

**BRIGHT HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
**ESSENTIAL GUIDELINES AND BELIEFS**  
**Statement of Promise...What We Pursue**

**We believe** we have been led by the Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, and on our profession of that faith have been immersed in the waters of baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. We accept the Word of God as our final authority for faith and practice, and now in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and willingly enter into this covenant with one another as one body in Christ to be one in Spirit and purpose. (*John 3:16-18; Acts 16:31-34; II Tim. 3:16,17; Eph. 4:3-6*)

**Therefore we pursue, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to...**

- Strive for the advancement of this church in spiritual growth, wisdom, knowledge and holiness
- Sustain its worship, ordinances and doctrines
- Be consistent in our attendance at all regular services and give it priority in all aspects of our lives
- Discover and use our spiritual gifts and talents
- Actively meet the needs of the poor and afflicted in personal and tangible ways
- Look for ways to reproduce ourselves through local New Testament churches both locally and internationally
- Contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church and the spreading of the Gospel to the most remote parts of the earth.

(*Eph. 4:13; Heb. 10:24,25; Rom. 12:4-8; I Pet. 4:10,11; Jas. 2:15-17; Acts 1:8; II Cor. 9:7,12,13; Matt. 28:19,20*)

**We also commit to...**

- Do our best to be diligent in maintaining personal devotions and to formally and informally educate our children in the ways of Christ
- Develop relationships with family, friends and acquaintances and seek opportunities to share Christ with them
- Live lives of distinction by not conforming to the patterns of this world
- Avoid all gossip, divisiveness, bitterness and unrighteous anger
- Remove anything from our life that may grieve or quench the Holy Spirit, or that may cause another believer to stumble

(*Josh. 1:8,9; Deut. 6:7-9; Mark 4:14; II Cor. 5:20; Rom. 12:1,2; 14:13; Titus 2:7-12; Eph. 4:29-32; I Thess. 5:19; I Cor. 6:19; II Cor. 6:3*)

**We further promise to...**

- Encourage each other in the blessed hope of our Savior's return
- Patiently forbear one another in love with all humility and gentleness
- Carry one another's burdens
- Remember each other in prayer
- Hold each other accountable
- Aid each other in sickness, distress and material need
- Be kind, tender-hearted and forgiving to each other
- Honor and submit to our God-appointed authorities
- Be slow to take offense, but always be ready for reconciliation
- Uphold the Essential Guidelines and Beliefs of Bright Hope Community Church

(*I Thess. 4:16-18; Eph. 4:2; Gal. 6:2; Jas. 5:16; Prov.27:17; Heb. 3:12,13; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 4:32; Heb.13:17; Matt. 5:23,24; II Tim. 4:2*)

**We purpose to** humbly and joyfully submit ourselves to our Christian calling and to live our Christian lives in the strength of the Lord for His ultimate glory. (*Matt. 5:16; I Cor. 10:31; I Pet. 2:9; I Pet. 4:11*)

# **BRIGHT HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH**

## **ESSENTIAL GUIDELINES AND BELIEFS**

### **Statement of Position...What We Believe**

#### **Article 1- Our Name**

This congregation of believers in Jesus Christ shall be known as the Bright Hope Community Church, Inc.

#### **Article 2- Our Purpose**

1. This congregation is organized 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: establishing and sustaining authentic / relevant worship, crisis intervention counseling and assistance programs, evangelism efforts locally and globally, ministry training for men, women and youth, and other churches to do the same.

2. As members of Bright Hope Community Church it is our desire to glorify God by creating a church environment where believers can develop a passion for God and a passion for people. We accomplish this through the balanced fulfillment of the following biblical tasks:

- Worshipping God
  - Serving others
  - Evangelizing the lost
  - Baptizing new believers
  - Discipling one another
- (Matthew 22:37-40, Matthew 28:19-20)

3. It is our desire to be effective in our purpose as a local church by consistently facilitating a Christ-like transformation in people (Colossians 1:28-29).

#### **Article 3- Our Declaration of Faith**

We are passionate about introducing people to Jesus and helping them become fully committed to Him (assisting believers in becoming passionate followers of Him). We desire to be a place where encountering God is the norm, where spiritual formation is an exciting and mysterious journey, and where no one stands alone. Bright Hope Community Church has experienced God's grace through Jesus Christ as a people and we long to share the amazing power it has in transforming a person's life for good and pursue after God's heart.

##### **1. The Authority of the Bible**

The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are the verbally inspired Word of God, they are without error in the original writings, and they are the complete and final revelation of God. (Matthew 5:18; John 17:17; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21; Revelation 22:18-19)

##### **2. The Triunity of God**

There is only one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Who are co-equal in their essential nature, attributes, and perfection. (Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 18:30-31, 147:5; Matthew 28:19; Mark 12:29; Luke 3:22; John 4:24, 5:23, 10:30, 14:9; Acts 5:3-4; II Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 1:1-3)

##### **3. The Person of Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is God the Son, the promised Messiah, conceived in the flesh by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, true God and true man, without sin, and the only mediator between God and Man. (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7; Matthew 1:18-25; Mark 14:61-62; John 1:1-3, 14, 29, 5:18, 8:58, 10:30; II Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 2:9; I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 1:2-9, 2:14-15; I John 5:20)

##### **4. The Work of Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ, through His death on the cross, paid for all sin, completely satisfied the righteous wrath of God against sin, and provided redemption and forgiveness for all who believe. After His death, Jesus Christ arose bodily from the dead, was seen by many during a period of forty days, and then ascended into Heaven where He is seated at the right hand of God as our Advocate and High Priest, from which place He will some day return to establish His Kingdom on earth. (Isaiah 53:5-6; Luke 24:36-43; John 1:18, 3:16, 20:25-28; Acts 1:6-11; Romans 3:21-26; I Corinthians 15:3-8, 20-23; Galatians 3:13; Colossians 1:13-14; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; I Peter 1:18-19, 2:24; I John 2:1-2; Revelation 20:6)

## **5. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is that Person of the Triune Godhead, who convicts men of sin, causes spiritual birth, indwells, seals, sanctifies, guides, equips, teaches, and fills the believer, thus enabling him to walk in obedience to God and His Word. For the sake of unity within this church family, we do not practice or teach the supernatural sign gifts (i.e.; speaking in unlearned foreign languages, miraculous healing, and speaking prophetically of future events; an expanded explanation is available). Instead, we encourage believers to seek the "most excellent way" of love and to be zealous about the developmental gifts that are certain to edify the church (i.e.; administration, encouragement, evangelism, giving, helping, mercy, shepherding and teaching). (John 3:5, 14:16-17, 26, 15:26-27, 16:7-15; Acts 1:8, 5:3-4; Romans 8:9, 14; I Corinthians 2:10-11, 6:11, 19, 12:4-13; II Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 5:16-18, 22-23; Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30, 5:18-21, Rom 12:1-8, I Cor. 12-14, Eph. 4, 1Pet 4:10)

## **6. The Creation and Fall of Man**

Man was created by God in His own image and is not the product of evolution; he fell into sin through personal disobedience to the revealed will of God; and as a result, all mankind is sinful in nature and practice, is unable to save himself and faces eternal separation from God. (Genesis 1:26-28, 2:7, 18-24, 3:1-24, 9:6; Matthew 19:4; Mark 7:21-23; John 8:42-44; Romans 1:18, 3:10, 23, 5:1; Ephesians 2:1-3)

## **7. The Salvation of Man**

Eternal salvation from sin, death and hell is the free gift of God's grace and is based solely upon man's personal faith and belief in Jesus Christ. He voluntarily died as a substitutionary sacrifice for our sins and arose bodily from the dead, thus guaranteeing our own resurrection to eternal life. This salvation is not received by, nor based on, any sacrament, merit, or good work on our part. This one who receives Christ's salvation is eternally secure. (John 1:11-13, 3:16, 5:24, 10:28-30, 14:6; Acts 16:31; Romans 3:23-26, 5:8, 6:23, 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 7:24-25; I Peter 1:18-19, I John 5:11-13)

## **8. The Destiny of Man**

At death, the redeemed pass immediately into the presence of Christ and there remain in joyful fellowship until their bodily resurrection unto life. The unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades where they are kept under punishment until their bodily resurrection resulting in damnation. (Daniel 12:2; Luke 16:22-23, 23:43; II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 3:10, 11, 21; Revelation 20:11-15)

## **9. The Nature and Organization of the Church**

All who have placed their faith in Christ are united together immediately by the Holy Spirit in one spiritual body, the Church, of which Christ is the Head. In addition, the members of this one spiritual body are directed to associate themselves together in local church assemblies. (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:46-47; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 10:25)

These local independent churches are given the needed authority and scriptural guidelines by God for worship, administration, edification and exhortation. The officers at BHCC serving under Christ and over the church are pastors and deacons. (Acts 6:1-6, I Corinthians 14:40; Ephesians 4:11-12; I Thess. 5:12-14; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-5)

## **10. The Ordinances of the Church**

Two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the triune God. This ordinance, being a command of Christ, is recognized as a prerequisite for membership in the local church. Likewise, the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His atoning death. These two ordinances are to be observed until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 2:41, 10:47-48; I Corinthians 11:23-29)

## **11. Future Events**

One of the coming great events in the fulfillment of prophecy concerning the church is the personal, bodily return of the Lord to remove from the earth His waiting church and to reward them according to their works. (John 14:2-3; Romans 14:10-12; I Corinthians 3:11-15, 15:51-53, II Corinthians 5:10; I Thessalonians 4:15-17; Titus 2:11-13; Revelation 3:10)

Another event yet to come is the seven year period of tribulation during which the judgments of God will be poured out upon the unbelieving world. These judgments will climax with the return of Christ in glory to the earth. He will destroy His enemies and restore Israel to her land. (Daniel 9:27, 12:1; Jeremiah 30:7; Matthew 24:15-31, 25:31-46; II Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 16:1-19, 21, 19:1-21)

Christ will then establish His thousand-year kingdom in which the saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth. (Deuteronomy 30:1-10; Isaiah 11:1-16, 65:17-25; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Revelation 19:11, 20:1-6) At the close of the thousand year reign the unsaved dead will be raised and committed to eternal punishment and the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God in the New Heavens and the New Earth. (Mark 9:43-48; I Corinthians 15:24-28; II Thessalonians 1:9; II Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 20:11-15, 21:1-4, 22:5, 11)

## **12. BHCC's Position on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25.) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4.) 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 (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10.)

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11.)

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) 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 Bright Hope Community Church.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Bright Hope Community Church as a representative of the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Christian community in general, it is imperative that all members and those who serve at BHCC agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22.)

**BRIGHT HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
**ESSENTIAL GUIDELINES AND BELIEFS**  
**Statement of Practice...How We Function**

**Article 4 – How We Function**

The following Essential Guidelines and Beliefs (also known as Guidelines) concern how we function and are for the purpose of outlining the internal organization and operation of Bright Hope Community Church. This statement does not exhaust the extent of our organizational structure. We do believe, however, that the foregoing statement accurately represents the present practice of our church, and is therefore, binding upon all members of Bright Hope Community Church. At the same time we want it to be understood that these Guidelines look to the Holy Scriptures for our instruction.

**A. Membership**

1. Privilege of membership.
  - a. We believe that once an individual makes a commitment to be a member of Bright Hope Community Church he or she becomes part of a team with an exciting adventure before them. There will be opportunities for corporate worship, loving and caring fellowship, service, the discovery and use of spiritual gifts, and mutual accountability. Bright Hope members, being led by God, may start up, organize, and lead specific ministries that reflect BHCC's overall Mission Statement (Introducing people to Jesus Christ and assisting believers in becoming passionate followers of Him) and that have been approved by church leadership.
  - b. Believers who are non-members may actively serve in BHCC's ministries except in leadership positions.
  - c. The membership functions as a body under the headship of Jesus Christ and the direction of the pastor as the under-shepherd with the assistance and counsel of the deacons. Determination of the internal affairs of the church is an ecclesiastical matter and is determined exclusively by the church's own organizational procedures. Members may not vote to initiate action, but rather to confirm and ratify the direction of the church as determined by the pastor and deacons.
  - d. It will be the privilege of each active member of the church, who is at least 18 years of age, to vote on the calling of a pastor and the office of deacon, for issues of membership, the annual church budget, the purchase or sale of real estate, and amendments to the church documents. Younger members may vote on other areas at the discretion of the pastor and deacons.
  - e. Each area listed above in pt.(d) will require a simple majority vote of those active members present and constituting a quorum. A quorum will consist of 30% of active voting members. The exception to this rule is the calling of a pastor, which will require at least a three-fourths affirmative vote of those active members present and constituting a quorum.
2. Members (and serving non-members) are held accountable to what we have agreed upon as a church in the Essential Guidelines and Beliefs.
3. The composition of the membership of Bright Hope Community Church shall consist of believers in Jesus Christ who upon their confession of faith in Jesus Christ, have been baptized by immersion; have read and are in agreement with the Essential Guidelines and Beliefs; have given evidence of a teachable spirit and a desire to live a holy life.
4. The admission of members.
  - a. By testimony of faith, having previously been baptized by immersion following his or her salvation.
  - b. By water baptism (immersion) as a believer in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord.
  - c. By a letter of recommendation from another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice or other letter of good standing from the prior church as long as the applicant has been baptized by immersion (discussion of other modes of baptism in relationship to conscience and understanding and willingness to have a teachable spirit towards the biblical instruction of BHCC in regards to immersion baptism – this does not include Baptismal Regeneration) following their profession of faith.
  - d. By restoration upon recommendation of the pastor and deacons, after the excluded person has given evidence of honest repentance and made full confession of wrong doing before the church membership.
5. The process of admission into membership.
  - a. Complete the application for membership in total.
  - b. Attend membership classes.
  - c. Meet with the Membership Team (Deacon(s) for an interview and to share personal testimony.

- d. Be recommended to the church membership by the Membership Team and be approved by majority vote of the active membership as stated in section (2d) above.
  - e. Be baptized by immersion if applicable.
  - f. Be presented with a membership certificate and be extended the "right hand of fellowship" following a Sunday worship service.
6. The classification of members.
- a. An active member is someone who is faithfully fulfilling the church's Essential Guidelines and Beliefs.
  - b. A member who is inactive is someone who is not faithfully fulfilling the church's Essential Guidelines and Beliefs as determined by the pastor and deacons. Once this determination has been made and the individual has been informed, he or she will no longer have the privilege of serving in a church ministry, attending a church business or information meeting, or voting on church business. The pastor and deacons will then initiate a meeting with the member in question in an attempt to encourage them and restore them to their commitments. If this proves to be of no avail, after patient instruction and prayer, the member in question will be removed from membership and the membership will be informed. People who will not be considered as inactive members will be, but not limited to, college students, military personnel, shut-ins, missionaries, and evangelists.
  - c. An associate member is someone, who having membership in a church of like faith and practice, finds it impractical to change his or her membership (such as temporary residence or employment), yet desires opportunity for service. These situations will be reviewed by the Membership Team and recommendations will be made to the active church membership in accordance with normal membership requirements. These individuals will have all the privileges of membership, except the right to vote or hold an elected office.
7. The discipline of members.
- a. There are times when the church must exercise their biblical responsibility of disciplining its members. This is never a comfortable action and many times, it can provoke negative attitudes from within the church body. Many people misunderstand church discipline, therefore, we believe it is necessary to carefully outline both the biblical teaching and steps applied by Bright Hope Community Church in these situations.
  - b. The objectives for church discipline are to: restore an erring brother in Christ, honor and obey God, remove defilement of sin from the church body, and restrain others from sin (Galatians 6:1, James 5:19-20, II Corinthians 2:9, I Corinthians 5:6, II Timothy 2:14-21, I Timothy 5:20).
  - c. The biblical reasons for church discipline are: false doctrine, immorality, a disorderly walk, divisive spirit within the church, and an unrepentant attitude towards sin (I Timothy 6:1-5, II Timothy 2:16-17, I Corinthians 5, II Thessalonians 3:6-15, Romans 16:17-18, Titus 3:10, Matthew 18:15-17).
  - d. The biblical attitudes when conducting church discipline are as follows: Personal and spiritual consistency, humility, and meekness; a committed love for the individual involved in the sin; a firm and uncompromising stand against sin; quickness to grant forgiveness of those who repent and confess; and a willingness to take an active role in the restoration of the repentant individual (II Thessalonians 3:15, Titus 1:13, Luke 17:3-4, Ephesians 4:32, Galatians 6:1,2).
  - e. The practical steps in carrying out discipline/reconciliation of a church member.
    - 1e. The Discipline/Reconciliation Team will consist of the pastor and deacons. It is specifically directed that these men, in carrying out the above objectives for church discipline, move carefully yet firmly in protecting the peace and purity of the church. Any intentional disruption of a worship service is not acceptable and may result in the removal of the privilege of attendance. It is also recognized that God specifically directs these men based upon their biblically appointed office to care and watch out for the spiritual character of the church and individual members (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17). It should also be understood that there will be times, due to liability, the sensitivity of the discipline situation and the need to protect all parties involved, that the full disclosure of all the details pertaining to the discipline of the individual(s) may not be in the best interest of the church membership. If the pastor or a deacon is the subject of a disciplinary matter he will not be permitted to sit as a member of the Discipline/Reconciliation Team and shall be entitled to the same steps as other members and be subject to the same discipline and reconciliation process.
    - 2e. 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, testimony, and church unity, he is to go alone to the offending party(ies) and seek to restore his brother or sister. 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 (Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1).
    - 3e. If the member in question does not repent or reconciliation of the issue is not reached, a second member (spiritually mature), or either a deacon or the pastor may accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter. This should also be preceded by self-examination, prayer, and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration (Matthew 18:16).

- 4e. If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (2e) and (3e) have been taken the Discipline/Reconciliation Team shall hear the matter. If the matter is not resolved during the meeting with the Discipline/Reconciliation Team then the member in question will be placed on "disciplinary probation" and the membership will be informed (Matthew 18:17). Disciplinary probation will result in the individual no longer having the privilege of serving in a ministry of the church, attending a business or information meeting, or voting on any church business.
  - 5e. If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (2e), (3e), and (4e) have been taken, and the members of the church have had time to pray, admonish, and encourage the member in question, then the individual who refuses to repent and be restored is to be removed from the membership of the church upon recommendation of the Discipline/Reconciliation Team (Matthew 18:17, I Corinthians 5).
  - 6e. No matter may be heard by the Discipline/Reconciliation Team or the church unless the steps outlined in the subsections (2e) and (3e) have been taken, except in the case of public offense as determined by the pastor and deacons.
  - 7e. If an unrepentant offending party is removed from the membership of the church, he is to be viewed as an unbeliever. All contact with him or her from that point forward must be for the sake of repentance and restoration except in the case where a family member is the subject of disciplinary action (Matthew 18:17).
  - 7f. If at any time during the above process confidential information is breached by the member/s under discipline/restoration in a way that distorts the truth of the incident and may cause harm to the Name of Christ, the reputation of BHCC, its members, or its leadership, the pastor and deacons have the right and responsibility to inform the membership of the true facts pertinent to the incident for the purpose of the protection and purity of the church, and the integrity of its leadership.
8. The termination of membership.
- a. Death - (no action required)
  - b. Resignation by request - Any member upon written request to the church will be removed from the membership and the membership will be informed. Any individual that is the subject of church disciplinary action making such a request must understand that a favorable recommendation will not be given to any other church until they have repented of their sin and sought forgiveness.
  - c. Letter of recommendation - A majority vote of active members present and constituting a quorum may grant a letter of recommendation to any member who is an active member and who wishes to unite with any other Bible-preaching church of like faith and practice, as determined by BHCC.
  - d. Inactive - If there is no favorable response, as determined by the pastor and deacons, by the individual after an attempt has been made to restore them to their commitments.
  - e. Discipline - As outlined above in (pt. 8, sub pt. e., subsection 5e).

## **B. Church Officers**

### **1. Elected and Appointed Officers**

The elected officers of this church will be the pastor and deacons. The appointed officers will be the president (deacon chairman), church treasurer, church clerk, and financial secretary. All appointed offices will be selected from the membership who is in good standing, with the exception of president. The pastor and deacons may also create and appoint new officers, other teams, coordinators and ministry groups as deemed necessary.

### **2. Qualifications**

Elected and appointed officers of this church will be at least twenty-one years of age. All officers are required to meet the expectations of all members as outlined in the Essential Guidelines and Beliefs. Elected officers will be measured by higher standards highlighted in I Timothy 3, where the wife, home, and family relationships must be considered, as well as their individual qualifications. All officers should be spiritually mature, of unquestioned Christian character, loyal to the Word of God, dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the spiritual welfare of this church. They should be faithful in attendance and participate in regular and special meetings as well as business sessions of the church. No person will hold more than two offices at the same time. All new officers will assume office on the first Sunday following the annual meeting.

### **3. Retention of Records**

The records of all officers are considered to be church property and will be maintained in good order. These records are to be given to the succeeding officers as soon as practical for safekeeping in a prudent place.

### **4. Dismissal of Officers**

Any officer unable or unwilling to fulfill the duties of his office, who fails to meet the qualifications (pt.2) during his tenure, or who is unable to support the pastor should resign from office. If any officer can no longer support or meet the requirements of the Essential Guidelines and Beliefs of this church, he or she will be removed from office by the pastor and deacons.

## C. Pastor

### 1. Qualifications (Article 4, Section B, pt.2)

The candidate, before he is called, will be required to state his acceptance of and adherence to the Essential Guidelines and Beliefs of this church to the Pulpit Committee. Any differences which he has concerning these documents should be submitted to the committee in writing.

### 2. Selection

The deacons of the church will serve as the Pulpit Committee. As often as it may become necessary to call a pastor, the Pulpit Committee will without unnecessary delay begin the process of evaluating potential candidates. If the candidate has served in other churches, his ministry there will be explored. If after examining him the Pulpit Committee desires to consider him as a candidate for the pastorate, he will be invited to come and preach and meet with the leadership and the church. His candidacy is to be announced to the church prior to his coming.

### 3. Call and Term

- a. The candidate for the pastorate will be extended a call at a special meeting of the church called for that purpose. Notice of this meeting will be given on two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting.
- b. The pastor will be elected for an indeterminate term. He will be chosen by at least a three-fourths affirmative vote of the active church members present and voting. To avoid confusion, only one candidate for the pastorate will be considered at one time.
- c. The pastor will give the church not less than thirty days notice of his intention to discontinue as pastor.

### 4. Responsibilities

- a. The pastor is to be considered the chief administrator of the church and have spiritual oversight with a servant's attitude toward this church. The pastor's duties will include, but are not limited to, preaching the Gospel, feeding the flock and equipping the membership for the work of the ministry. The pastor will conduct and have in his charge the stated services of public worship. He will administer the ordinances and he is to perform the usual duties of a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (i.e. counseling, weddings, funerals, etc.).
- b. The pastor will moderate all business meetings of the church and deacons. In his absence he may appoint a member of the deacons to moderate. When the pastor is unavailable to appoint a moderator, the president of the corporation (Deacon Chairman) will moderate or appoint a moderator from the deacons.
- c. The pastor will secure speakers and programs for the church with cooperation and counsel of the deacons.

### 5. Compensation

The deacons will review the pastor's compensation on an annual basis. This review will be submitted as a part of the church budget prior to the annual church business meeting.

### 6. Vacation and Days Off

It is expected that the pastor will take an annual vacation. The time and extent of the vacation will be agreed upon by the pastor and deacons. It is also expected that he will take at least one day off a week as well as be granted time off for normal holidays.

### 7. Absence for (Pastoral and Ministry Development)

Absence from the services of the church will be by mutual consent of the pastor and deacons. The pastor will be encouraged to attend, at the church's expense, conferences or church ministry-related trips and other opportunities that will facilitate continuing his education and personal enrichment. The church should allocate funds to provide for these growth opportunities for the pastor in the annual budget if possible.

### 8. Sabbatical

Every seven years of service, the pastor will be granted a paid sabbatical of four months, provided adequate funds are available to support the ministry and operational costs of BHCC including pulpit fill during the extent of the sabbatical.

## **D. Deacons**

### **1. Composition**

The number of deacons must not be less than three. It will never exceed the number of "Spirit-filled" men available who meet the qualifications listed in Acts 6, I Timothy 3, Titus 1 and Article 4, Section B, pt.2.

### **2. Nominations**

The membership will be encouraged to submit in writing potential nominees to the Nominating Team (pastor/deacons). Any names submitted less than two weeks prior to the annual meeting will not be considered. The Nominating Team will make the final determination on those to be considered as potential candidates. Each potential candidate will be interviewed by the team as to his assent to be a candidate, affirmation of the Essential Guidelines and Beliefs, acceptance of biblical qualifications for the office of deacon, and meeting of leadership standards (Article 4, Section B, pt. 2). Names appearing on the ballot must be presented to the membership at least one week in advance of the annual meeting as a matter of information and prayer. Names appearing on the ballot will be the only names considered. There will be no nominations from the floor.

### **3. Election and Term**

The active membership of the church will elect the deacons from the ballot submitted by the Nominating Team at the annual meeting. They will serve terms of three years arranged to end alternately. A deacon may serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms. Following the two consecutive three-year terms served he must take one year off before he can serve another term. Election will be by written ballot and tallied by appointed tellers at the meeting.

### **4. Responsibilities**

- a. It will be the duty of the deacons to assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church; to be his counselors; to exercise special and prudent care over the church membership, seeking out and ministering to those who need assistance. The deacons will assist the pastor in the administration of the ministries and activities of the church as in the succeeding paragraphs of Sections E, F, and G in Section 6/Trustees below.
- b. The deacons will participate in administering the ordinances of baptism and communion.

### **5. Meetings**

- a. The deacons will convene on a monthly basis to transact an agenda that reflects the overall responsibilities entrusted to them. This regular meeting will be established by the pastor and deacons. The pastor or the president of the corporation (deacon chairman) may call additional meetings.
- b. The pastor will preside at all meetings unless he chooses to appoint a deacon to preside. No meetings will be held without the pastor unless agreed upon by the pastor and deacons. A majority of the full number will constitute a quorum. The secretary of the deacons will keep a faithful record of any important work, acts or transactions performed by the deacons. The secretary of the deacons will supply this record of minutes to the church clerk to be included with all church business meetings, thus compiling a complete and orderly church record. The deacons will make a full report of their activities to the church at each annual meeting.

### **6. Trustees**

- a. The deacons will serve as trustees of this church, representing this corporation as its agent.
- b. The trustees will not have authority to buy, sell, lease, give away, or dispose of in any manner church property that exceeds \$2500 in value, or to mortgage or encumber the same with debts that exceed the above amount, except as the church will order by a corporate act.

## **E. Other Officers and Staff**

### **1. Treasurer**

- a. The treasurer of the church will be appointed annually by the deacons from the office of deacons. He will cooperate with the financial secretary and assistant treasurer in counting and recording all monies received by the church. A weekly record of income and disbursements, specifying distribution into various funds, will be maintained with a copy to be received by the pastor.
- b. The treasurer will perform his duties in accordance with the giving principles of the church as outlined in the Statement of Position...What We Believe, sound accounting principles, and any written instructions from the deacons or Auditing Committee.
- c. All financial transactions are to be kept in permanent records. Written quarterly and annual reports will be submitted to the church.
- d. The treasurer, financial secretary or assistant treasurer will deposit all church receipts in the bank, including monies received from within the church or from other individuals, with receipts from all sources being recorded on the weekly reports and books of record.
- e. All disbursement of funds will be by check signed by the treasurer or other authorized officer in his absence.

- f. The president or secretary of the corporation will assume the responsibilities of the treasurer in his absence, except that he may not simultaneously perform the duties of financial secretary.
2. Financial Secretary
    - a. The financial secretary will be appointed annually by the pastor and deacons following the annual meeting of the church.
    - b. He or she will assist the treasurer in counting and recording all monies received by the church. He is to keep an accurate record of all giving through the individual envelope system and cooperate with the treasurer in guarding the records of individual giving as a sacred trust. A report of annual church contributions for each participant will be provided in January of each year.
    - c. The president or secretary of the corporation will assume the responsibilities of the financial secretary in his absence, except that he may not simultaneously perform the duties of the treasurer.
  3. Church Clerk
    - a. The church clerk will keep a record of all church business meetings. He/she will keep a record of receptions and terminations of membership, including baptisms. He/She will be responsible for notification of other churches relative to church membership. He/She may not release the membership roll of this church to any outside group or individual for other than official church business.
    - b. He/She will make a full written report of all official church actions at the annual meeting of the church.
  4. Vocational Staff
    - a. Every effort will be made to provide qualified personnel for the ministries of the church through the working membership. When it is deemed necessary to invite vocational staff (such as pastoral associates, interns, secretaries, etc.) the pastor will have the final authority, with the input of the deacons, to establish such staff positions, and to dismiss the same. (Pastoral) Staff members and other staff members who are involved in confidential information pertaining to BHCC's ministry will be required to become, if not already, members of the church. They will be under the direct supervision of the pastor and deacons who will prepare an appropriate, written job description for each staff member.
    - b. New staff member's salaries will be established by the pastor and deacons and a recommendation will be submitted to the membership for its approval. These salaries will be reviewed annually by the pastor and deacons and will be submitted as part of the church budget prior to the annual church business meeting.

## **F. Ministry Teams**

1. Purpose
 

Ministry is the work of the church. All of BHCC's ministries originate out of necessity and God's leading in an individual (or group of individuals) to begin such ministry. This structural paradigm allows the important dynamic of the spiritual gift of leadership to be unleashed.

Effective churches believe that the role of God's people is to minister to people by living out their spiritual gifts instead of running the church by sitting on committees and making decisions about what can or cannot be done. The pastor has a responsibility to keep the church doctrinally sound and headed in the right direction while the day-in, day-out ministry is fulfilled by the people who are actually being the ministers of the church (Eph. 4:11-16).

Ministry teams are a group of people with similar gifts and abilities who are committed and called by God to a specific ministry that supports the purposes and mission of BHCC. Each individual ministry team is self-directed but does not operate independent of the overall plan, purpose and philosophy of BHCC. Teams are individually accountable to one another and to the mission of BHCC according to our Essential Guidelines and Beliefs.

### **Principles for Serving God and Others**

---

- We encourage individuals who identify a need, to seek and start new ministries as they are led by God.
- Our desire is to prepare people for service by pre-service training...but on-the-job training is more beneficial...we learn best by doing.
- Most ministries require a specified length of commitment for the benefit of those serving and being served...but we allow people to change ministries gracefully, without guilt.
- We encourage people to serve primarily in the areas where they are most gifted. However, in order for our church to be effective it is also important for our members to serve in areas where they are needed, even if not necessarily gifted. It may be necessary for some members to carry multiple ministry responsibilities.

- It is our goal that every member has some on-going ministry involvement, although time commitment will depend on individual life circumstances. We hope that every member will continually seek *greater* ministry challenges and have *growing* commitment to ministry involvement.

All team leaders and members will be active members of the church who are willing to faithfully fulfill the responsibilities of their ministry.

## 2. Ministry Development Process

- Start with a need. A ministry should not be considered unless it meets a specific need in the life of BHCC.
- Match the need with our mission. A ministry must not only meet a need, it must also support the purposes, mission, and core values of our church. Financial resources should be allocated strategically to cover the purpose and mission of the ministry.
- Passionate leaders. Leaders must be spirit-led individuals who have a heart burdened for their particular ministry area.
- Build according to giftedness. The ministry team must be built according to their gifts which match the particular area of ministry.
- Review regularly. All ministries should be evaluated regularly to determine whether they continue to meet a need, serve the purposes of BHCC, continue to be well-led, and have the necessary team of spirit-gifted people in place.

## G. Missions

### 1. Purpose

One of the primary objectives of Bright Hope Community Church is to spread the gospel in our community, our nation and to the most remote parts of the earth (Acts 1:8 model). Therefore, we will be aggressive in our efforts to promote evangelistic missions. We will accomplish this goal through prayer support, financial support, missions' trips, missionary conferences, and other activities that focus on missions. Not only will we send missionaries into the world, but we will also disciple and encourage all our members to be willing to serve in missions as well.

### 2. Support Policies

- The policy of this church is to support missionaries and mission agencies who hold to the inerrancy and infallibility of the Scriptures and whose primary objective is establishing indigenous, self-supporting churches, schools, hospitals, orphanages, and similar ministries. Each agency will be evaluated based upon their beliefs and operational philosophies.
- The church may also make contributions to Christian schools, social agencies, literature services, camps, and youth organizations that are known to be passionate in their evangelistic pursuits. These contributions will be in addition to the missions' budget.

### 3. Supported Missionaries

- Support for missionaries will be based upon their need and our leading and ability to support.
- The missionary will be prayerfully considered for support after presenting their ministry to BHCC.
- After consultation with the mission agency under which the missionary is serving, the amount of support and date when support is to begin will be included in the support recommendation by the church. All missionary support will be reviewed and approved annually in concurrence with the preparation of the annual budget. The support of the missionary may be discontinued upon recommendation of the pastor and deacons by a majority vote of active members present and voting at a properly called business meeting of the church.

## H. Financial Policy

### 1. Gifts and Offerings

We will give in accordance with the Scriptural plan by which the work of the Lord is to be accomplished by His people (3 John 7, Acts 20:35, Matthew 6:19-21, I Corinthians 16:1,2, II Corinthians 8:5, Ezra 4:2-0). Gifts and offerings will be considered to be our plan of finance. BHCC members will be encouraged to progress in their giving and stewardship according to the principle of grace-giving (II Cor. 9:7,8; 8:3,4).

### 2. Unified Budget

A single treasury system will be our method of finance. There will be only one treasury in the church that all monies will pass through. There will be an orderly recording of all monies given to the church.

### 3. Special Offerings

Designated offerings will be taken for the Deacon's Benevolence Fund, love offerings, and other special offerings and/or funds as deemed appropriate by the pastor and deacons.

### 4. Budget Year

The budget year of the church will begin February 1<sup>st</sup> and end January 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **I. Meetings of the Church**

### **1. Use of Church Facilities and Name**

Use of the church buildings other than for church-sponsored activities will be according to BHCC's Facilities Use Guidelines. All gatherings off the church property held in the name of Bright Hope Community Church shall be subject to the approval of the pastor and deacons and must be in compliance with BHCC's Essential Guidelines and Beliefs.

### **2. Meetings of Public Worship**

- a. Public worship services - Public worship services will be held on Sunday, the Lord's Day, or any other day or evening as deemed necessary by the pastor and deacons.
- b. Other Ministries/Services – Other ministries/services may be established based upon the fulfillment of our Essential Guidelines and Beliefs.
- c. The Lord's Supper/Communion will be observed on a regular basis. No one who has been indwelt by the Spirit of God in Jesus Christ (Romans 8:9) will be excluded from participation except in certain cases of church discipline (I Corinthians 5:11,12). Unleavened bread/crackers and grape juice will be the elements used to represent the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

### **3. Business Meetings**

- a. All members should consider the importance of active participation in business meetings. Business meetings will be for active church members only. The annual meeting of the church should be held in the month of January. Public notice will be given two successive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting. The agenda will include the election of church officers, presentation and approval of the annual church budget, annual ministry team reports of the treasurer, church clerk and other areas of ministry as requested, as well as any other proper business
- b. Special business meetings may be called at any time by the pastor and deacons providing public notice be given on the preceding Sunday. The following meetings require a two Sunday notice: the calling of a pastor, electing of deacons, or amending the Essential Guidelines and Beliefs.
- c. Guidelines for voting are outlined in the Essential Guidelines and Beliefs...How We Function, Article 4, Section A (Membership).

## **J. Dissolution**

In the event that the congregation of Bright Hope Community Church should move to dissolve as a corporation by corporate action, all of its debts and liabilities will be fully satisfied. All remaining assets or holdings will be not be divided among the members or any other individuals, but will be forwarded as a contribution to an organization that will multiply our convictions and be passionate in their pursuit of evangelizing the world. They must be in full agreement in doctrine and practice with BHCC's Essential Guidelines and Beliefs, as well as, conform to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Code).

## **K. Additions and Deletions**

We believe there is wisdom in the periodic evaluation and review of BHCC's Essential Guidelines and Beliefs. The purpose is to ensure both relevance and an accurate reflection of our Biblical purpose as a church. The Essential Guidelines and Beliefs may be amended, altered or repealed by a majority vote of the active members present and voting. All proposed changes must be submitted in writing to the pastor and deacons. If after review and study the pastor and deacons find the change to be necessary, they will make a recommendation at least two weeks prior to voting on any such changes.

- 
- The original documents were fully approved and accepted on November 4, 2001.
  - This entire group of three documents, renamed "Bright Hope Community Church – Essential Guidelines and Beliefs" and all of its changes were fully approved and unanimously accepted on January 28, 2007.
  - Amended upon unanimous vote at Q2 business meeting, June 8, 2008 (Article 4 A. Membership, 1a. and the addition of 1b.).
  - Amended upon unanimous vote at August 21, 2016 business meeting; Statement of Position...What We Believe: page 3, added Item 12, BHCC's Position on Heterosexuality and Homosexuality (Same Sex Relationships).