

# **CONSTITUTION OF BYLAWS OF HAGERSTOWN CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

## **ARTICLE I. PURPOSE**

Hagerstown Christian Church, incorporated under the laws of the State of Maryland, has formed adopted these Bylaws to set forth the rules by which the Church will be governed. These Bylaws are in accord with the Articles of Incorporation and the principles of church administration practiced by the church of the New Testament.

We purposefully assemble to be a visible church in the community with a passion and purpose to enlarge God's Kingdom! This purpose will be accomplished by obeying the great commission of Jesus Christ. We will seek to love God and people. We will live our lives as God's "messengers of hope" to the lost and seek to follow through with discipleship for those who enter Christ's Kingdom.

The address of the principle place of worship is:

336 Linganore Avenue  
Hagerstown, MD 21740.

## **ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in this assembly shall be open to all of those who give evidence of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who voluntarily agree to its "Articles of Faith", and agree in writing to be governed by its Constitution and Bylaws as herein set forth. Names on the membership roll shall constitute the "voting membership" provided they meet the requirements set forth in this document.

A. QUALIFICATION – the standard of membership of this assembly shall be:

- (1) A personal testimony of a genuine conversion experience asking Jesus Christ for forgiveness and leadership in one's life. (John 1:12, 13; 3:3-8)
- (2) Evidence of regeneration and the pursuit of an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ. (Romans 12, I Corinthians 13; Galatians 5; Ephesians 4-6; I John 1:6-7)
- (3) To fully subscribe to the Articles of Faith as set forth in this Constitution.
- (4) Readiness to be governed by the Constitution adopted by this assembly.
- (5) Willingness to submit to the authority of Scripture, regularly attend Sunday gatherings, observe the ordinances of communion and baptism, give regular

financial support with a cheerful heart to the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ through this body.

(6) Those who are at least 18 years of age.

B. APPLICATION – Persons desiring to become members of the assembly shall complete a membership application form. The applicant shall be interviewed by the Pastor(s) and/or Elder(s), in person according to the standards set forth in this Constitution of Bylaws. Applicants will be received as a member of Hagerstown Christian Church upon the recommendation of the elders and the agreement of the majority of present congregational members.

C. DISCIPLINE REASONS- Any member of the assembly shall be subject to disciplinary action for:

(1) The teaching of doctrines which are contrary to the teaching of the Word of God. (Titus 3:10-11)

(2) Refusal to be reconciled to a fellow Christian with whom there has been a difficulty. (Matthew 18:15-17)

(3) Appears to be out of harmony with the Constitution and Bylaws.

(4) Conduct which is unbecoming a Christian, such as immorality, greed, idolatry, slandering, drunkenness, sowing discord, robbery, etc. (I Corinthians 5:9-13)

D. DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE – The procedure outlined in Matthew 18 shall be followed: The pastor will investigate the situation to ensure that any offended individual(s) has gone directly to the one who has offended them first, to reconcile, before moving forward with leaderships involvement.

(1) If the offended one has done so & the offending individual is still at odds, then two (2) members of the Advisory Board or Elder Board (whichever leadership type is currently in place) will contact the offending person in order to discuss the situation and describe the discipline procedure. *Restoration is the goal.*

If there is just cause for continuing disciplinary action, two or three members of the Board of Elders shall contact the member to discuss the situation. *Restoration is the goal.*

(2) If just cause for the disciplinary action continues to exist, the names and reason(s) of such persons shall be discussed in a business meeting and a vote taken for removal; a majority vote will remove the person(s) from membership.

E. REMOVAL FROM MEMBERSHIP – The church shall recognize the termination of a person’s membership following his or her death, apostasy, lengthy absence, or voluntary choice to resign and move to another like-minded church.

(1) Any church member who misses eight consecutive weeks of attendance and fellowship will be removed from membership.

(2) Persons who have been removed from membership due to absence, apostasy, or voluntary resignation are welcome to re-apply for membership.

### **ARTICLE III. LEADERSHIP**

This assembly recognizes Jesus Christ as its leader since He is described as the head of the body, His church (Colossians 1:18).

#### **A. PASTOR**

(1) The Pastor is to serve the church family as the spiritual shepherd or overseer and shall provide the vision for accomplishing the stated purpose. He shall be one of the registered agent(s), along with deacons/trustees of the corporation. No person shall speak or preach in the assembly without his approval.

(2) The Pastor shall supervise all personnel such as Associate Ministers, office help, custodians, etc.

(3) The Pastor is called by the church family into the ministry to and amongst this church family, and the local areas in which we reach. Within six (6) months of his ministry start, the Pastor will provide the church family with the names of at least two (2) godly outside advisors, who he will meet with regularly, as they serve to keep him accountable in all aspects of his relationship with the Lord, his wife and family, as well as in ministering to and serving the church family.  
\*These advisors will be called in occasionally, to witness and assist in regular leadership meetings.

If an un-reconcilable disagreement or concern arises between the Pastor and the elder board, the outside advisors will be called in to assist in reconciling in a godly fashion.

If the Pastor sins and is found to be destructive to God’s kingdoms growth through this church family, the elder board will take the appropriate steps of removing the Pastor from his leadership role, *while at the same time working with the Pastor to restore him and his family.*

If the Pastor is removed, the elder board will prayerfully consider new pastoral candidates to minister to and amongst this church family and the local areas in which we reach. When a candidate is found for consideration, he will be asked to visit and worship with the church family and preach what God’s laid on his

heart. In addition, he and his family will be given ample time to visit the Hagerstown and surrounding areas as they consider God's leading. During this time, the church family will also be given ample time to sit and visit with the candidate and his wife, so they are part of the process as well.

Once a candidate is decided upon, the board will call a meeting for discussion to take place within the church family regarding the candidate. Based upon the overall feel of the meeting, the elder board will prayerfully decide whether to call the candidate to ministry here at Hagerstown Christian Church or not. It is not wise for the leadership to move without considering the Holy Spirits' leading amongst the family. (Prov. 12:15; Prov. 20:18a; Prov. 11:14)

(4) Characteristics of a pastor are outlined in I Timothy 2:1-7; II Timothy 2:24-25; Titus 1:6-9.

(5) Resignation- If a pastor desires to cease his service in this church family, he shall give a three (3) months notice and his service shall be terminated by the end of the three months.

#### B. BOARD OF ELDERS

The goal is for leadership to be developed into a Board of Elders who will be servant leaders to the church family. When an "elder candidate" is selected by the Pastor(s) / Elder Team, after much prayer ... said "candidate(s)" will be presented to the church family for time of review & consideration, lasting for two (2) weeks (Luke 6:12-16). If a concern arises regarding any of those being reviewed & considered, that concern should be presented to the Pastor(s) / Elder Team for investigation. If after that investigation, the concern is found to be legitimate, the Pastor will remove said person from consideration at this time.

At the end of the two (2) week period of review & consideration, those who have been presented & have not had legitimate concerns raised, will begin serving in an active role as Elder, working alongside the Pastor(s) in serving the spiritual needs & necessities of the church body, along with the ministry & business affairs of the church. I Timothy 3:1-17; II Timothy 2:24-25; & Titus 1:6-9

An elder has the opportunity to take a hiatus at any point in his time serving ... without any negative actions against him of course. Any elder who has taken a hiatus, and then desires to return to serve in elder role, must go thru evaluation by the current Elder Team

#### C. BOARD OF DEACONS

- (1) The Board of Deacons is chosen to serve the church family in all matters pertaining to the physical needs of the members of this church family, as well as the real estate and real property needs and dealings of the church family, with Elder Board approval, including any signatures needed to conduct said business.
- (2) For each situation involving financial assistance, a Benevolence Form must be completed by a member of the Board of Deacons and the guidelines established by this Board for handling benevolence requests must be followed.
- (3) The Board of Deacons is chosen to serve the church family in all matters pertaining to the real estate and real property needs and dealings of the church family, with Elder Board approval, including any signatures needed to conduct said business.
- (4) Deacons shall first, be selected by the Pastor(s) and Elder Team. Then, be interviewed to insure they meet the qualifications of a Deacon as described in I Timothy 3:8:13; Acts 6:3. After prayer & consideration, the Deacon “candidate(s)” will be presented to the church family for time of review & consideration, lasting for two (2). If a concern arises regarding any of those being reviewed & considered, that concern should be presented to the Pastor(s) / Elder Team for investigation. If after that investigation, the concern is found to be legitimate, the Pastor(s) / Elder Team will remove said person from consideration at this time.
- (5) At the end of the two (2) week period of review & consideration, those who have been presented & have not had legitimate concerns raised, will begin serving in an active role as Deacon.
- (6) Deacons will oversee & develop a “Finance Committee” that will assist the Pastor(s) and serve the church family in the diligent tracking and use of the funds provided for the Lord’s service here at Hagerstown Christian Church. The committee members will be appointed by the Pastor and will pass all decisions before the Pastor(s) and Elder Board for approval.
- (7) The Pastor(s) has the authority to spend up to, but not to exceed \$100.00 in any situation that arises where immediate help is needed. Beyond \$100.00, refer to article C., #2. This will be done through an “expense account” overseen by the “Finance Committee” of the church.

## **ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS**

- A) Meetings for public worship shall be held on each Sunday and during the week as may be provided for under the direction of the Pastor(s).

- There shall be an annual business meeting of the assembly, at which time a re-presentation of Elders and Deacons shall take place so that church family can be reminded of who their current Elders / Deacons are. Finance and Pastor(s) reports shall be presented at these meetings as well.
- The Board of Elders shall meet monthly for prayer, as well as for any business needing their attention.
- QUORUM- No record of any special or regular business meeting of the assembly shall be made unless one-third of the voting members shall be present to constitute a quorum. In the event that two consecutive meetings have been duly called and one-third of the voting membership does not appear, a meeting may be conducted with that number which does appear at the next duly called date.
- ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING- During the annual “Church Family Meeting”, the past 12 months financial summary is to be presented along with the new years proposed budget and any relevant reports.

## **ARTICLES V. FISCAL YEAR**

- The fiscal year of the Church shall be January 1 to December 31.

## **ARTICLE VI. BUDGET**

The annual budget shall be prepared and presented to the Council of Elders for their approval. The annual budget will then be presented to the congregation at the annual meeting for its approval.

## **ARTICLE VII. FINANCES**

We hold to the Biblical method of tithing for each member. We believe that everything belongs to God and we are stewards of it. By bringing the tithe to this assembly (Malachi 3:7-11) we demonstrate our obedience to God and trust in Him.

## **ARTICLE VIII. PROPERTY**

- A. All property, real or chattel, shall be taken, held, sold, transferred, or conveyed in the corporate name of the assembly, or successors in office.
- B. In the event that this assembly ceases to function as a church body then the said real property, property or chattel shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the assembly, dispose of all the assets of the assembly exclusively for the purposes of promoting the gospel of Jesus Christ to such organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational or 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 1954 (or the equivalent or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Pastor(s) and current elders shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Circuit Court for the County where the principal place of worship of the assembly is located exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such religious, charitable or educational purposes. **(Articles of Incorporation, Section 8)**. In the case of Hagerstown Christian Church, the county is Washington County, in the State of Maryland, 21740

## **ARTICLE IX. AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote at any business meeting of the congregation. Any proposed change shall be presented to the congregation in writing not less than two (2) weeks prior to the time of the proposed action. The change shall be available in writing at the Church office and at the Sunday morning services.

By-laws were last amended on 12.10.2023