

# BY LAWS

## ARTICLE I

### Membership

#### SECTION 1.01 REQUIREMENTS

Membership within East Hickory Baptist Church, Hickory NC ("church") is first precipitated on one becoming a genuine follower of Jesus Christ through having responded by faith by the drawing of the Spirit to the message of the gospel and been baptized by immersion. In addition, thereto:

Members shall have completed all of the requirements of membership as defined by the elders; and

Members have agreed with and confirm the church Constitution, Faith & Doctrine and By Laws including the Membership Expectations.

Those seeking membership to the church must sign a membership agreement stating they have read and do affirm the church's Constitution, By Laws and Faith & Doctrine and will seek to uphold them in speech, practice and habit.

- a) Members (immersed) of other churches of like faith and order may be received by the church upon a letter of transfer from that church.
- b) (b)Anyone who has once been a member of a Baptist church, and in consequence of peculiar circumstances has no regular letter of transfer, may be received unto our fellowship upon a statement satisfactory to the church.
- c) Letters of transfer shall be granted to any church of like faith and order for members in good standing. When letters are granted, membership in this church will be terminated.
- d) When a member of this church joins a church of different faith and order membership in this church will terminate.
- e) In considering the rights involved, members, and members only, present at any church conference may act and vote on the transactions of the church. A member for voting purposes will be an individual, 16 years or older, whose name appears on the active membership role.

#### SECTION 1.02 MEMBERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

- a) Members shall regularly attend and participate in corporate worship gatherings;
- b) shall participate in Small Groups for the purpose of mutual accountability and encouragement;
- c) Following the instructions of 2 Cor. 9:6-7, members shall joyfully, regularly and generously give financially to the mission and ministry of the church.
- d) shall regularly serve in some manner both within and outside the ministries of the church; and
- e) Shall make every effort to relate to other members of the church in a manner consistent with scriptural teachings.

### SECTION 1.03 PRIVILEGES

The active members of the church shall vote on the matters of

- a) the annual operating budget;
- b) indebtedness associated with the purchase or construction of real estate;
- c) cumulative indebtedness for all other aspects of church business that exceeds twenty percent (20%) of the annual church operating budget;
- d) acceptance of an amended or restated constitution or bylaws;
- e) disposition of substantially all of the church's assets;
- f) merger or dissolution of the Church;
- g) the removal of a person's membership resulting from church discipline after such member has been admonished according to Matt. 18 by a friend and the elders yet refuses to repent;
- h) confirmation of pastors/elders and deacons
- i) Other actions deemed major and extraordinary by the pastors.

All items above will be communicated to the church not less than twenty-one (21) days prior to the vote and afterward as well. Comments received from the church will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### SECTION 1.04 INACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

The Biblical intent of church membership is to encourage the growth of the believer through regular attendance at church gatherings, faithful giving and consistent service. Out of love and care for the members the pastors/elders will minister by encouraging active engagement in these aspects of committed membership. Exceptions may arise and be considered but after six months of absence a member may be moved to inactive status at the elder's discretion.

### SECTION 1.05 REMOVAL

Members of the church shall be removed from membership for reasons of

- a) Death;
- b) The member's request for removal;
- c) Evidence of membership with another church; or
- d) Failure to substantially uphold the membership expectations for one year or longer.
- e) The church's decision based upon the process of Church Discipline Guidelines for the cause of unrepentant sin as outlines in Article V of these Bylaws.

## ARTICLE II

### Church Pastors, Staff and Deacons

The Church is to be recognized as a Jesus ruled, elder led and congregationally accountable church in accordance with the principles laid down in the New Testament.

#### SECTION 2.01 PASTORS

Elder's are servant leaders. The Pastor is a paid Elder while all other Elder's serve as unpaid lay-pastors

#### SECTION 2.01.A QUALIFICATIONS

The pastors shall be comprised of not less than three men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of 'overseer/elder' set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Each must also be a giving and serving member of the church. A majority of the active pastors shall be composed of church members not in regular pay of the church, and no pastor shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

#### SECTION 2.01.B RESPONSIBILITIES

Subject to the confirmation of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the pastors shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock.

The pastors shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. The pastors are to further ensure all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

The Pastors shall meet at least three times annually and more if deemed reasonable or necessary by the standing pastors. Members may attend pastor meetings with prior approval or invitation.

#### SECTION 2.01.C SELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICE

Should the standing pastors(s) recognize the need for additional lay pastors, candidates that meet the above stated qualifications (Article 2.01.b) and receive a two thirds majority vote by the congregation will begin service immediately unless another date has been specified. Pastors serve indefinitely or until they are removed OR they choose to take a temporary leave for personal reasons.

#### SECTION 2.01.D TEMPORARY LEAVE

A lay pastor may opt to take a temporary leave.

- a. the term shall be set and agreed upon prior to the leave;
- b. should the pastor wish to rejoin the team prior to the agreed upon term he may do so with the consent of the remaining pastors;
- c. in the case of an extended absence (at or greater than 2 months) a qualified man shall be selected by the pastors and confirmed by the church as a temporary elder to be dismissed upon the return of the absent pastor.

#### SECTION 2.01.E LAY PASTOR REMOVAL

Any member of the church may bring written Scriptural reasons for the removal of a lay pastor. If reasons are substantiated by two or more witnesses, Pastors may be removed from office by a unanimous decision of the other Pastors. Removal shall be based upon being scripturally unqualified or the inability to serve.

#### SECTION 2.01.F DEFINITION OF QUORUM AND PASSING VOTE

A proper quorum is defined as seventy-five percent (75%) of the lay elders and seventy-five (75%) of the vocational elders. A quorum is required for voting matters.

The pastors shall prayerfully seek unanimous agreement in all matters believing the Holy Spirit guides with oneness of mind (Acts 15.1-29; Phil. 2.1-2).

#### SECTION 2.01.G THE LEAD PASTOR

The lead pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Article 2.01.b, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full time ministry of preaching and teaching.

He is responsible to oversee the preaching ministry, administration of the ordinances (the Lord's Supper and Baptism) and performance of such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution.

#### Lead Pastor and Church Staff

The church staff positions shall be filled by the Lead Pastor in consultation with the other standing Pastors. The staff shall perform such duties as shall be assigned by the Lead Pastor and/or the Pastors. In the event of a staff vacancy during a lead pastor vacancy, ministerial staff positions will be filled on an interim basis until such time as a permanent Lead Pastor is called.

#### Lead Pastor Dismissal

The church may dissolve the Lead Pastoral relationship by a three-fourths' public vote of the active membership present at any regular or special church conference provided notice of such proposed action shall have been given to the other Pastors at least twenty-one days in advance and found warranted with moral or ethical basis. Notice will be given at a regular Sunday service. The Lead Pastor may not block such a notice. The Lead Pastor may resign from his position at any time for any reason with the blessing of the remaining pastors and an announcement to the church by the Lead Pastor at least 21 days prior to the termination of his duties. The remaining pastors may release him of his duties earlier than 21 days.

A severance package if appropriate will be given to the leaving pastor as agreed upon by the remaining pastors no less than 1/12 and no more than 1/2 of the budgeted compensation for that position.

#### Lead Pastor Replacement

In the event a Lead Pastor vacancy occurs, the remaining Pastors shall be charged with the responsibility of securing a permanent lead pastor for the church. The call of the lead pastor shall take place at a meeting especially set for that purpose with at least one week's notice by whatever means deemed appropriate by the remaining pastors. The pastors shall bring only one name at a time for consideration of the church, and no nomination shall be made except that of the Pastors. The church shall have an opportunity to hear the minister at a Sunday morning worship service prior to a vote being taken unless this provision is waived by majority vote of the church in any regular or called church conference. Election shall require an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present and voting to constitute a call. Should the one recommended by the pastors fail to receive a three-fourths vote, they will be instructed to seek out another minister and the meeting shall be adjourned without debate.

#### SECTION 2.01.H TRUSTEES

The trustees shall constitute the body politic and corporate by the name of "East Hickory Baptist Church of Hickory, NC" and shall hold in trust all property, effects, etc., for the benefit and subject to the direction of the church. The acts of said trustees relating to the property and effects of the church are valid only when ratified by a majority vote at a publicized regularly convened meeting of the church. They shall be legal representatives of the church. Written consent by at least two of the trustees is required to take any action on behalf of the church. The Pastors and other persons confirmed by the church shall act as Trustees for the church.

#### SECTION 2.02.A STAFF AND DEACONS

#### SECTION 2.02.B QUALIFICATIONS

Where applicable all staff and deacons or Servant-Leaders must meet the qualifications of the Deacon as presented in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

#### SECTION 2.02.C RESPONSIBILITIES

(a) Staff responsibilities will be determined by the pastors and specified in a written job description. Each staff member is responsible to the pastors and may have another supervising staff member to which he/she answers.

(b) Staff shall submit to the specification of the Church Personnel Policy as issued by the Pastors.

(c) The primary responsibilities of lay deacons are to assist the pastors in ministry to the church as illustrated in Acts 6. This includes but is not limited to widow care and the ministering of those in the hospital.

#### SECTION 2.02.D SELECTION

Staff and Deacons may be called/hired and set apart for specific service upon the recommendation of the pastors. Deacons will be confirmed by the church with a majority vote. The diaconate shall consist of no fewer than 3-5 members. Deacons shall serve a term of one year with no limitation on the number of consecutive terms. Staff shall serve indefinitely in accordance with the wishes of the pastors and the Church Personnel Policy.

#### SECTION 2.02.E TERMINATION/REMOVAL

Staff and Deacons may be terminated or removed by

- a. request of the person serving in such position,
- b. dismissal by the pastors for grounds of immorality,
- c. termination as stated in the Personnel Policy Manual

### ARTICLE III

#### Ordinances

##### SECTION 3.01 BAPTISM

The ordinance of Believer's Baptism shall be observed as often as necessary in accordance with the church's Faith and Message.

##### SECTION 3.02 THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least annually as determined by the pastors and in accordance with the church's Faith and Doctrine.

#### Gatherings

##### SECTION 4.01 WORSHIP GATHERING

The church shall gather when possible for the expressed purpose of worshiping Christ corporately.

##### Section 4.02 Annual Meetings

The regular church conference shall be held annually with prior notice of the date and time given to the church at least one week in advance.

##### SECTION 4.03 SPECIAL MEETING

A special church conference may be called at any time by the pastors after verbal notice has been given to the membership in a previous Worship Gathering or by other means at least 7 days before the meeting. In unusual circumstances or matters of great urgency, this notice provision shall be waived by unopposed action of the church assembled at any regular worship gathering.

##### SECTION 4.04 QUORUM

A quorum for voting purposes shall consist of any active members present at a called Church Conference.

## SECTION 4.05 RULES OF PROCEDURE

### Section 4.05a

- a. One of the Pastors shall preside at all church conferences.
- b. The moderator shall preserve order, determine active membership, state and put all questions, take the vote and shall cast the deciding vote in case of a tie.
- c. In all cases of order, the moderator shall decide, but a majority of two-thirds may reverse the decision.

### Section 4.05b

All questions shall be brought before the church by motion and seconded before they shall be discussed and voted upon.

### Section 4.05c

All motions, resolutions, and reports shall be submitted in writing.

### Section 4.05d

Only one member shall speak at a time and preference shall be given to the member first addressing the moderator.

### Section 4.05e

Every member wishing to speak shall rise from their seat and respectfully address the moderator.

### Section 4.05f

No member may speak more than once upon the same subject until every member wishing to speak shall have the liberty to do so.

## ARTICLE V

### Church Discipline

#### SECTION 5.01 DEFINITION

Church discipline is the loving act of confronting sin in the life of a fellow believer with the hope that they return to obedience to the Lord. Matt. 18:15-17 offers instruction for following this practice for the good of the church. On occasions when a member has been approached privately and has been asked to repent but chooses to continue in rebellious sin, the pastors/elders may need to take steps of corporate Church Discipline (1Cor. 5:4-5).

Church discipline may require admonition by the pastors/elders and directive guidance regarding service and involvement. In severe circumstances excommunication may be necessary with the purpose of seeking repentance.

Although members may resign their membership at any time, members in the discipline process should complete the discipline process. The purpose for these stipulations is to encourage the loving care and correction that may be necessary for the member's spiritual good.

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Members who have been found in good standing by the pastors/elders may receive a letter of transfer.

#### SECTION 5.02 PURPOSE

- a. The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15: 5; 29: 15; I Corinthians 4: 14; Ephesians 6: 4; I Timothy 3:4–5; Hebrews 12:1–11; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27: 5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26–27; 18:15–17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; I Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1–5; II Thessalonians 3:6, 14–15; I Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:13–14; James 1:22);
- b. For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13: 20; Romans 15: 14; I Corinthians 5: 11; 15: 33; Colossians 3: 16; I Thessalonians 5: 14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; I Timothy 5: 20; Titus 1: 11; Hebrews 10: 24–25);
- c. For the purity of the church as a whole (see I Corinthians 5: 6–7; II Corinthians 13: 10; Ephesians 5: 27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21: 2);
- d. For the good of our corporate witness to non–Christians (see Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13–16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1–14; Ephesians 5:11; I Timothy 3:7; II Peter 2:2; I John 3:10); and
- e. Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5:11; I Kings 11:2; II Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; 18: 17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15:5–6; II Corinthians 6:14–7: 1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; I Peter 2:12).

#### SECTION 5.03 MEDIATION

Members of the church agree to submit any legal dispute with the church for mediation before a mutually agreed-upon mediator, or if none can be agreed upon, one selected by Peacemaker Ministries. Lawsuits between believers, or threats of lawsuits between believers, are a matter of grave concern for the church, are contrary to biblical and church teaching, and mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a biblical fashion. (1 Cor 6: 1-7.) Mediation will be governed by the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ICC Rules), unless modified as stipulated by the parties. In particular, subject to the more detailed provisions of the ICC Rules, mediator(s) will attempt to assist us in reaching a voluntary settlement of any disputes through mediation. The confidentiality of the mediation process will be protected and these matters will not be discussed with people who do not have a necessary interest in them. If settlement can be agreed upon, the conciliators may, at their discretion, issue an advisory opinion. Neither the opinion, nor any communications exchanged in the mediation process, will be admissible for any purpose in any subsequent legal proceeding.

## ARTICLE VI

### Church Finances and Properties

#### SECTION 6.01 FINANCIAL YEAR

The church's financial year runs January 1 through December 31.

#### SECTION 6.02 CHURCH BUDGET

A comprehensive annual budget will be formed by the vocational ministerial staff and approved by the pastors before being submitted to the congregation near the end of the Financial Year for approval.

#### SECTION 6.03 ACCOUNTING

##### Section 6.03a

All funds received for any and all purposes shall be properly recorded on the books of the church.

##### Section 6.03b

A system of accounting shall be implemented which shall adequately provide for the management of all funds of the church.

#### SECTION 6.04 CONTRIBUTIONS

It shall be the duty of the members to contribute regularly for the expenses of the church, and for the missionary benevolent agencies as the church may name.

#### SECTION 6.05 SOLICITATION

No person shall solicit or sell to the public in the name of the church or to the membership of the church on church properties items not directly related to the church ministries without the express consent of the pastors.

#### SECTION 6.06 INDEBTEDNESS

No one may be authorized or approved to borrow money or incur indebtedness on behalf of the church without resolution of the church. Exception to this rule is made in respect to the pastors/elders in the case of severe emergencies for which provision cannot be made.

#### SECTION 6.07 CHURCH PROPERTIES

##### Section 6.07a Purpose

It is agreed by the present membership and all persons hereafter becoming members of this church that the securing and maintaining of real, personal, and mixed property by this church shall be for the express purpose of providing facilities for public worship, the engagement of the missionary education, and benevolent interest of this church in accordance with the character and in the spirit of these Bylaws and Faith and Doctrine.

### Section 6.07b Rights

If at any time, this church shall determine to alter the quality of its beliefs, usages, and practices so as in any important respect to be at variance with the character described in the Faith and Doctrine, if the decision is by less than a two-thirds majority vote of those present at any church conference, it is understood and agreed that the title and all rights to the property of the church shall inhere in and remain vested in the part of the congregation which shall agree to continue in accordance with these Bylaws and Faith and Message.

### Section 6.07c Amendments to this Article

This article shall not be amended, altered or repealed except by three-fourths' vote of the membership present at a regular church conference and then only if such proposed amendment, alteration or repeal has been given in writing to the Pastors and has lain on the table for a period of three months; no consideration of such proposal shall be voted upon until the period aforementioned has elapsed and then at a regularly announced church conference.

## ARTICLE VII

### Amendments

These bylaws or any provision contained herein may be altered, amended or repealed, and new bylaws may be adopted by recommendation of the pastors/elders and a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote of the congregation. All desired changes must be submitted to the pastors at least 21 days prior to the church conference in which the vote will be cast.

## ARTICLE VIII

### Statement of Final Authority on Matters of Faith and Conduct

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of the church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our elders are the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

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