

HILLSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH

By-Laws and Structure of Ministry

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREAMBLE:

ARTICLES:

I. NAME

II. VISION

III. MISSION

IV. VALUES

V. STATEMENT OF FAITH

VI. MEMBERSHIP

VII. GOVERNMENT

ELDERS, STAFF, SENIOR PASTOR

A. Role

B. Qualifications

C. Selection

D. Term of Office

CONGREGATION, ROLE OF WOMEN, MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

VIII. ORDINANCES

IX. CONFRONTATION & DISCIPLINE

X. MEETINGS AND DECISION MAKING

XI. AMENDMENTS

HILLSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH

By-Laws and Structure of Ministry

Preamble

That we, as a localized, interdenominational body of believers, may worship, proclaim and represent Jesus Christ in such a way that we might "let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner" (1 Cor. 14:40), we adopt these Articles.

Articles

I. NAME

This organization shall be known as Hillside Community Church, by which name it is incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas.

II. VISION

To be a biblically functioning community of believers so that Christ's redemptive purposes can be accomplished in the world.

III. MISSION

Our mission is to:

To help people Discover who Jesus really is and become just like Him.

IV. VALUES

1. We Love Lost People.
2. We Relate in a Real & Friendly Way.
3. We Teach God's Word in a Bold, Fresh and Relevant Way.
4. We Challenge People to Christlikeness.
5. We Advance God's Kingdom in the World.

V. STATEMENT OF FAITH

A. The Bible

We believe the Bible is the supernaturally inspired Word Of God, and that the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments represent the whole of inspired Scripture. The Bible simultaneously speaks with the authority of God and reflects the backgrounds, styles, and vocabularies of the human writers He used as instruments. The Bible is without error in the original documents, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and the divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life. Hence, there are no other writings similarly inspired by God (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21; Heb 10:15-16; 1 Cor 2:12-13; Mt 5:17-18; Ps 119:160).

B. God

We believe there is one infinite and personal God, who is the sovereign Creator and omnipotent Sustainer of all things, who is eternal and perfectly existent in three persons--Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three equally possess all the characteristics of personality and attributes of deity, and each is equally deserving of worship and obedience. By His providence, He is operating throughout history to fulfill His redemptive purposes (Is 41:4; 45:5; 46: 10; Mt 28:19; Gen 1: 1; Coll: 17; 1 Cor 8:6; Deut 6:4; Jer 32:17; Ps 139:1-10; Jn 1:18; 4:24).

C. Jesus Christ

We believe Jesus Christ was both fully God and fully man; therefore, His deity was total, and His humanity was perfect. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary and, as the Son of God, He lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father. He voluntarily atoned for the sins of all by being crucified and dying on the cross as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of mankind, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him and His work alone. He arose bodily from the dead, and He ascended to the Father's right hand. There, as High Priest and Advocate, He intercedes for the believer before the Father. He indwells the believer in the Person of the Holy Spirit, and He will return personally and bodily to earth in power and glory to consummate history and fulfill the eternal plan of God (Coll:15-17; Phil 2:5-8; Jn 1:1; 4:26; 8:58; Lk 24; Heb 2:14; 4:14-16; 9:24; 10:5; Ac 1:9-11; Mt 1:18-25; 25:31-46; Mk 10:45; 1 Thess 4:16-18; Rom 5:18-19; 1 Cor 15:12-19; 2 Cor 5:21; Is 53:5; Rev 11:15-17; 20:4-6, 11-15; 22:13).

D. Salvation

We believe, at the beginning of history, mankind was originally created to have loving fellowship with God. However, our first parents, Adam and Eve, defied God and chose to live independently from Him, thereby becoming alienated from God and falling from the privilege of relationship with Him. Thus, all human beings are born with a depraved, sinful nature and commit acts of sin and rebellion against God's rule in their lives. Individuals cannot be saved from the penalty of their sins and restored into a right relationship with God through human effort or works of goodness, but only through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit which comes as a free gift of God's grace on the basis of Christ's death and resurrection. Salvation becomes a reality in peoples' experience when they admit they are a sinner, receive God's gift of forgiveness and eternal life through faith and acknowledge their need for repentance. This transformation is accomplished as they personally and solely rely on Jesus Christ's finished work on the cross and receive Christ as their Savior and Lord (Gen 1:26-27; Rom 3:10,23-28; 4:6; 5:9-10; 6:23; 8:3; 10:3; Is 64:6; Gal 2:16; Eph 1:3-7; 4:32; Jn 1:12; 3:3; 3:16; 10:28; Ac 4:12; 13:38-39; 2 Cor 5:1, 17; Col 3:9-10; 1 Pt 1:3-6).

E. The Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity whose present ministry is to glorify Jesus Christ, to make unbelievers aware of their sin and to be actively involved in the life of the believer. The Holy Spirit's ministry in believers' lives involves regenerating and permanently indwelling them at the moment of conversion, assuring, guiding, instructing, interceding and empowering them for Christlike living. The Holy Spirit's power and control are appropriated by faith, making it possible for believers to live a life of holiness and obedience and to bear fruit to the glory of Christ (In 14:16,26; 16:8,13; 3:5-8; Ps 139:7-10; Gen 1:27; Ac 5:3-4; 2 Cor 3:17; Eph 4:30; Tit 3:5; 1 Cor 3:16; 12:13; Rom 8:9,13; Gal 5:16-17,25).

F. The Church

We believe the universal church is the body of Christ, of which He is the Head, and it is composed of all who have acknowledged Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and are united to Him and to one another by the indwelling Holy Spirit. All individual believers are to be an active part of a local church body, devoting themselves to worship, prayer, the teaching of God's Word, the observance of believer's baptism and communion as the sacramental ordinances established by Jesus Christ, fellowship, service to the body and outreach to the world, thereby glorifying Christ and furthering His purposes (Mt 16:18; 28:19-20; Ac 2:41-47, 15:13-17; 1 Cor 12:7,12-13; Eph 1:5-18, 22-23; 2:11-22; 4:12; 5:23, 30; cei i. 18,2:19; Rom 12:4-9; 1Pt4:10).

G. Human Destiny

We believe death seals the eternal destiny of each person. At the return of Christ, every human being will be bodily resurrected from the dead. The believer will be resurrected and received into everlasting life and joy and communion with the Lord and rewarded according to works done in this life that glorify Christ. The unbeliever will be resurrected to judgment and condemnation, as God reveals His justice in consigning them to perpetuate, in eternal retribution, their own rejection of God. These unbelievers will, therefore, be everlastingly and consciously separated from Him (Mt 20:2-16; 25:14-30, 46; In 5:24-29; 1 Cor 3:11-15; 9:25; 15:13; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Tim 2:11; Rom 2:5-11; 1 Thess 4:16-18; 2 Thess 1:7-10; Rev 14:11; 20:11-15).

H. Faith and Practice

We believe Scripture is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. We believe the Statement of Faith to be an accurate summary of what Scripture teaches. All individuals involved in our ministry shall refrain from advocating doctrines that are contrary to the Statement of Faith in such a way as to cause dissension. HILLSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH recognizes that it cannot bind the conscience of individual members regarding those areas about which Scripture is silent. Rather, each believer is to be led in those areas by the Lord, to whom he or she is ultimately accountable. If a person has questions about any of the church's policies or positions on certain matters, they should address them to the leadership of the church.

VI. MEMBERSHIP

It is the desire of HILLSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH to extend its fellowship and ministry freely to all individuals. Those wishing to unite with the church in membership agree to accept the discipline of the church as set out in these bylaws as well as the other responsibilities associated with church membership. Members of the HILLSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH are designated as “Partners.”

VII. GOVERNMENT

For the purpose of order, God's Word clearly teaches that the leadership and oversight of a local church is to be fulfilled by a group of godly, qualified and called individuals. Therefore, we shall utilize a representative form of government, allowing the ultimate authority and responsibility for oversight of the ministry and shepherding of the body to be accomplished by the ministry of the Board of Elders, composed of qualified men. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church. He is the ultimate authority of all the church is and does, and His glory is to be the objective of every act, function and motive of the body, both individually and corporately (Col1:18; 2:29; Eph 1: 22-23). Scripture serves as authority for the actions of the Elders. The Elders acting as a group are the sole authoritative interpreter of Scripture for HILLSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH.

ELDERS

A. Role of Elders

The elders are the spiritual leaders of this local community of God's people, providing pastoral oversight for the people and biblical direction for the ministry (1 Pt 5:1-3; Ac 6:4, 14:23; 20:28). The Elder Board shall consist of a minimum of three men and is responsible as to the state of Texas. They are a group of men who are subject to and accountable to God and to each other. They are accountable to the church body by the congregation ensuring that God's Word is obeyed (see “Congregation”). Decisions of the Elder Board will be made by agreement of the majority. In case of an equal number of votes for and against an issue, the senior pastor will get two votes.

Elders at HILLSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH are responsible for:

1. Providing the overall vision of the church. 1 Pet 5:1-4
2. Caretaking and oversight of the staff. 1 Pet 5:1-4
3. Ensuring an appropriate and accurate diet of biblical instruction. Ac 20:28-31;
Tit 1:9
4. Setting ministry & administrative policy. 1 Tim 3:5; 5:17
5. Dealing with discipline and conflict management. 2 Tim 2:25
6. Praying for spiritual health & well-being of people. Js 5:14; Ac 6:4

Note: The elders have executive authority in all ministerial and financial matters and are generally responsible for the spiritual oversight and direction of this church. Therefore, they are directly responsible to the congregation. The Senior Pastor provides ongoing accountability and evaluation of the elders.

B. Qualifications of Elders

1. Biblical

1 Timothy 3:1-7:

Desire = "Aspires";

Character = "Must be above reproach" (No one can point a finger at you)

"Above reproach" does not mean that one is perfect. It means that he does not allow offenses and debts to linger. He rights his wrongs. So, his reputation stands for itself. He is successfully dealing with the passions, habits, roles and relationships of his life.

Elders at HILLSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH are required to have the following character qualities as laid out in 1 Tim 3:1-7:

PERSONALLY *he must be* SELF-DISCIPLINED

- temperate
- prudent
- respectable
- not addicted to wine
- free from the love of money

RELATIONALLY *he must be* REASONABLE/KIND

- not pugnacious
- gentle
- uncontentious
- hospitable

SPIRITUALLY *he must be* MATURE

- able to teach
- not a new convert

DOMESTICALLY *he must be a* LEADER

- husband of one wife
- manages household
- keeps children under control

PUBLICLY *he must have* INTEGRITY

- good reputation with outsiders

2. Philosophical

All leaders of this church will personally own and live out the church's Vision (why it exists and what it seeks to accomplish), Values (principles that govern how it seeks to accomplish the vision), and Vehicles (how it seeks to accomplish its vision).

3. Ministerial

All leaders of this church will continually define, develop, integrate and actively exercise the following personal and corporate aspects of life in this body:

PERSONALITY - how God has designed them to function

GIFTS - special abilities given by the Spirit

MATURITY-stage of spiritual growth

SCHEDULE- availability given proper priorities and current stage in life

Other practical issues include:

- Has been at HILLSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH for at least 3 years.
- Has demonstrated a commitment to the vision & values of Hillside.
- Has demonstrated faithful leadership to the ministry of Hillside.
- Is well-versed in the Scriptures, theological issues and ministry issues.

C. Selection of Elders

Elders will be selected in a manner to be determined by the Elder Board.

D. Term of Office

Because Scripture indicates no fixed term for elders, no specific fixed term of office is recommended. Instead, each elder, upon appointment, shall be asked for a 3 year commitment subject to an annual review. The elders shall individually and mutually evaluate one another's continued service as an elder, again considering the biblical qualifications, as well as, personal factors that might affect his service. An individual's service as elder may be discontinued by his own decision or by the unanimous decision of the other elders.

STAFF

A. Role of Staff

1. Training - Equipping the people of HILLSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH for serving in their own unique and gifted way.

2. Leading - Providing guidance to the church leaders in the area of direction and priorities.

Note: No staff, other than the Pastor, shall sit on the Elder Board.

All staff will be directly accountable to the Senior Pastor for personal and professional matters on a day in day out basis. He will provide leadership, oversight and evaluation of their ministry. The elders will assist him in this process.

B. Qualifications of Staff

1. Biblical

All pastoral and ministry staff members shall be required to meet deacon qualifications (1 Tim 3:8-13) regardless of their specific area of ministry. They fulfill a position of leadership and should, consequently, be mindful that they serve as role models for other believers. Therefore, their spiritual qualifications and walk are of the utmost importance.

2. Philosophical

All leaders of this church will personally own and live out the church's Vision (why it exists and what it seeks to accomplish), Values (principles that govern how it seeks to accomplish the vision), Vehicles (how it seeks to accomplish its vision).

3. Ministerial

All staff of this church will continually define, develop, integrate and actively exercise the following personal and corporate aspects of life in this body:

PERSONALITY - how God has designed them to function

GIFTS - special abilities given by the Spirit

MATURITY-stage of spiritual growth, gifts, abilities and/or credentials that qualify them for their area of ministry

CHARACTER - demonstrate personal integrity

C. Staff Selection

Church staff shall be selected as determined by the elders.

SENIOR PASTOR

A. Role of the Senior Pastor

1. Primary Communicator
2. Vision Caster
3. Leadership Developer

Note: The Senior Pastor must maintain the following accountability structure:

Leader

The Senior Pastor is the senior leader of the church. As such, he leads the leaders primarily in the areas of vision and direction.

Accountability

The Senior Pastor is accountable to the elders for how he discharges his duties as pastor. He looks to the elders for protection, direction and evaluation.

B. Qualifications of the Senior Pastor

(See "Qualifications for Elders")

C. Selection of the Senior Pastor

(See "Staff Selection")

CONGREGATION

God's Word teaches that within the membership of a local church, there is equality of status but not of role: all believers are to be participating ministers in the life of the fellowship, but all believers do not lead. Therefore, we have a representative form of government that follows the biblical pattern in which the responsibility of leadership is in the hands of a few, and ministry is to be in the hands of many (Phil 2:2; 1 Thess 5:12; Heb 13:17; Eph 4:11-12; 1 Pet 2:9).

However, New Testament principles of church government do not imply that the congregation-at-large is to be passive or uninvolved, even in the decision-making of the church. In fact, the leadership shall resolve to not be satisfied with passivity among the congregation. Even though the elders are the ultimate authority in the life of the church under God, they are not to be authoritarian in their ministry to the body. They are to be humble, servant-leaders within the body, seeking the counsel and mind of those they are leading.

Hence, there is to be a reciprocity of communication between the leadership and the body: the leadership not being hesitant to seek the congregation's counsel when needed (through both formal and informal means) and the congregation not hesitating to come directly to the leadership with ideas, suggestions or concerns.

ROLE OF WOMEN

The texts specifically relevant to this issue are 1 Cor 11:1-16; 14:34-36; 1 Tim 2:9-15 and Tit 2:3-4. The first three passages make reference to the Genesis account of creation and the fall, thus invalidating a cultural argument and linking the role of women to a fixed historical and theological fact event. The passage in Titus encourages women to teach other women, thus providing the positive side to the issue and validating the prohibition in the other passages.

We believe that, historically, churches have misunderstood or misinterpreted the beauty of God's design because of cultural or personal reasons and, therefore, have placed illegitimate restrictions on women's involvement in church ministry and leadership. We are convinced that Scripture strongly encourages women's full participation in a vast array of necessary ministries and supports active, informed participation by women in decision-making and leadership in the church, as well as, in the family.

Though we do not feel, because of the parallel issue of roles and responsibilities in the home and the church, that Scripture permits women elders, we do see women as equally important and vital to the ministry of HILLSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH.

MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

The church's views on marriage and sexuality are founded on Scripture. God created us as male and female (Gen. 1:27). The Bible describes two options for sexual behavior: monogamous relations within the marriage between one woman and one man (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:18, 21-24; Matt. 19:4-6; Mk. 10:5-8; cf. Heb. 13:4) or sexual celibacy (1 Cor. 7:7; Matt. 19:12).

Monogamous heterosexual marriage has implications which go beyond the regulation of sexual behavior. Rearing children in a family unit and the establishment of legal and economic benefits are part and parcel of marriage as described in the Old and New Testaments. Biblical marriage is described as creating "one flesh." It is meant to create a union that portrays the union between Christ and His church (Eph. 5:22-33.) This means that the foundational understanding of marriage is as a covenant grounded in promises between a man and a woman which finds its divinely intended expression in the "one flesh" union of husband and wife, and between the "one flesh" union of husband and wife and God (cf. Prov. 2:16-17, Mal. 2:14, Eph. 5:31-32.)

All of creation has been affected by sin. Sexual practices are no exception. Scripture condemns adultery and goes further by commanding that we shun all sexual immorality. (Ex. 20:14, 1 Cor. 6:18, 1 Thess. 4:3) Homosexual behavior is specifically condemned as sin in both the Old Testament and the New Testament (Gen. 19:4-11[cf. 2 Pet. 2:6-7; Jude 7]; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Judges 19:22-25; Rom. 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:8-11). Whether homosexual attractions are the result of environment, or heredity, they are not what God intends and so do not render homosexual behavior legitimate.

VIII. ORDINANCES

During His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ "ordained" two symbolic practices for His church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

A. BAPTISM

Baptism is faith's visible response to gospel (Mt 28:19-20; Ac 2:38,41; 8:38; 18:8). It is also a visual symbol of a person's new life in Christ, of what the Holy Spirit has already done for every true believer at conversion. Baptism serves as a symbol of the three following realities:

1. Identification/Union with Christ

It is a symbol of the believer's identification with Christ's death as an offering and sacrifice for one's sins, His literal burial and powerful resurrection from death into newness of life (Rom 6:3-4; 1 Cor 1:11-17; Gal 3:27-29; Co12:12).

2. Connection to the Church

It is a symbol of the believer's initiation into the fellowship of the visible body of Christ on earth, His church (Ac 2:41-42; Eph 4:5; 1 Cor 12:13).

3. Ethical Responsibility

(Rom 6:6; 1 Cor 12:25-31; Gal 3:27; Eph 4:1-16; Col3:3-11; 1 Pt 3:17-18)

Baptism represents that I live in the new era in Christ and that I am empowered by The Spirit being made a partaker of its benefits, privileges and responsibilities.

B. LORD'S SUPPER

Whereas the elements of communion are only representative of the flesh and Blood of Christ, the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is, nevertheless, an actual communion with the risen Christ who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people (1 Cor 10:16). The Lord's Supper is primarily a memorial of Christ's sacrificial death (1 Cor 11: 23-25). However, it signifies other important concepts as well:

- COMMEMORATES CHRIST'S DEATH 1 Cor 11:23-25
- PROCLAIMS (AFFIRMS) THE NEW COVENANT 1 Cor 11:26; Lk 22:20.
- REITERATES COMMUNITY 1 Cor 5:1-13; 10:17; 11:17-22, 28-32

IX. CONFRONTATION AND DISCIPLINE

Ongoing sin in the life of a believer obstructs his walk with the Lord, threatens the unity and fellowship within the body and, ultimately, weakens the witness of the church among nonbelievers (1 Jn 1:7; 2 Cor 6:3). Scripture, therefore, encourages believers to be concerned with each other's spiritual well-being and teaches them to confront in love and in a Spirit-led manner when there is evidence of sin (2 Cor 11:29; Lk 17:3; Gal 6:1).

HILLSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH acknowledges the following biblical procedures for such confrontation and discipline:

- A. If one becomes aware of destructive or immoral behavior in the life of a fellow believer, he should go promptly and confront the individual in private (Mt 18:15).
- B. If there is no expression of repentance, he should reprove the individual in the presence of two or three witnesses (Mt 18:16).
- C. If there is still no repentance, Scripture teaches that the matter should be brought to the church. In the HILLSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH structure, the matter should, at this point, be brought before the elders, as representatives of the church (Mt 18:17).
- D. If there is no evidence of genuine repentance after confrontation of the individual by the elders, the elders should bring the matter before that portion of the church as determined by the elders to be necessary to encourage repentance. (Mt 18:17).
- E. If there is still no evidence of repentance, Scripture teaches that the individual should be removed from the body and believers should break fellowship with him until such time as there is genuine repentance. This step shall be taken at the

discretion and by the initiative of the elders (2 Thess 3:6, 14; 1 Cor 5:11; Tit 3:10-11).

- F. If an individual is undergoing church discipline, the discipline will continue at the discretion of the elders through completion as set out above despite the resignation of the individual from affiliation with the church.

Note: In addition to the above procedure, scripture teaches that confrontation should be approached and carried out with an attitude of love, concern, humility and should be motivated by the sincere desire to see repentance and restoration to full fellowship. Reflecting Christ's grace and forgiveness, believers are taught to be quick to forgive when there is the genuine expression of repentance on the part of a fellow believer (Gal 6:1; Mt 6:14-15; 18:21ff; Eph 4:32; Lk 17:3).

- G. If a person under discipline attends another church in the community, the elders will, on a case by case basis, determine a course of action.

Note: The same biblical principles and procedure for confrontation apply in attempting to resolve relational conflicts within the body. In such cases, Scripture indicates that it is the responsibility of the believer to go promptly to his brother/sister when he has been offended or when he has reason to believe that he may have done the offending (Mt 5:23-24; Eph 4:26-27).

Note: GUIDELINES FOR REBUKING AN ELDER 1 TIM 5:19-20 An accusation against an elder is to be received only on the basis of two or three witnesses. Those elders who continue in sin are to be rebuked in public.

X. MEETINGS and DECISION MAKING

The elders shall normally meet once a month.

The elders must work toward consensus, however a vote of the majority of the elders shall be controlling. Should there be equal number of votes for and against a proposition, the tie shall be broken by the senior pastor casting an additional vote.

Additional gatherings, whether special or regular, of the church body-at-large and of the leadership shall be determined by the elders.

From time to time it may be necessary for the Board of Elders to make decisions outside the time of a scheduled meeting. In those circumstances a proposition can be circulated and a vote taken without further notice by electronic means.

XI. AMENDMENTS

This document shall be amended as determined by the elders.