

Bylaws of Highlands Community Church

Incorporated 1950

March 15, 2022

Preamble

We believe that an independent, nondenominational church provides a closer fellowship for all who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior and is better able to supply the spiritual needs of our community, and we unite under these Bylaws and pray God's richest blessing on this effort on behalf of His church.

It is desired that the government of the church be structured in such a way as to facilitate the rule of Jesus Christ over His church. Statements of Scripture on this government are: 1 Timothy 3:1-13, 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; and 1 Peter 5:1-4. In light of this, the church is ruled by a Board of Elders who are selected from the congregation based on their satisfaction of the qualifications for the position as defined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

Article I

The Name

The church shall be called Highlands Community Church.

Article II

Statement of Faith

Section A - The Scriptures

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and proper conduct. 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matthew 5:18; John 16:12-13.

Section B - The Godhead

We believe that there is one God eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14.

Section C - Man's Creation and Fall

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sin nature and consequent alienation from God, and came under the judicial sentence of death. Genesis 1:26; Romans 3:23, 6:23.

Section D - The Person and Work of Christ

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return for His church and with His church in power and glory. Romans 3:25; Hebrews 7:24-25; Titus 2:13; 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 20:31.

Section E - The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, in the present age indwells all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, baptizes them into the body of Christ, seals them unto the day of redemption, and that every believer is commanded of God to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Ephesians 5:18-20; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17.

Section F - Salvation

We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that this faith is manifested in works pleasing unto God. Titus 2:11-14; Ephesians 2:8-10; John 1:12; 1 John 5:11-13.

Section G - The Church

We believe that the church, which is the body and bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons in this age of grace, irrespective of their affiliation with Christian organizations. Ephesians 1:2-23; 5:25-27; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14.

Section H - The Final State

We believe that the condition and retribution of the lost and the salvation and blessedness of the saved are conscious and everlasting. Mark 9:43-48; John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Revelation 20:5-15.

Section I – Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

We believe that God has established marriage as a lifelong, exclusive relationship between one man and one woman and that all intimate sexual activity outside the marriage relationship, whether heterosexual, homosexual, or otherwise, is contrary to God's design and therefore sin [Gen 1:27, 2:24; Matt 19:3-12; Rom 1:18-32; 1 Cor 6:9-10]. We believe that God created the human race male and female and that all conduct with the intent to adopt a gender other than one's birth gender is immoral and therefore sin (Gen. 1:27; Matt. 19:4).

Article III

Organization and Administration

Section A - Background

Highlands Community Church was incorporated in 1950 in the State of Washington as the outgrowth of a Sunday school effort to meet the spiritual needs of people representing many denominational backgrounds in a temporary Federal Housing project. The congregation has no denominational support nor obligation and practices congregational autonomy. The congregation is independent in government, bound to other congregations only by love and fellowship. The property belongs to the corporation and is dedicated to God to be used for His glory and the good of mankind.

Section B - The Board of Elders

The Board of Elders is responsible for the shepherding of the congregation and the governance of the corporate business of the church.

Section C - Deacons and Deaconesses

Deacons and Deaconesses act with delegated authority from the Board of Elders in their assigned areas of ministry.

Section D - Pastoral Staff

The lead pastor reports to the Board of Elders. All other pastors and staff report to the lead pastor or a designee of the lead pastor.

Article IV

Board of Elders

Section A - Membership

The Board of Elders is composed of those members of the church who satisfy the qualifications of Scripture for eldership and are appointed to serve in that capacity (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

Section B - Qualifications

The qualifications for appointment to the Board of Elders are based on those set forth in the New Testament in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17-20, and Titus 1:5-9. Additionally, an elder shall be 18 years of age or older, a member of Highlands Community Church (HCC) for at least one year, and active in HCC ministry for at least the previous year, with the exception of the lead pastor who may be appointed prior to achieving one year of membership and active participation in ministry.

Section C - Meetings

1. Meetings of the Board of Elders will be held at least quarterly.
2. Special meetings may be called by the Chairman of the Board of Elders at the request of any elder.
3. Two thirds of the members of the Board of Elders constitute a quorum.

4. When necessary and appropriate, elders may attend meetings of the Board of Elders by teleconference or other electronic means.
5. Because we believe that the leaders of the church should be of "one mind and purpose" (Philippians 2:2), the unanimous consent of those elders present at the meeting is required to approve any motion.
6. When necessary and appropriate, the Chairman of the Elder Board may present a motion for approval to the Board of Elders and receive votes by electronic means. Such a motion may only be approved provided all members of the Board of Elders vote and unanimously consent to the motion.
7. All meetings of the Board of Elders will be conducted in a manner consistent with the spirit and meaning of the Scriptures, and in accordance with the Bylaws of Highlands Community Church. All meetings will follow the parliamentary procedures outlined in Roberts Rules of Order.

Section D - Responsibilities of the Board of Elders

The Board of Elders is responsible:

1. For the spiritual guidance, instruction, and protection of the congregation.
2. To assist the pastoral staff in the administration of all ordinances.
3. To appoint or remove the lead pastor.
4. To oversee the management of the corporation. In this capacity, the elders will ensure that all affairs pertaining to the function and well-being of the corporation are transacted efficiently and in keeping with sound biblical principles.
5. To approve the acquisition or disposition of real property
6. To approve any changes to the Bylaws.
7. To appoint officers of the church.
8. To serve as the final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application for Highlands Community Church.
9. To discipline and/or remove a member of the Board of Elders, deacons, deaconesses, or any other officer in the event that he or she ceases to fulfill the qualifications of the office. No elder is eligible to vote upon the issue of his removal from the Board of Elders.

Section E – Appointment and Term of Service

Candidates for the Board of Elders may be recommended by the Board of Elders, ministry leadership, or the congregation. A call for recommendations by the congregation will be made at least eight weeks prior to the annual appointment of the Board of Elders. If it is determined by the Board of Elders that the number of elders on the board must be increased prior to the next annual appointment time, a call for candidate recommendations by the Board of Elders, ministry leadership, or the congregation may be made at any time. Candidates recommended will be referred to the Board of Elders for review.

The Board of Elders will weigh the qualification of each nominee against the criteria set forth in the New Testament and these Bylaws.

The Board of Elders will annually appoint those to serve on the Board of Elders, with these exceptions: 1) the Lead Pastor who may be considered for appointment to serve upon commencement of employment at Highlands Community Church and 2) qualified candidates who may be considered for appointment to fill positions on the Board of Elders prior to the normal, annual appointment time. Each member of the Board of Elders will serve from the time of his appointment until the normal, annual appointment time when his term may be renewed for another year.

After serving for six (6) consecutive annual appointments (one-year terms), staff and lay elders, with the exception of the Lead Pastor, must rotate off the governing Board of Elders for a one (1) year sabbatical prior to being appointed again. The Lead Pastor will rotate off the Board of Elders during his required sabbaticals.

The Board of Elders is to be primarily lay elders and shall be made up of less than half paid employees of HCC, including those with an immediate family member who are paid employees.

Section F - Input from the Congregation

The list of nominees will be submitted to the membership at least two weeks prior to the annual appointment of the Board of Elders.

After publication of the nominees, the Board of Elders will accept for consideration any concerns regarding a nominee that would render him ineligible according to the Scriptures or these Bylaws. The Board of Elders will determine the validity of these concerns and either confirm or remove the nominee.

Article V

Deacons and Deaconesses

Section A - Organization

Deacons and Deaconesses will be organized according to their role within the established Highlands Community Church (HCC) ministries. Deacons and deaconesses will be selected for positions identified by the Board of Elders as requiring "deacon- or deaconess-qualified" individuals.

Section B - Definition of "Deacon- or Deaconess-Qualified" Positions

Those ministry positions where the appointed person will act with delegated authority and responsibility on behalf of the Board of Elders are deacon- or deaconess-qualified positions.

Section C - Qualification of Deacons and Deaconesses

The qualifications of a deacon or deaconess are based on those represented in the New Testament, specifically in 1 Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-7. Additionally, a deacon or deaconess must be 18 years of age or older, involved in ministry at HCC for one year or longer, and a member of HCC or in agreement with the membership covenant.

Section D – Appointment and Term of Service

Deacons and deaconesses will be appointed annually by the Board of Elders. In addition to those appointed annually, the Board of Elders may, as ministry needs arise, appoint deacons and deaconesses.

Section E - Duties of Deacons and Deaconesses

Deacons and deaconesses will serve in ministry areas and perform the documented responsibilities for which they were appointed.

Article VI

Pastoral Staff

1. All pastors must meet the qualifications of scripture for eldership (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

2. The lead pastor will be appointed or removed by the Board of Elders.
3. All other staff will be appointed or removed by the lead pastor, unless otherwise delegated by the lead pastor, following a process approved by the Board of Elders.

Article VII

Officers of the Church

Section A - Officers

The following are the officers of the Church: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. Officers will be appointed annually by the Board of Elders and will be elder qualified.

Section B - Responsibilities of Officers

1. The Chairman presides at all meetings of the Board of Elders and all business meetings of the membership, and is the chief officer of the corporation.
2. The Vice-Chairman assists the Chairman, assuming his duties in the Chairman's absence or at the direction of the Chairman.
3. The Secretary keeps the minutes of all meetings of the Board of Elders and all business meetings of the membership, and carries out other duties as assigned by the Board of Elders.
4. The Treasurer is familiar with the finances of the church and carries out other duties as assigned by the Board of Elders.

Article VIII

Requirements for Membership

Section A - Admission

The Board of Elders appoints new members to the congregation.

The church follows an established process for the appointment of new members.

Members are appointed upon the following terms:

1. One must be born-again by the Spirit of God according to John 3:3-7 and Romans 10:9-10. Prospective members must show by their new life in Christ, demonstrated by their actions and confessions, that old things have passed away and all things have become new, and that they are willing to abide by the teachings of Christ and the Apostles in the Gospels and Epistles.
2. A new member must agree to accept and abide by the provisions of these Bylaws and the Statement of Faith (Article II).

Section B - Membership Responsibilities

1. Conduct. Each member of the church is expected to attend its services, to work for its building up, and to guard its good name and that of the elders, pastoral staff, and each individual member; to give of him or herself and his or her means for the work of the church; and to submit to the authority of the Board of Elders

according to the Scriptures. Hebrews 10:25; Romans 12:10; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; and Hebrews 13:17.

2. Discipline. All cases involving members and regular attenders will be dealt with in accordance with Matthew 18:15-20, not forgetting Galatians 6:1 and 1 Corinthians 10:12. Final discipline is the responsibility of the Board of Elders.
3. Attitude. Considering the many denominational backgrounds of our community church, we wish to stress the importance of the main fundamental doctrines as being absolutely necessary and to be understanding in minor differences that so often are merely differences in terminology or custom.
4. Resolution of Disputes between Members of the Church. In accordance with 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, any unresolved dispute arising between members of the church will be submitted for final resolution by the saints through spiritually qualified designees appointed by the Board of Elders.

Article IX

Membership Meetings

Section A - Worship Meetings

Worship will be conducted in accordance with the New Testament and contain the elements stated in Acts 2:42.

Section B - Business Meetings

1. The Board of Elders will call at least yearly meetings of the membership to provide timely input on critical matters.
2. After first meeting with the Board of Elders without successful resolution, a special meeting may be called by written petition signed by fifty members and provided to the Chairman of the Elder Board, who must call a special membership meeting within 60 days and publish notice of the meeting at least 14 days in advance.

Article X

Ordinances

Section A - Communion

The communion service will be observed on a regularly scheduled basis. All Christians, regardless of denominational affiliation, are invited to partake of this service. The order given to the church in 1 Corinthians 11:23-33 will be followed.

Section B - Baptism

Because we believe water baptism is a scriptural witness of an inward regeneration, all who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior will be encouraged to take this step of obedience in their Christian life. 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3-6; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41, 8:12, 35-39.

Article XI

Ordination and Licensing

The Board of Elders is authorized to ordain and license ministers of the gospel.

When in the judgment of the Board of Elders any person is convinced he or she is called of God to the Christian ministry and has personally requested ordination, or the church he or she is serving has requested the ordination, it is the prerogative of the Board of Elders to call a council of ordination and conduct an examination of the candidate.