FOR ADMINISTRATION (CONFERENCE)**

- (A) Regular church conference for the administration of church matters shall be held not less than once per quarter.
- (B) In January, the bi-annual appointment of officers will take place at regular conference
- (C) The rules of decorum for these meetings are as follows
  - a. Church conference shall be opened and closed by scripture reading and prayer.
  - b. It shall be the duty of the Elder(s) to hold conference with the congregation at least quarterly.
  - c. It shall be the prerogative of the church to hold conference at any time deemed worthy and necessary.
  - d. The Elder(s) of the church shall choose one among them to preside as moderator when more than one is present.
  - e. It shall be the duty of the moderator to explain and put questions, and in discussion, he shall have the right of speech as any other member provided the chair be filled.
  - f. In discussion, only one person shall speak at a time and he/she shall address the moderator adhering strictly to the subject in discussion
  - g. The speaker shall not be interrupted while speaking and shall speak on any proposition as often as he feels burdened.
  - h. The church clerk shall keep fair record of all proceedings, and the minutes taken of each conference shall be read, and amended if necessary.
  - i. In all matters the Elder(s) shall bear rule. The purpose of conferences being to review the budget, bring business matters before the church, inform the congregation of the matters to be decided.
  - j. It shall be the responsibility of the moderator to attend to his duties.
  - k. Each new member shall feel free to express his/her opinion in all matters pertaining to the conference.

### **SECTION 6.03 SPECIAL MEETINGS**

(A) The Elder(s) may call a special meeting by giving notice of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called to the church from the pulpit at least one Sunday and not less than one week prior to said meeting.

(B) Bible conferences, missionary conferences, and worship meetings may be held as the Elder(s) deem beneficial.

## **SECTION 6.04 FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year for the church shall begin January 1<sup>st</sup> and end December 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **SECTION 6.05 APPOINTMENTS**

(A) Deacons

- a. To be considered for the office of deacon, a person must meet all the scriptural requirements outlined in Acts, chapter 6, and First Timothy, chapter 3.
- b. To be considered for the office of deacon, a person must be a male member of this church in good standing for one year.
- c. The consideration of deacons will be held when necessary by the recommendation of the Elder(s). This can occur at any regular meeting or special meeting.
- d. Once affirmed by the Elder(s), an ordination service will proceed, upon the completion of the ordination the deacon will assume his office

(B) Elder(s)

- a. Before a candidate for the pulpit may become an Elder, he shall be required to meet with the elder(s), deacon(s), and corporate officers to give full and complete assurance that he accepts, without reservation, the entirety of the church's object, status, program, and statement of faith and practice. He shall be required to pledge that he will, should he be called as an Elder, uphold and maintain the church's independency and freedom from any outside ecclesiastical control.
- b. The call of an Elder may take place at any regular conference or special meeting upon recommendation by the current Elder(s).
- c. In the absence of Elder(s), the Deacon(s) and members of the church will be designated to perform such duties as necessary by the corporate officers

## **ARTICLE 7 ORDINATIONS**

### **SECTION 7.01 ORDINATION QUALIFICATIONS**

(A) Upon a conference with the pastor and after the pastor has approved the candidate for ordination, the Elder(s) shall form a presbytery to examine and pass the qualification of the candidate. This presbytery shall consist of the Elder(s) of the church and ordained ministers of like faith invited to participate in the examination of the candidate.

(B) If the candidate is found worthy of the ordination by the presbytery, the presbytery may ordain the candidate on behalf of the church

(C) The Elder(s) and/or the corporate officers and deacon(s) shall arrange for the ordination service.

## **ARTICLE 8 DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS**

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the church. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of the purposes stated in Article 1, Section 1.02.

## **ARTICLE 9 BINDING ARBITRATION**

Believing that lawsuits between believers are prohibited by the Scripture, all members of this church agree to submit to binding arbitration any matters which cannot otherwise be resolved, and expressly waive any rights in law and equity to bringing any civil disagreement before a court of law, except that judgement upon award be rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.

## **ARTICLE 10 TAX EXEMPT PROVISIONS**

### **SECTION 10.01 PRIVATE INUREMENT**

No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to the members, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for the services rendered, and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article 1, Section 1.02.

### **SECTION 10.02 POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT**

No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

### **SECTION 10.03 DISSOLUTION**

Upon dissolution of the church, the trustees shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all of the assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or

organizations under Section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the trustees shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to organizations which agree with the church's statement of faith and practice.

## **SECTION 10.04 RACIAL NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Understanding that according to the scriptures there is no race but human (Adam's race) the church cannot and shall not discriminate based on race, color, national, or ethnic origin. The church has a racially nondiscriminatory policy.

## **ARTICLE 11 AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be revised or amended by the Elder(s) provided that said revision or amendment has been announced from the pulpit fourteen (14) days before the action is taken.

## **ADOPTION**

This constitution was adopted by the Elder(s) with the affirmation of the members at a duly called conference of the church.

This constitution and bylaws supersedes any other constitutions and/or bylaws of New Hope Fellowship Christian Church, Inc.