



GOVERNING BYLAWS

*Real Hope Community Church exists
to help the seeker and believer
develop a real and vital personal relationship
with Jesus Christ
impacting their world for his glory.*

**Version IV
April 2015**

Article I: DECLARATION OF THE CHURCH

A) Name of Church Body:

The name of this fellowship shall be **Real Hope Community Church**.

B) Incorporation:

We were incorporated in Jefferson County, Wisconsin, (No. 1032585, Vol.1138, pg. 099) on January 27th, 2000.

C) Affiliation:

This Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches in world missions, this Church voluntarily affiliates with Converge Worldwide (Baptist General Conference), and Converge Great Lakes (Great Lakes Baptist Conference).

D) Vision Statement:

“Real Hope Community Church exists to help the seeker and believer develop a real and vital personal relationship with Jesus Christ impacting their world for His glory”

Article II: PURPOSES

The purpose of the church is to glorify God by making disciples that love God, serve people, and tell the world about Jesus Christ. (Matthew 22:36-40)
(Matthew 28:18-20)

1. Love God:

By helping members develop toward full Christian maturity by training, equipping and mentoring them for effective ministry. To promote personal, and spiritual growth and discipleship through Bible teaching.” (Eph. 4:11-13; Matt. 18:20; 2 Tim. 2:2)

This includes participation in corporate worship services together and the regular practice of spiritual disciplines. (Hebrews 10:25) (John 4:24)

2. Serve People:

To serve unselfishly, as Jesus served, meeting the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those in our church, community and in the world.” (1 Peter 4:10-11; Matt. 25:34-40, 1 Thess. 5:11; Gal. 5:13)

To encourage, support and pray for each other as members of the family of God as we share life together. (1 John 1:7, Acts 2:44-47; Heb. 10:23-25, Rom. 15:5, 7; John 13:34-35)

3. Tell the World:

By sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with as many people as possible in our community and throughout the world. (Matt. 28:18-20, Acts 1:8; 2 Peter 3:9).

Article III: STATEMENT OF FAITH

The beliefs of any church can be found primarily in its statement of faith. This statement is provided to give the Biblical foundation for our teaching and Christian walk.

- **In essential beliefs — we have unity.**

“There is one Body and one Spirit...there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of us all...” Eph. 4:4-6

- **In non-essential beliefs — we have liberty.**

“Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters... Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls... So then each of us will give an account of himself to God... So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.” Romans 14:1, 4, 12, 22.

- **In all our beliefs — we show charity.**

*“...If I hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but also the very secrets of God, and if I have the faith that can move mountains — but have **no love**, I amount to nothing at all.”* 1 Cor. 13:2 (Ph)

IN THE ESSENTIALS WE BELIEVE:

1. ABOUT GOD

We believe that there is one, true, holy God, eternally existing in three persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit —each of whom possess equally all the attributes of deity and the characteristics of personality, while executing distinct, but harmonious functions. We believe that God the Father concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayers, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. We believe that God the Father is the head of the Trinity. These three are co-equal and are one God. (GENESIS 1:1,26,27, 3:22; DEUT. 6:4; PSALM 90:2; MATTHEW 7:7-11; 28:19; 1 PETER 1:2; 5:7; ROM. 1:18-20; 2 CORINTHIANS 13:14)

2. ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

We believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe that Jesus is the second Person of the Trinity who was united forever with a true human nature by virgin birth. We believe in His sinless life, miracles and teachings. We believe that He voluntarily died on the Cross to be our substitute, paying the penalty for our sins, rose from the dead in the same body, though glorified and ascended into heaven. We believe that He is at the right hand of the Father and He is the only Mediator between God and Man. He will come again to earth, personally and visibly to fulfill God’s eternal plan. (MATT. 1:18-24, 20:28; LUKE 1:26-38; JOHN 1:11-14, 20:28; ACTS 1:11; ROMANS 4:25; 1COR. 15:3-5; 2 COR.5:21; HEBREWS. 1:1-4, 4:14-15, 9-28)

3. ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the personality and present ministry of the Holy Spirit. That He has been sent by the Father to be the Comforter, to convict men of their sin, to testify to the world of Jesus Christ, and to empower the believer to walk a victorious Christian life. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ at the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and

guidance in doing what is right. He gives every believer a spiritual gift when they are saved. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily. (JOHN 1:1; LUKE 12:12; JOHN 3:3-6; JOHN 14, 15-16; ACTS 1:8; ROMANS 8:9,16; 1 COR. 3:16; 12:1-30; EPHESIANS. 1:13-14, 5:18; GALATIANS 5:25)

4. ABOUT THE TRINITY

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that they are co-equal in every divine and perfect attribute of deity, and that they have distinct but harmonious roles in the work of creation, providence and redemption. (GENESIS. 1:1,2,26; DEUT. 6:4; MATT. 3:16, 28:19; JOHN 1:1-14; 1 JOHN 5:7; GAL. 4:4-6)

5. ABOUT THE BIBLE

We believe that the sole basis of our belief is the Bible, composed of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. We believe that Scripture in its entirety originated with God, and that it was given through the instrumentality of chosen men. We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without any error, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We believe it is God's truth to man and has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. (EX. 24:4a; PSALM 119:105,160, PROVERBS 30:5; MATT. 5:18; 2 TIM 3:16; 2 PETER 1:19-21)

6. ABOUT HUMAN BEINGS

People are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. People are the supreme object of God's creation. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "sin". This attitude separates people from God and causes many problems in life. GENESIS 1:27; PSALM 8:3-6; ISAIAH 53:6a; ROMANS 3:23; ISAIAH 59:1, 2

7. ABOUT CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

We believe that the Bible is the final authority in all matters of faith and conduct. Believers that have a relationship with God are ultimately responsible to Him. Believers need to submit to the authority of leaders that God has placed over them. We are committed to the truth that believers are to live for the glory of God with the goal of being conformed to the image of Christ. We are to honor God by obeying His Word, loving and serving others, sharing the gospel with the lost, and being faithful with our resources. (MATT 25:21; JOHN 13:34-35, 14; ROM 10:14-15, 12:1-2; 1 COR. 4:2; Eph 4:13)

8. ABOUT SALVATION

We believe that since Adam and Eve sinned, all people are sinners both by nature and by choice. Human sinfulness separates people from Holy God. Salvation is God's free gift to us but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith we are saved. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith. Jesus paid the penalty for all human sin by his suffering on the cross and offers forgiveness and eternal life to those who trust in Him as their personal Savior and Lord. (JOHN 1:12-13; JOHN 3:3, 16, 17; ACTS 20:21; ROMANS 6:23; EPHESIAN 2:1-9; Titus 3:5)

9. ABOUT ETERNAL SECURITY

Because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, the true believer is secure in that salvation for eternity. If you have been genuinely saved, you cannot “lose” it. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and keeping power of God that gives us this security. (JOHN 10:29; 2 TIMOTHY 1:12; HEBREWS 7:25, 10:10, 14; 1 PETER 1:3-5)

10. ABOUT ETERNITY

People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence. (JOHN 3:16; 14:17; ROMANS 6:23; ROMANS 8:17-18; REVELATION 20:15; 1 COR. 2:7-9)

11. ABOUT ORDINANCES

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion (wherein a person is completely lowered under the water) of a believer into water in the name of the Triune God, symbolizing the believer’s union with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. We believe that “The Lord’s Supper” was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death and spiritual self-examination of His people. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. (MATT 26:26-28, 28:18-20; MARK 1:8-11; LUKE 22:14-20; ACTS 2:41, 42, 8:12; ROM. 6:3-5; 1 COR. 11:23-32)

12. ABOUT LAST THINGS

We believe in the visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal happiness of the believer. Those who follow Christ will enjoy eternal life in heaven. Those who chose to reject Jesus and live their own way will be separated from God and will be eternally punished in hell.

(MATT 16:27, 24:31-46; MARK 9:43-48; JOHN 14:3; ROMANS 14:10-12; 2 THESS. 1:7-10, HEBREWS. 10:27; 2 PETER 2:4-10)

13. ABOUT CHURCH COOPERATION

We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise cooperate with interdenominational fellowships on a voluntary, independent basis. (1 COR 8:9-13; 16:13-16; GAL 5:22-26; EPH 4:1-3; JAMES 3:5-8)

14. ABOUT RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority. The church has specific functions and roles in society, which are ordained by God and therefore must have freedom to exercise religious liberty. Therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions. (ACTS 5:29, 20:28-32; ROMANS 14:7-9; 1 COR 3:16; 1 TIMOTHY 2:5; COL. 1:18; ROMANS 14:11-12)

15. ABOUT MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

We believe that marriage was ordained and sanctioned by God at creation as in the joining of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.. All sexual relations must therefore be reserved for that union. Christian marriage is a representation of Christ's relationship to His church. 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, 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. 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. We also believe that children are a blessing from the Lord. Thus all human life is sacred and worthy of protection from the moment of conception. GENESIS 1:26-28; 2:24; PSALM 127 & 128; 139:13-16; MATTHEW 19:1-10; 1 COR. 6:9-11; EPH 5:22-33; HEBREWS 13:4.

We believe this Statement of Faith to be an accurate summary of what Scripture teaches. All members shall refrain from advocating doctrines that are not included in this Statement of Faith in such a manner as to cause dissensions and divisions.

Doctrinal Statement concerning Gifts of the Spirit

In an effort to maintain the unity of believers and because of potential division, we do not practice the gifts of the Spirit, by speaking in tongues, prophecy, exhortation or interpretation, unless specific guidelines of 1 Cor. 14:27-28 are evident. For this reason the following guidelines are given:

1. We recognize speaking in "tongues" as a legitimate spiritual gift; it is not a proof of salvation, the evidence of the filling of the Holy Spirit, a sign of maturity, or a universal experience of all believers. (1 Cor. 12:11)
2. In all things we must strive to demonstrate love toward all regardless of their experience or lack thereof. All persons in the body need to be careful of any prideful or superior attitude that could result in division. (1 Cor. 14:26)
3. Because of the potential division over this issue, we do not practice "the gift of tongues" in our corporate worship or small groups, unless specific guidelines of 1 Corinthians 14:27-28 are followed (limited in number, interpretation required).
(1 Cor 12-14, particularly verses 12:1-14, 27-30; 13:1, 14:1-5, 12, 26-28, 28, 40, Eph 5:18; Gal. 5:22-26)

Article IV: MEMBERSHIP

We believe the idea of Membership is a biblical one identified in the New Testament. It is therefore our desire that all Christ-followers identify with and be committed to a local body (church) while submitting to the church leadership. (Acts 2:38, 41-47). This pattern facilitates the process of holding each other accountable and spurring on another towards spiritual growth. (Hebrews 10:24-25). In keeping with this pattern, Real Hope Community Church affirms the value of formal membership and the important role it can play in challenging people to keep growing in their relationship with God and other believers through Jesus Christ.

It is important to realize that any non-divisive person (who chooses not to be a member) is still viewed as a vital part of the church family and will have opportunities to serve within the ministries of Real Hope.

A) Membership Profile:

Members at Real Hope Community Church represent the heart and mission of the church. As an organization, we operate with minimal staff, budget and programming because we rely on the Holy Spirit to move through the transformed hearts of our members, mobilizing the collective body of Christ to carry out the mission of Real Hope by making Jesus known for the glory of God.

Membership in this church shall consist of all persons who meet the following criteria if physically able to do so, and are listed on the membership list.

1. Profession of a saving faith in Jesus Christ
2. Baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*
3. Faithful attendance at corporate worship and prayer gatherings for a period of at least six (6) months.
4. An established regular pattern of biblical tithing and wise stewardship.**
5. A *growing disciple* engaged in a RHCC Discipleship Group. (*At least 6 months of involvement before becoming a member*).***
6. Serving in an area determined by their spiritual giftedness.
7. Models a godly lifestyle maintaining a good reputation with those inside and outside of the church.****
8. Leads a “Great Commission” lifestyle by actively sharing their faith with others.
9. A commitment to abide by the Membership Covenant.

* Since Jesus commands that all of his disciples be baptized, baptism is a requirement for all Real Hope Members (Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:38, 1 Peter 3:21). If you have already been baptized since becoming a Christ-follower, you don't need to get re-baptized. Real Hope performs believer's baptisms (by immersion after profession of faith in Christ) only, and does not baptize infants. If a prospective member was baptized as an infant and does not desire to be re-

baptized due to reasons of conscience, this is acceptable as long as the decision remains personal and does not become a divisive issue within the church.

** For believers who are married to an unbeliever, biblical tithing may not be received well by your spouse. If this is the case, a healthy, peaceful, and loving relationship with your spouse should take priority over biblical tithing. For couples who are equally yoked, 10% of gross family income is considered the minimum tithe. All giving should be done joyfully and cheerfully as commanded in the Scriptures.

*** Real Hope's Discipleship Group may be defined as a group of individuals, or a single mentor-mentee relationship.

A Growing Disciple is defined as someone who:

1. Lives a balanced life with time for God, family, work and rest. (prioritized in that order)
2. Has consistent relationships:
 - Up - Loving God through prayer and the Word
 - In - Serving others through fellowship in the Church.
 - Out - Telling the world the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. Constantly repents and believes that God will change their life.
4. Seeks out lost people who are ready to hear Christ's message.
5. Having been discipled, seeks to mentor others.

**** Having been born again by the power of the Holy Spirit and redeemed by the blood of Christ, the believer will seek to leave their old life and sinful habits behind. In their new life the believer's reputation within the community (including online/social communities) should reflect and display Jesus as well as the ministry of Real Hope.

B) Member Classification:

In an effort to properly reflect the membership of the church, two lists shall be maintained. Real Hope Community Church will have the following church membership categories: Active Members (also referred to as members), and Inactive Members. These lists shall be updated periodically.

1. Members:

- a) Individuals who continue to fulfill their Membership Covenant.
- b) Individuals who are not under discipline by the church.

2. Inactive Members:

- a) Individuals who have been regularly or intentionally absent from the service or ministries of the church for a period of 6 consecutive months or more without giving a reasonable explanation to the Elders of such absence.
- b) Those who have come under church discipline by the church.
- c) Inactive Members may be reinstated as members under the following conditions:
 - A review by the Elders.
 - Re-established the criteria found in the Membership Profile (Article "A") for a period of at least 6 consecutive months.

- A recommitment to the Church Membership Covenant.
d) Inactive Members are not eligible to vote.

C) Membership Process:

The following steps outline the procedure for becoming a member at Real Hope Community Church. All categories of Membership are invited into the membership process.

1. Attend the Intro to Membership Class.
2. Accept the Invitation to the “Call to Follow Christ” and enter into the Discipleship Track with an assigned mentor.
3. Maintain commitment and growth in a Discipleship Group for at least six (6) months.
4. Meet with two or more Elders to share testimony, and affirm the Gospel calling on your life.
5. Formal approval by Elders.
6. Presentation before Congregation at Annual Meeting.

D) Benefits of Membership:

1. It identifies a person as a genuine believer (Ephesians 2:19, Romans 12:5).
2. It provides a spiritual family to support and encourage them in their walk with Christ. (Gal. 6:1-2, Heb. 10: 24-25)
3. It gives them a place to discover and use their gifts in ministry. (1 Cor. 12:4-27)
4. It places them under the spiritual protection of godly leaders. (Heb. 13:17, Acts 20:28-29).
5. It gives them the accountability they need for spiritual growth. (Eph. 5:21).

E) Privileges of Members

Each Member at Real Hope Community Church, of legal voting age in Wisconsin, has the responsibility and privilege to vote on congregational ministry business and is eligible for leadership positions. Therefore, the Membership has the following privileges:

1. Confirmation of Elders. (Acts 6:1-7)
2. The calling of the Senior Pastor, as well as the removing of the pastor.
3. Approving the Fiscal Budget, the purchase and sale of land/ property, and borrowing money or contracting debt of a capital expenditure over \$25,000.00.
4. Amending this document if we change any of the ways we operate by law of Wisconsin.
5. Eligible for participation in formal positions of leadership. (1 Cor. 12; Eph 4:11-13)

F) Church Discipline and Disputes. (see the Biblical guidelines found in Matt. 18; 1 Tim. 5:19-21; Gal 6:1-2 along with The Peace Plan)

G) Removal

The Elders will remove members from the membership list under the following conditions:

1. Transfer to another church.
2. Written request for membership release.
3. After an extended absence of 6 months without notification to the church.
5. Not responding to church discipline.
6. Death.

H) Restoration of members

Members dismissed shall be restored by the Elders according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8, when their life-styles are judged to be in accordance with the Membership Covenant.

Article V: MEMBERSHIP MEETING

A) General Meeting

A general meeting of the members shall be held in the spring (April) of each year at such times as determined by the Elders. This general meeting shall be the annual membership meeting. The purpose of this meeting shall be to adopt an annual budget, confirm newly appointed Elders and Members if needed, and renew the Membership Covenant together. Subject to Section C1 of this Article, any other proper business may be conducted at this meeting.

B) Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called at anytime by the Elders or the Senior Pastor for any purpose by giving notice to the members in accordance with SECTION C of this Article.

C) Notice Requirement for Membership Meeting

1. General Requirements: Whenever members are required or permitted to take any action at a meeting, notice shall be given to members no less than two (2) weeks prior to a meeting. Notification of membership meetings shall be given in any of the following manners which shall be deemed to be a reasonable method of calling a membership meeting:

- a) Distribution of the written material to the congregation in attendance at the regular weekend service.
- b) Announcement through the Church Website, CCB or Email.
- c) Oral announcement to the congregation at the Sunday worship gathering.

2. Notice of Certain Agenda Items:

Action by the members on any of the following proposals by those members present, and are entitled to vote, is valid only if notice or waiver of notice specifies the general nature of the proposal:

- a) Calling or removing the Senior Pastor.
- b) Adopting, amending or repealing Bylaws.
- c) Disposing of all or substantially all of the Church's assets.
- d) Approving the election to dissolve the Church.
- e) Approving the acquisition of real property and any indebtedness.

D) Quorum

Those members present and voting, consisting of at least 1/2 of the active members, at a meeting duly noticed and called shall constitute a quorum of the membership for the transaction of business. *If Quorum cannot be attained for three consecutive meetings regarding the same business agenda, the Elders are permitted to transact business.*

E) Majority

Majority should be defined as two-thirds of the quorum for all business that requires a vote.

Article VI: CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Godly leadership is essential to the health and effectiveness of the local church. We, at Real Hope Community Church, are committed to doing things God's way. Therefore, it is extremely important that those in leadership positions be seeking God individually and living a life that is worthy of imitation. The selecting and appointing of leaders will not hinge on popularity or social status, but on character and Biblical principles laid out in the Word of God.

Christ is the Head of the Church. Each action and motive of the church should be done under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The objective of such service is to bring glory to Him. (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18) God's plan for leadership of the church is a plurality of godly, gifted leaders who are responsible to lead, care for and equip its members. (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

A) Church Leadership

Overall church leadership will be given by the Elders which will include the Senior Pastor as one of the Elders. (Titus 1:5-9; Acts 20:28-32; 1 Tim 3:1-12, 5:17)

B) Elders

The functions of the Elders are to support the vision and direction of the Senior Pastor, and to monitor the health and actions of the church body. (Acts 15). The Elders are servants of God, and commissioned by God, to give Biblical direction and spiritual oversight to the church, along with helping to 'shepherd the flock' of God. No church in the New Testament was ruled and managed by one person. Plurality of elders appears to be the norm. (Acts 20:17, 28)

1. Biblical qualifications for Elders

- a) The qualifications of an elder as found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
- b) Candidates must be members in good standing for a period of at least one (1) year.
- c) Be an exemplary model of the Membership Profile.

2. Duties and Responsibilities

- a) Prayer. To pray continually with and for the members of Real Hope.
- b) Guard the body of truth revealed in scripture.
- c) Preach in worship services when requested by the Senior Pastor.
- d) Teach equipping and discipleship classes and groups.

- e) Attend various ministry team activities to show support and to monitor the pulse of what is being taught.
- f) Determine and resolve doctrinal issues as they arise.
- g) Resolve conflicts/disciplinary issues within the church body.
- h) Be available and remain visible to church members and visitors.
- i) Modeling attendance as much as possible at all of the church services.
- k) Caring for the poor, the sick and the needy.
- l) Assisting the Senior Pastor in the shepherding of church members.

3. Selection and Appointments.

- a) Each year, the Elders will determine the number of positions, if any, to be filled that year. There will be a minimum of three (3) Elders in addition to the Senior Pastor and a maximum total of seven (7). (Heb 13:7; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5)
- b) The Elders will make a final selection and appointment of the names of the prospective Elders to the Membership of the church for confirmation at the annual meeting.
- c) The Elders will set and determine the Senior Pastor's salary. The pastor will abstain from this process.

Members are encouraged to notify any Elder and Senior Pastor with information that would disqualify a potential Elder. Proper notice must be given four weeks prior to the annual meeting. This is based on facts of reputation and lifestyle issues that would disqualify a potential Elder.

4. Terms of Service

Each Elder will serve for at least one year. After that period each Elder with the other Elders present will determine the renewable commitment for the following year. This renewable commitment will occur every year and shall be reconfirmed by the membership each year. An Elder is encouraged to take at least one year sabbatical after each 5 years of service.

5. Removal

- a) If an Elder is unable to perform their duties or is living in disharmony with Biblical principles, the Elder may be suspended or dismissed by a vote of all other Elders.
- b) An Elder may resign voluntarily at the annual renewal period set by the elders or by filing a written resignation with the Elders.
- c) An Elder can be removed if a unanimous consensus of the Elders is in agreement.

6. Officers

- a) The Elders will select a facilitator who will serve as Chairman of the church business meetings. The Elders will also select an individual to perform duties as the Secretary of the corporation.
- b) The Elders will also appoint a Treasurer who maybe an Elder or an ex-officio member.
- c) The Senior Pastor will function as the Chief Executive Officer of the corporation.

7. Elder Meetings

- a) The Elders will select a Chairman for the Elder team annually.
- b) Elder meetings will be held monthly; time and place at the discretion of the Elders.
- c) Special meetings may be called, if necessary, by any Elder by proper notice to all Elders.
- d) Telephone communication and/or electronic communication such as email or fax are acceptable for business matters.
- e) A quorum will be a simple majority of the Elders.

C) Trustees

While Scripture indicates that Elders bear the ultimate responsibility for the care of the church, the Elders shall, from time to time, designate the authorized number of Trustees of the Church.

1. Duties

Trustees shall have the following responsibilities and duties.

- a) To conduct such other duties and activities as the Elders may designate from time to time to assist the church.

Article VII: PASTORS

A) Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor is responsible to seek and discern God's vision for the church, and then provide leadership and Biblical instruction toward that vision. (Eph 4:11-13; 1 Cor 12:4-7, 28-30)

1. Qualifications

In addition to meeting the requirements for Elder, the Senior Pastor will demonstrate one or more of the gifts of Ephesians 4:11-12.

2. Duties

- a. The Senior Pastor's job description will be created and approved by the Elders.
- b. The Senior Pastor will be a voting member of the Elders. He shall be ex-officio member of all boards and teams of the church. (1 Tim 3; Titus 1)
- c. The Senior Pastor will cast vision, preach and teach, oversee and develop staff and Shepherd the church.

3. Selection Process:

- a. A Pastoral Search Committee shall be appointed and formed as deemed appropriate by the Elders.
- b. The Elders shall contact the Converge Great Lakes District Executive Minister for advice and counsel during the transition periods, which will include training and advising of the pastoral search committee (if needed), and help in securing an interim minister (if needed).
- c. Upon approval from the Elders, the pastoral candidate will be given a variety of interaction opportunities with members of the congregation.
- d. If approved, the candidate shall be recommended to the membership of the church to be voted upon to extend a call to the candidate.
- e. A two-thirds majority quorum will be required to extend a call to the Pastor.

4. Terms of Service, Resignation

The Pastor may serve indefinitely; the relationship may be terminated upon ninety days written notice by:

- a. Action of the Senior Pastor through a letter of resignation submitted to the Elders.
- b. Action of the Elders. By two-thirds consent (with the Senior Pastor abstaining). Then presented to the membership for a vote.

c. Action of the Church. If a written petition requesting the Senior Pastor's resignation, signed by at least 1/3 of the Church Active Membership, is submitted to the Elders, then the Elders will review the request and determine whether to make such a recommendation to the membership at a special business meeting. (The said purpose of which has been publicly stated for two weeks notice). A two-thirds majority vote of the membership in good standing can dismiss the Senior Pastor.

5. Severance:

Unfortunately, the church may be faced with the unpleasant circumstance of termination of a Pastor. The church understands that a pastor is a valued position within the church family and has a high calling from God. In the event the Church terminates the Senior Pastor and the Employment Agreement without just cause and while the Senior Pastor is otherwise willing and able to perform the duties of Senior Pastor, such termination shall entitle Senior Pastor to a lump sum payment in an amount equal to the salary payments the Pastor would otherwise have been entitled to receive at the Senior Pastor's current rate of pay in effect on the day prior to the effective date of termination for a period of one hundred thirty (130) working days following the effective date of termination.

6. Performance Evaluation

The Elders shall conduct an annual review of the Senior Pastor's performance and salary.

Article VIII: AMENDMENTS

A: Amendment Procedure

These Bylaws or any provision of them may be altered and amended. The new Bylaws may be adopted by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any special or regular meeting at which a quorum is present.

B: Revisions to Amendments

Changes to these Bylaws which do not require an amendment are as follows:

- a. Minor revisions not effecting a change in the theology and spirit of the document.
- b. Corrections and clarifications (grammar, spelling, additional Scriptural Support)

C: Review of Bylaws

The Elders of Real Hope Community Church shall review the Bylaws every 5 years. Revisions may be made at the discretion of the Elders.

Article IX: RATIFICATION OF BYLAWS

A: Ratification and Declaration of Support for Bylaws

The members of Real Hope Community Church, gathered at their annual business meeting, do hereby ratify these Bylaws, declare our reliance on God for the ministry and outreach of this church, and affirm our dependence on Him for its future.

Ratified by a majority vote of members dated the 22nd day of April, 2012

Pastor _____

Elder _____

Elder _____

Elder _____

Elder _____

X: CLOSURE OF CHURCH

A: Division and Disposition of Church Property

In the case of organic division of the church membership, the church property shall belong to those members who abide by these Bylaws. Should any controversy arise as to who is abiding by these Bylaws, the questions shall be submitted to the Leadership of Converge Great Lakes and their decision shall be final.

B: Dissolution

Should conditions arise when, for any reason, the church work cannot continue, the Elders will contact the leadership of Converge Great Lakes for their advice and counsel. If the church dissolves, the church property and assets shall be transferred to Converge Great Lakes for the ongoing work of the Gospel Ministry.

Article XI: INDEMNIFICATION

Real Hope Community Church will indemnify any and all persons who may serve or who have served at any time as a pastor, associate pastor, or in another executive level staff position in the church, as a church officer, or member of a church board or committee, as a youth leader for a church youth organization, or as a teacher, or counselor of the church elected or appointed by the church of any board or committee of the church, against any and all expenses, including amounts paid upon judgments, counsel fees, and amounts paid in settlement (before or after suit is commenced) actually and necessarily incurred by such persons in conjunction with the defense or settlement of any claim, addition, suit or proceeding in which they, or any of them, are made parties, or a party, or which may be asserted against any such person be adjudged in any action, suit, or proceeding to be liable for duties. Such indemnification will be in addition to any other rights to which those indemnified may be entitled under any law, bylaw, agreement, or otherwise.



MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

*Real Hope Community Church exists
to help the seeker and believer
develop a real and vital personal relationship
with Jesus Christ
impacting their world for his glory.*

INTRODUCTION

“...Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” -Romans 12: 1-2

As Christians, we are members of God’s household (Eph. 2:19) called to function, participate, and minister in a particular place within the body of Christ. A healthy body requires that each member do its part well. A healthy church requires the same: members who are sacrificially committed and well-equipped to do the works of service that God has prepared in advance for us to do (Eph. 2:10; 4:12). Real Hope Community Church holds its members in high regard; we expect them to lead as missionaries of the gospel to the culture. God, in his sovereignty, placed us in this city, among these people, in this century, for a reason (Acts 17:26-27).

“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them...” - Romans 12: 3-8

Being a member of Real Hope Community Church is really about being part of a family. All members are disciples of Jesus, unified by their identity in Christ. This unity is expressed in the way they collaborate in loving God, loving fellow Christians, and loving non-Christians. Members who enter into a covenant with their local church are called to a higher degree of responsibility and service. At the same time, the elders are covenanted to assist members first and foremost, to love and lead, provide counsel and aid, pray for, teach, and guide them.

“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace...” -1 Peter 4: 8-10

WHAT IS A COVENANT?

A covenant is a promise by which we obligate ourselves to one another in such a way that the obligation of one party is not dependent on the faithfulness of the other (Ezek. 20:44; 36:22; Ps. 76:11; Hos. 2:19-20; 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:13). The Real Hope Community covenant includes a statement of faith, a statement of biblical doctrine, the obligations of Real Hope Community Church to its members, and the obligations of members to Real Hope Community Church. Though the covenant does define the relationship between members and the church, it is first and foremost a promise made to God as a commitment to his glory and his bride, the church (Eph. 5:25).

STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. I am a Christian saved from the eternal wrath of God by faith in Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior, through his death and resurrection, by which I am assured of eternal life (John 3:16-18; Rom. 3:23-26).
2. I believe Jesus Christ is exactly who he claimed to be (Isa. 53:6; Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:70; John 4:25-26; 6:29; 8:58; 11:25-27; 14:6-7; 15:5).
3. I have repented of my sins and have been made a new creation in Christ (1 John 1:9; 2 Cor. 5:17).
4. In obedience to Scripture, I have been baptized to personally identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and to publicly demonstrate my commitment as a disciple of Jesus (Col. 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21).

STATEMENT OF BIBLICAL DOCTRINE

6. I agree with the core beliefs of Real Hope Community Church, which are founded upon historic creeds (e.g. Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed) and expressed in the Statement of Faith found in Article III of the Bylaws.
7. I understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace; I will adhere to Real Hope Community Church's position on primary theological issues, and I will not be divisive over secondary issues (Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:7, 17).
8. I agree that the sixty-six books of the Bible are the ultimate doctrinal authority on all matters (Is. 55:11; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; 2 Tim. 3:15-16; Heb. 4:12).

OBLIGATION OF REAL HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH TO ITS MEMBERS

1. We covenant that your elders and deacons will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:1-13; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
2. We covenant to seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5).
3. We covenant to care for you and seek your growth as a disciple of Christ, in part by equipping you for service (Eph. 4:11-13) and praying for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (James 5:14).
4. We covenant to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18).
5. We covenant to be on guard against false teachers (Acts 20:28-31).
6. We covenant to exercise church discipline when necessary (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1).
7. We covenant to set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of church members (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12).

MY OBLIGATION TO REAL HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH AS A MEMBER

1. I have read and understood the Real Hope Community Church Statement of Faith and will not be divisive to its teaching. I also understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace (Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:7, 17).
2. I covenant to submit to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues (Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
3. I will maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines. My relationship will be evident through my participation in weekly worship services, communion, Real Hope community, service, and a life that glorifies Jesus (Ps. 105:1-2; Ps. 119:97; Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25; 2 Peter 1:3).
4. I will steward the resources God has given me, including my time, talents, and treasure (Prov. 3:9-10; Rom. 12:1-2; Gal. 5:22-26; Eph. 4:1-16; 5:15-18). This includes regular financial giving, service, and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary (Rom. 12:1-8; 2 Cor. 8-9; 12:7-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
5. I will not function in leadership or as a member in another church family (Heb. 13:17).
6. I covenant to submit to discipline by God through his Holy Spirit, to follow biblical procedures for church discipline in my relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ, to submit to righteous discipline when approached biblically by brothers and sisters in Christ, and to submit to discipline by church leadership if the need should ever arise (Ps. 141:5; Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:5-8; Gal. 6:1-5 8; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 2:25; Titus 1:9; 3:10-11; Heb. 12:5-11; Rev. 2:5-7, 14-25).
7. I agree, by God's grace, to walk in holiness as an act of worship to Jesus Christ, who has saved me from my sin that I could live a new life (2 Cor. 5:17); I will practice complete chastity before marriage and complete fidelity in heterosexual marriage by abstaining from practices such as cohabitation, pornography, and fornication (Job 31:1; Prov. 5; Rom. 13:12-14; 1 Cor. 6:9-7:16; Heb. 13:4); I will refrain from illegal drug use, drunkenness, and other sinful behavior as the Bible, my pastors, and my conscience dictate (1 Cor. 8:7; Gal. 5:19-21). Should I sin in such a manner, I agree to confess my sins to Christian brothers or sisters and seek help to put my sin to death (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5; 1 John 1:6-10).

**MY COMMITMENT TO THE VISION & MISSION OF
REAL HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH**

The VISION of Real Hope Community Church is to help the seeker and believer develop a real and vital personal relationship with Jesus Christ impacting their world for His glory.

Our MISSION together is to make disciples that Love God, Serve People and Tell the World about Jesus Christ.

I agree with the vision statement of Real Hope Community Church and commit to participate in its mission as a diligent, faithful disciple of Jesus, that my identity would be in him, my worship would be for him, my fellowship would be through him, and my interaction with the culture would be for his glory.

I understand that this covenant obligates me to the members of Real Hope Community Church and is an acknowledgment of my submission to the elders of the church. I accept the responsibility to notify Real Hope Community Church leadership if at any time I can no longer commit to this covenant, or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding Real Hope Community Church.

I understand that my membership is voluntary and that I may resign from Real Hope Community Church at any time. But for as long as I choose to be a member of this church, I covenant to do my best to make Real Hope Community Church a church where God is honored by my life and others are encouraged by my words and by my actions.

Signature of Real Hope Community Church Member

Date