

**Huntington Community Church**  
**Huntington, WV**

**Constitution & By-Laws**  
*(completed August 16, 2020)*

**Article I: Name**

1.1 The name of this church will be Huntington Community Church (HCC).

**Article 2: Purpose**

This church exists to glorify the triune God: God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; II Timothy 3:14-17); to teach the full counsel of God (Acts 20:27); to provide opportunities for worship through expository preaching of the Word and Biblical teaching (John 4:23-24; Colossians 3:15-16); to make disciples and share the gospel of Jesus Christ with Huntington and the world (Matthew 5:16, 28:18-20; Romans 10:14-15); and to equip, train, and encourage members to lead lives of worship, pleasing to God (Ephesians 1:4; Colossians 1:22-23).

In order to obey the commandments given to the church in Scripture, we preach the gospel (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15), administer baptisms (Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:1-4), and share in the Lord's Supper with fellow believers (Luke 22:19; I Corinthians 11:23-29). We love one another (John 13:34-35) and, in doing so, practice both formative and corrective discipline as it is laid out in Scripture for the purpose of mutual edification, restoration, and continued molding of each of us into Christlikeness (Matthew 18:15-20; I Thessalonians 5:14-20; I Timothy 5:1-2, 17-2).

We hold to the following principles: to always prioritize the importance of an individual's relationship with the Father and the expression of that faith within the corporate body of believers (John 3:3, 14:6; Revelation 3:20), to love one another and our community well by ministering to the spiritual and physical needs of others (John 13:34-35, 15:12; James 1:27) and supporting the growth of individuals, couples, and families according to the Biblical design of men and women (Ephesians 5:15-6:4; Colossians 3:18-25; Titus 2:1-15); and to train up confident, disciplined, discipled believers equipped to share the Gospel, living their lives on mission for the Lord, in our communities and across the world (Matthew 28:19; Romans 10:14-15; Ephesians 4:11-12; II Timothy 2:2; I Peter 2:9, 3:15).

**Article 3: Membership**

3.1 Qualifications

Church membership is a covenant relationship between individuals who have been accepted into fellowship at Huntington Community Church. The Bible teaches that the early church assembled together, prayed together, exhorted one another, and shared with one another (Acts 1:12-26, Acts 2:44, Hebrews 10:25).

To qualify for membership in Huntington Community Church, a person must be a baptized believer in Jesus Christ (having been baptized following conversion), who demonstrates genuine repentance and faith, as confirmed by a life of good works (Acts 10:48, James 2:26). A member should be in agreement with the Statement of Faith of Huntington Community Church (I Cor. 1:10).

Membership process involves completion of the church introductory class, submission and review of a faith story, and a meeting with an elder of the church, followed by an affirmation from the church body.

### 3.2 Duties and Privileges of Membership

Membership involves obedience to Scripture, corporate worship, faithful service, and personal accountability. Scriptures contain numerous passages that involve how we are to interact with one another. These passages find their application within the body of Christ (general) and within a body of unified, committed believers (specific).

Members are to:

Love one another (John 13:34). Show honor to one another (Romans 12:10). Live in harmony with one another (Romans 12:16). Build up one another (Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11). Welcome one another (Romans 15:7). Instruct one another (Romans 15:14). Admonish one another (Colossians 3:16). Greet one another (Romans 16:16). Serve one another (Galatians 5:13). Bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). Forgive one another (Ephesians 4:32). Bear with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2). Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15, 25). Be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32). Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19). Submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21). Consider others more significant than yourselves (Philippians 2:3). Look to the interests of one another (Philippians 2:4). Encourage one another (I Thessalonians 4:18). Exhort one another (Hebrews 3:13). Stir up one another to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24). Show hospitality to one another without grumbling (I Peter 4:9). Employ the gifts that God has given us for the benefit of one another (I Peter 4:10). Clothe yourselves with humility towards one another (I Peter 5:5). Pray for one another (James 5:16). Confess your faults to one another (James 5:16). Each member will have the privilege and responsibility to attend members' meetings and vote on officer elections and all church matters submitted to a vote. Such matters include annual church budget, loan that exceeds twenty percent of church budget, disposition of church assets, merger or dissolution of church, constitutional amendments, and other decisions deemed major by church elders.

### 3.3 Renewal and Termination of Membership

Membership will be renewed yearly, if so desired. Membership will be terminated if the said members dies, transfers to a different church, or voluntarily resigns membership. Membership may also be terminated through a majority church vote as part of the church discipline process.

Students, who are members of another likeminded assembly, may be accepted as "student members" and will enjoy all rights and privileges of church membership, excluding voting rights. Younger students (< 18 years old) may also become members of the church and will enjoy all rights and privileges of church membership, excluding voting rights. Opportunities for discipleship and accountability will be provided to students of all ages.

## **Article 4: Gathering of the Church Body**

### 4.1 Corporate Worship

Corporate worship gatherings are to be established in both time and place by the governing elder staff.

Corporate worship gatherings must serve the above stated purpose for this church body.

Corporate worship services are to include the administration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism at frequencies deemed appropriate by the elder staff.

## 4.2 Member Meetings

All business meetings require a quorum of 30% of the current, cumulative voting membership population. In the event of extenuating circumstances, the option of digital participation is available for members, with the consent of a member of the board of elders.

The governing elders are to facilitate, at minimum, yearly business meetings for the discussion of church direction, budget, and finances, as well as other content deemed worthy of corporate discourse by the elder staff.

Further business meetings beyond the annual meeting may be called by the board of elders or 1/5 (20%) of the church members in good standing by request.

The business meeting date and agenda are to be communicated to the membership of the church, from the pulpit and any other means, no less than fourteen (14) days prior to the occurrence of the meeting. Elder and deacon staff are responsible for the dissemination of such information to the members as well as providing opportunity for the congregation to discuss, question, and become educated on the topics submitted for discussion.

In unusual circumstance or matters of utmost urgency, the 14-day notification provision may be waived by unopposed action by the gathered members at any regular worship service. This provision will be replaced with a two (2) day notification provision.

Members meetings are closed to non-members. This does not include non-member children of whom members are responsible.

## Article 5: Officers

### 5.1 Summary

The biblical offices in the church consist of elders and deacons/deaconess. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of clerk/secretary and treasurer. All officers (including administrative positions) must be members in good standing of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

All deacons and deaconesses must be a member of Huntington Community Church for at least two (2) years before the start of their term. All lay elders must be a member for at least three (3) years before the start of their term; pastoral hires may be exempt from this two-year requirement.

Any committee member must be a member in good standing of Huntington Community Church for at least one (1) year before the start of their term.

In the case of a vacancy in any office, except that of pastoral hires and staff members, the vacancy shall be filled by the nominating committee.

### 5.2.1 Elders

Scripture indicates that the responsibility for shepherding and leading the church under Jesus Christ belongs to the elders. As necessary, the Scriptures also provide for the appointment of deacons to serve the church, particularly in areas of ministry that may cause the elders to neglect their Biblical responsibilities (Acts 6:1-7).

The board of elders will appoint a chair, who will serve as moderator of meetings and as a leader within the group.

### 5.2.2 Elder Responsibilities

An elder of Huntington Community Church will:

- be responsible to manage or administrate the local church before Almighty God (Titus 1:7).
- be responsible to be a guardian to the truth and to care for the welfare of the members of the local church in (I Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:7), as accountable to God (Hebrews 13:17).
- exercise leadership and authority in the local church as a member of the board of elders (I Timothy 3:4-5).
- be required to hold fast to the Scriptures and to be able to apply them to life situations (Titus 1:9).
- be required to reprove, rebuke and exhort according to the principles of Scripture as necessary (Titus 1:9, 13; 2 Timothy 3:16).
- be required to “feed the flock,” by ministering the Word of God whether publicly or privately (I Timothy 3:2, I Pet 5:2-3; Acts 20:28).
- be an example to the membership of the church (I Peter 5:3).
- be required to “shepherd” (pastor) the members of the local church (Acts 20:28).
- oversee the administration of the ordinances of the Lord’s Supper and baptism.

### 5.2.3 Elder Qualifications

Elders shall meet the qualifications and standards of the Word of God prescribed for their office. They shall endeavor, by God’s grace, to live and serve in full conformity to the standards found in John 21:16; Heb. 13:17; I Tim. 3:1-7; I Peter 5:1-3, and Titus 1:5-9. Elders must be “able to teach,” must reflect the character of Christ which includes caring for the flock, a willingness to serve, a lack of greed for money, a refusal to lord it over the flock, an exemplary life, blamelessness, being the husband of one wife, and the ability to manage a household well. As with the minister, an elder also is not overbearing, quick tempered, or given to much wine; should not be violent or willing to pursue dishonest gain. Additionally, an elder should be reputable within his community.

In accordance with I Corinthians 7:32-35, HCC recognizes and appreciates the ability of unmarried members to serve in this role.

### 5.2.4 Elder Selection

The elders shall serve for a three (3) year term on the board of elders and may serve consecutively, if the result of inactivity would be vacancy. Should the need arise for an additional term, a congregational vote will be required for the approval of the elder’s consecutive service term. Elders should serve until they have completed their designated term, resign, or voluntarily become inactive for a season.

A teaching elder of Huntington Community Church will serve alongside the board of elders as a continuous member for the duration of his employ.

The selection process for elders shall be as follows:

- The current elders shall provide the congregation with Biblical teaching concerning the tasks and qualifications of elders.
- The elders and/or congregation shall submit names of candidates for elder to the board of elders for their consideration.
- In order to continue in the process, a candidate for elder must meet the criteria found in Scripture for the role of the elder (listed in Section I) and be a member of Huntington Community Church for three (3) years.
- The candidate should perform extensive self-evaluation based upon the Scriptural teaching concerning elders and determine their own desire to pursue the elder role and its assumed responsibilities.
- The elders shall interview those candidates who remain in the process following the self-evaluation.
- The elders shall recommend to the congregation the candidates they believe best fulfill the Biblical requirements for elders.
- The congregation shall then evaluate the recommended nominees. Any concerns shall be taken up first with the candidate in question and then with the current elders.
- Following congregational evaluation, and contingent upon elder evaluation, a time of dedication, congregational affirmation, and prayer shall be held for the new elders during a regular church service.

An elder may be dismissed following a recommendation of the remaining members of the board of elders and a resulting a majority vote of the congregation (I Tim. 5:19). In the event of an unclear recommendation from the board of elders (for example, a 1:1 tie or an inability to establish a majority), the deacons/deaconesses will hear and determine the viability of the recommendation. At that point, a business meeting will be held and a congregational vote will take place.

Charges against an elder may be made to the board of elders and will follow the process above.

### 5.3 Deacons and Deaconess

The office of deacon is described in I Timothy 3:8-13. Deacons "...must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well" (I Timothy 3:8-12).

The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men and women who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6, these members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons and deaconesses. They shall be elected to one term lasting for a maximum of three (3) years and may only be elected to another term after one year.

Only men or women who have been an active member of HCC for at least two (2) years are eligible to serve.

The number of deacons and deaconesses shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and the call and qualifications of men and women in the church.

Deacons and deaconesses shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage the support of those able to help others and those with gifts of administration. The deacons and deaconesses may be organized in the most fitting way to accomplish the mission of the church. The body of deacons/deaconesses will appoint a chair, who will serve as moderator of meetings and as a leader within the group.

The deacons and deaconesses, at the behest of the elders, shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only.

The deacons and deaconesses, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

The selection of deacons/deaconesses will follow the Elections process outlined in Article 6.

In accordance with I Corinthians 7:32-35, HCC recognizes and appreciates the ability of unmarried members to serve in these roles.

#### 5.4 Church Committees

Church committees shall be formed as needed, with the consent of the board of elders, for successfully accomplishing the mission and purpose of the church. Church committee members shall be elected by the church from nominations presented by a Nominating Committee and nominations from the floor with the consent of the nominee.

The Nominating Committee will consist of the chair of each primary committee/group within the church (including Deacons/Deaconesses, Trustees, Missions, and Budget & Finance) working in conjunction with the board of elders, who will serve as ex-officio members.

All committees shall have a minimum of three (3) members with a chairperson and serve a three (3) year term. Any committee member elected to fill any vacancy shall serve the unexpired term of the position vacated. Each committee chairperson shall submit an annual budget request to the Budget and Finance Committee.

Any committee member must be a member in good standing of Huntington Community Church for at least one (1) year before the start of their term.

#### 5.5 Church Staff

This church shall employ or call staff as needed. The elders may hire additional staff to assist with pastoral ministry. For paid positions, approval will be required from the Budget and Finance committee. These shall not be pastors, though they may be recognized as elders should they be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation.

## 5.6 Administrative Assistant

It shall be the duty of the administrative assistant to maintain the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to provide reports as requested by the pastors, board of elders, deacons/deaconesses or the church. Responsibilities may include, but will not be limited to: administrative tasks, payroll, and supply orders.

Additionally, the administrative assistant will be responsible for maintaining a current calendar of property rentals, events, and other programs hosted by HCC. Please note that each of these events must be sponsored by an active member of HCC, in agreement with the Event Sponsorship form provided by the Trustees.

## 5.7 Treasurer

The treasurer, who shall not be an active pastor or a paid church staff member, will serve on the Budget and Finance Committee for a term of three (3) years. The treasurer shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as designated by the church. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the board of elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the church at regular members' meetings.

The Treasurer will work in conjunction with the Administrative Assistant to accomplish these tasks.

## 5.8 Trustees

At least three (3) trustees shall be elected by the church to hold in trust the property of the church.

They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property of the church without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action.

It shall be the function of the trustees to sign any, and all legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or lease of church property or any other legal documents requiring the signature of the trustees for and in behalf of the church.

The chair of the trustees will be responsible to oversee the administration of the calendar for building use, reservations, etc. as he or she sees fit.

## **Article 6: Elections**

Elections are the mode by which church leadership will be decided. Election decisions will be made by the voting members of the congregation. All candidates for church office shall be members of the church, who are in good standing, and who have been members for at least one year or longer as defined by the office.

Candidates may be nominated by church members during the nomination period yearly. The nominating period will be during the month of October each year. After review by Nominating Committee and confirmation of the members' interest in the given position, names of successful candidates for a given vacancy will be presented by the elders to the congregation for affirmation.

Candidates will be presented individually for election, rather than as part of a group. Those persons receiving an 80% affirmative vote will be declared elected to their respective position. Should a position become vacant prior to the end of a term, the Nominating Committee will use its discretion as to whether the position should be filled prior to the yearly nomination period. Should a position need to be filled, members will be informed in a timely manner for a special election to be held. Nominations will proceed in the same manner as the yearly election, but on a schedule delineated by the Nominating Committee.

## **Article 7: Church Discipline**

At Huntington Community Church, we love one another (John 13:34-35) and, in doing so, practice both formative and corrective discipline as it is laid out in Scripture for the purpose of mutual edification, restoration, and continued molding of each of us into Christlikeness (Matthew 18:15-20; I Thessalonians 5:14-20; I Timothy 5:1-2, 17-2).

Formative discipline is inherent to the preaching, teaching, and exercise of other ministries in the church. However, unrepentant sin calls for corrective discipline. The faithful practice of corrective church discipline is for the good of the member who has sinned and for the good of the church. It allows the church to be set apart from the world (I Peter 2:9; Ephesians 5:27), maintain our corporate witness (John 13:35; Matthew 5:13-16), and is ultimately for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (John 15:8-10; Ephesians 1:4; I Peter 2:12). It is not to be entered into lightly or rashly. The goal of corrective discipline is always the restoration, holiness, and good of the one being disciplined (Hebrews 12:1-11; Galatians 6:1). If the member remains unrepentant during this process, the member may be removed from the body in order to encourage their recognition of their need for salvation.

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties, guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church shall be subject to discipline according to Scripture (Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; I Corinthians 5:4-5; I Timothy 5:19-20). A person who evidences such habitual sin should be confronted in an initial one-on-one meeting. If needed, discipline will be escalated to meetings with two or three church members, deacons/deaconesses, or elders. When the escalated steps of discipline have been exhausted, the elders will disclose the matter to the church and consider removing a person from membership with the hope of eventual reconciliation and restoration.

In the event that the matter is brought before the church, it is desirable that a confession be made at an appointed meeting of the church, so that the church can freely extend forgiveness.

Those who have been removed from the body may be restored to fellowship when the church has determined that appropriate repentance has occurred, a public confession has been made, and they pursue restoration of their membership.

Restoration to fellowship, at any stage of corrective discipline, is not necessarily synonymous with restoration to any leadership position within the church.

## **Article 8: Budget & Finance**

A budget shall be approved by the church membership at the Annual Business Meeting in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of each calendar year. Each year the elders, after consultation with the deacons, the deaconesses, and the membership, shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented to the church membership two weeks prior to the Annual Business Meeting for questions and review. Congregational approval shall proceed, without amendment, as a single vote on the budget in its entirety.

The Budget and Finance Committee shall be composed of a minimum of members including the following:

- Treasurer
- Elder
- Deacon
- Deaconess
- Trustee
- Missions Committee Member

The Administrative Assistant will serve as an ex-officio member of the Committee, responsible for maintaining accurate minutes of the meetings; the Treasurer will have custody of and be responsible for all books, papers and documents pertaining to the Budget and Finance Committee.

The Budget and Finance Committee shall recommend to the church budget increases or decreases after consultation with respective committees or those with financial responsibilities. The Committee shall have the authority to modify proposed budget line items submitted by committees or staff personnel to stay within projected revenue.

The lay elders (excluding the Pastor) shall recommend any salary adjustments each year for the Pastor/Pastoral Staff. The Board of Elders (including staff elder(s)) shall recommend adjustments for the support staff each year. The Budget and Finance Committee shall have the authority to decrease the recommended adjustments to meet budget projections. However, the Committee does not have the authority to increase the recommended adjustments.

The Budget and Finance Committee shall be responsible for implementing and monitoring an expenditure accounting system.

## **Article 9: Indemnification**

### **9.1 Mandatory Indemnification**

If a civil legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee or agent of the church, the church may provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders unanimously determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The church should hold appropriate insurance to meet these potential liabilities.

## 9.2 Permissive Indemnification

The church also may indemnify, at the unanimous decision of the elders, any person who (a) acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and (b) either believed that his or her conduct was not unlawful or failed to abide by a law that the elders determine to be in contradiction to Biblical obligations.

## 9.3 Procedure

Determinations made by the elders on issues of indemnification should be confirmed by a majority vote of the membership present at a specially held members meeting.

In issues of indemnification involving members of the board of elders, the recommendation of the elders must be confirmed by a majority vote of the membership present at a specially held members meeting.

If a majority vote of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of pastors seeking indemnification, the requisite determination should be made by a majority vote of the membership at a specially held members meeting; this decision may be informed by legal counsel.

## **Article 10: Dispute Resolution**

Church members should make every effort to live at peace with one another and to resolve conflict among themselves according to Biblical principles (Romans 12:18).

The leadership of HCC must always strive to demonstrate absolute integrity in dealings inside and outside the church, knowing that the reputation of Christ is at stake. For this reason, we will strive to avoid lawsuits in dispute resolution between the church itself and/or with those outside the church, whether Christian or non-Christian (I Cor 6:1-7).

In the case, however, of criminal behavior, some situations may require the involvement of legal and governmental authority (Romans 13:3-4).

## **Article 11: Amendments**

This Constitution may be amended by a 75% majority vote at a members meeting, provided that the amendment was presented in writing at a previous members meeting and provided that it was announced for two Sundays from the pulpit before the vote takes place.

## **Article 12: Dissolution of the Church**

In the event that internal or external factors render the dissolution of the church necessary, there will be a members meeting called where the proposal will be made known to the church, with a subsequent meeting to follow two weeks later where a vote will be taken.

In the event that no other resolution can be worked out, all property belonging to HCC will be conveyed to the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists or its legal successor, with the Trustees of HCC performing all actions necessary to effect such conveyance.