



Highland Community Church

'Go out into the streets and
lanes of the city and bring in
here the poor, lame, blind, and
crippled...' Luke 14:21b

Highland Community Church Bylaws

Adopted by Highland Community Church - 2009

Preamble

It is to be remembered that the real charter governing laws of the church is God's Holy Word. However, as required by law, the following articles and bylaws are to be presented. These articles and bylaws are always subject to reconsideration as to their full and indisputable agreement with God's Word. As such, we, the founders of Highland Community Church do ordain and establish the following Articles, to which we voluntarily submit our posterity and ourselves.

Article I – Name

The name of this church shall be known as Highland Community Church of Columbus, GA., presently located at 3408 5th Avenue, Columbus, GA. 31904. The church was incorporated in 2009. Throughout these by-laws, Highland Community Church is also referred to as the “church”, “body”, and “congregation”. Such terms refer to all those who have completed the membership process outlined within Article IV of these by-laws.

Article II – Purpose

Section 1

The purpose of this church is to glorify the God of the Scriptures, both as individual members and as a body, by worshiping God, ministering to the saints, evangelizing to the world, discipling new believers, and sharing our resources with those in need. Our fellowship seeks to be pleasing to God as a way of life by being a people who in the power of the Holy Spirit grow in the grace of the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Section 2

Highland Community Church is driven by outreach to the poor for the purposes of:

1. Bringing people to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus.
2. Engaging people in the discipleship process.
3. Raising up leadership from within the Highland community.
4. Developing the community through discipleship and raising the community standard of living.

Article III – Statement of Faith

At this present time, this church does not subscribe to any denomination.

Section 1

The Scriptures – We believe the Scriptures are contained in the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. They are God-breathed, inerrant in content, and they serve as the only infallible and sufficient rule for faith and godliness.

Section 2

The Trinity – We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each possesses all of the divine perfections.

Section 3

Creation – We believe God created mankind in His image--holy and upright, with the ability to know and enjoy Him, and with the responsibility to be a steward over His earthly creation.

Section 4

The Fall of Mankind – We believe the entire human race fell in the sin of Adam. Thus, we are all by nature born in subjection to sin and death (including separation from God). The image of God in man was marred, but not entirely lost. The restoration of that image is the goal of redemptive history, the hope of every believer, and the delight of our Sovereign King.

Section 5

The person of Jesus Christ – We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was born of a virgin, fully human and fully divine, yet without sin. Who took our sin--with all its guilt and shame--and paid its penalty. His substitutionary death satisfied the wrath of God against sinners. He was raised from the dead, ascended to heaven, and lives today at the right hand of God the Father, interceding for His church. We believe He will return again to claim His bride--the church--and establish the fullness of His kingdom on earth.

Section 6

The Holy Spirit – We believe in the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and who regenerates and indwells every child of God. He is the "Spirit of adoption", nurturing our adoptive relationship with God. He enables all believers for acceptable worship, service, and holiness. He gifts each believer for ministry to the church, and keeps us secure in faith for the day of redemption.

Section 7

Salvation – We believe that all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are justified on the basis of His substitutionary death. Redemption, forgiveness, adoption, and reconciliation are the experience of all who receive Him by faith.

Section 8

The Church – We believe that the church is the focal point of God's redemptive work on earth. The church is called by God to assemble for worship, prayer, encouragement, ministry, and to reach the lost by proclaiming and living the truth of His redeeming love. The church has two ordinances instituted by Christ: water baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that God will consummate His sovereign plan with the future rapture of the church, the Tribulation, and the return of Christ to establish His kingdom on earth for one thousand years. Then comes the eternal state. And so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Article IV – Membership

Section 1

Highland Community Church is comprised of persons who profess a personal faith and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, actively follow the Lord Jesus Christ in discipleship, complete the membership process and serve the body at Highland Community Church.

Section 2

Roles of Members

Commitment to Other Members: Members of Highland Community Church are to serve one another in love.

Commitment to Church Leadership: Members of Highland Community Church are to submit to the authority of church leadership vested in them by the authority of Scripture. According to the Bible, it is clear that local church leaders also have the authority to exercise church discipline out of love and for the health of the church and its individual members.

Section 3

A person may be accepted into the membership process by any of the following ways:

By profession of faith. A person publicly confessing personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidences of a regenerate heart and adopting the covenant and the articles of faith and practices held by the church, shall, upon baptism, be admitted into the fellowship of the church.

By statement. Any person who has been baptized upon profession of faith in a church of like faith and order but who, because of loss of records or similarly unavoidable circumstances, has no regular letter of dismissal, may be received into membership after giving satisfactory evidence of a regenerate heart, Christian conduct and Scriptural faith. Any person presented for membership who has been baptized by immersion in a church of like faith and order shall be received by statement.

By letter. Any person from another church of like faith and order may be received into membership upon receipt of letter of transfer from that respective church.

By baptism from another denomination. Any person who professes a personal faith and belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and actively follows the Lord Jesus Christ in discipleship and has been baptized may become a member of HCC.

Section 4

Potential members will be expected to participate in the church's new member orientation program as developed and implemented by Highland Community Church. The membership and orientation process at Highland Community Church is as follows:

A person who desires to become a member of the church has to make that desire known to a Team Leader.

A person expresses a desire to become a member of Highland.

From the date the person expresses the desire, the 6 months thereafter includes completion of the Membership Classes and an evident commitment (Luke 3:8, Galatians 5:22-26) to the Lord Jesus and the church body.

The person must take part in the Membership Class of Highland Community Church, where they are introduced to the fundamentals of Christianity:

The identity and person of Jesus Christ.

The inerrancy of the Scriptures (God's is the final authority).

Understanding of the church structure, by-laws and vision.

Potential members must be in line with and submit to these fundamentals in order to be brought before the membership of the church to be received as a member.

All persons are expected to follow all federal, state, and local government laws during church activities and on church property and expected to strive to be law abiding in their personal life. (Romans 13)

Section 5

The rights of all full church members are as follows:

Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, provided the member is present.

Every member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for the elective offices in the church. Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

Section 6

Membership from Highland Community Church may be removed in the following ways:

Death.

Transfer by letter to another church.

Acknowledgement when a member has joined a church of another faith and order and requested such action.

Refusal to follow the Restoration Spectrum.

Section 7

The Leadership Team and Elder Board have the right to ask any individual who is participating in unlawful activity, deliberate interruption of church services or

activities, destruction of church property or is a safety threat to themselves or others to leave the premises until a meeting with a Pastor / Elder and/or the Restoration Committee can be scheduled and completed with the understanding that it will be offered within seven (7) days following the dismissal. HCC also reserves the right to contact legal authorities and/or medical personnel if members of the Leadership Team and/or Elder Board agree that such contact would be appropriate due to unlawful activity or danger to the individual or others.

Any individual determined to be walking outside of the biblical principals upheld and taught by the church will be asked to participate in the Restoration Spectrum process. The Restoration Spectrum will include tiers of action which will be implemented if a member or church participant exhibits continual attitudes, behaviors or beliefs that are in direct conflict with the word of God and refuses to participate in communication to come to peaceful resolution over the issues. In regards to situations where there is not an immediate threat or problem, the church will use the following guidelines to address issues within the congregation:

The Restoration Spectrum tiers:

If the individual(s) do not respond to the action of the previous tier then a Pastor / Elder and a witness shall contact the individual(s) to request private sessions to address the issue(s) and create a written plan to include spiritual and personal goals as well as a timeline and resource options with the individual(s) to address the need.

If the individual(s) do not respond to the attempts of a Pastor / Elder, the Restoration Committee will request a formal meeting with the individual(s) to discuss concerns and issues. The committee and the individual(s) will create restoration requirements for the individual to begin the spiritual and personal growth process leading towards healthy Christian living that is beneficial to both the individual(s) and others.

If at any time, the member or attendee believes the restoration process or individuals engaged in the restoration process are not implementing Biblical principals that lead toward a healthy Christian living in accordance with the Word, the individual(s) can request a direct meeting with the Pastor / Elder Board and Restoration Committee to discuss the concerns.

The goal of all restoration process at HCC is to fully restore each person to the functioning body of Christ as outlined through Biblical principals and teachings at Highland Community Church (Galatians 6:1).

Article V – Church Leadership

Our Lord Jesus Christ shall always be recognized as the Head and sovereign authority of the church. The Holy Spirit who indwells and controls believers is the source of power conforming us to the character of Jesus Christ. The church is a theocracy, meaning it is governing and based on God's will being revealed to its people through the Scriptures. Christ's authority is expressed through the Scriptures. Therefore, Christ is the ultimate authority of the church unto whom all things are subject. The church exists as a living organism conforming to the Lord through His Word to the glory of God. As such, all church leadership will align with the Word of God.

Section 1

In these by-laws, the titles Pastor / Elder are synonymous terms. The role of the Pastors / Elders will be to hold the church leadership and membership to Biblical and theological soundness, and to bring church issues to a peaceful resolution. The Scriptures, the specified church vision, as well as church leadership and membership will hold the Pastors / Elders accountable. The Pastors / Elders will have the opportunity to participate in all church functions and team meetings as a non-voting member or facilitator to assist with team consensus if needed. The Pastor / Elders will be the spiritual governing body of the church. It will be an appointed board of up to six (6) members who are nominated by the Pastor / Elder Board and/or the Team Leader Board, having obtained a consensus of the membership.

Elder Board members must meet the membership requirements for Highland Community Church and the principals as outlined in the Holy Bible as they will provide support and spiritual covering for the church through biblical study, prayer, and meditation.

The Pastor / Elder Board will assist and support the leaders in establishing and maintaining the mission and vision for HCC. The Pastor / Elder Board is assembled to discuss the direction God is leading the church, pray, and assist with peaceful resolution to church decisions when needed.

When an issue arises that affects the future and/or direction of Highland Community Church the follow protocols shall be observed:

The issue is brought before the Pastor / Elder Board for prayer to ask God's direction.

The Elder Board will work with the Team Leader Board to make a decision needing full consensus to proceed with the recommendation.

The Pastor / Elder Board will offer guidance when the Team Leader Board, Teams and/or congregation cannot come to consensus over a particular matter. However, if a consensus cannot be reached, then the Elders shall make the decision.

The Pastor / Elder Board is to not override decisions made by the Team Leader Board or Ministry Teams if given that the decision(s) do not compromise the integrity of Scripture or the vision of Highland Community Church, but shall consider and submit solutions based upon suggestions from that particular Ministry Team, the Scriptures and the vision of the church.

Upon review by the Pastor / Elder Board, the Team Leader Board will make decisions in accord with the Ministry Teams. Recommendations and decisions being made by all three groups are to be based on Biblical grounds and on the vision of the Church.

Necessary Qualifications for Pastor/ Elder: 1 Timothy 3:1-7

“It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

Members of the Pastor / Elder Board may request to be removed from the board with approval by the Pastor / Elder Board upon review. Pastor / Elder Board membership may be reviewed by the Pastor / Elder Board if after a meeting with a

Pastor / Elder and a witness is found to be living a lifestyle that is not patterned after the beliefs, standards and teachings from the Word of God and provided at Highland Community Church. This review will include the possibility of removal from leadership responsibilities during which time the restoration process found in Article IV, Section 7 of these by-laws will be implemented.

Section 2

The Team Leader Board will be the administrative body of the ministries of the church. All matters concerning church finances, ministries, projects, planning operations will be finalized with full consensus among the Team Leader Board. The Team Leader Board will review proposals, recommendations and activities from Ministry Teams to ensure the church has a balanced calendar and financial means to support the various areas of church ministry. The Team Leader Board will participate in annual planning and accept submissions for the Highland calendar and budget for the upcoming year during the last quarter of each year. The Team Leader Board will gather and submit the information to the Finance Committee to draft an annual budget to be reviewed and approved by the church at the annual church meeting. The Team Leader Board will either accept proposals from the Ministry Teams or return the proposal back to the Ministry Team with areas of concern that need to be reviewed. The Team Leader Board will be comprised of the chairpersons or selected member by annual vote from each committee to include:

Finance Committee

Building and Community Outreach Team

Breakfast, Lunch, and Mission Meals Team

Evangelism and Outreach Ministries (Chicken and Rice)

Nursery, Children and Youth Team

Women's Team

Men's Team

2nd Chance Resource Center

During the establishing period of time of Highland Community Church the Team Leader Board will be selected from the current leaders and approved by the Elder Board. After the establishing year of Highland Community Church, the Leader Board will be an elected group of up to 12 members and will continue to serve on the board until either requesting replacement or annual vote of the committee the person is representing. Necessary qualifications for consideration of service on the Leader Board are:

- Member in good standing of the church and church participation for at least 6 months
- Member in good standing of a team and team participation in meetings and activities
- Beliefs, attitudes and lifestyle which supports a desire to live within the Biblical beliefs, guidelines and standards taught at Highland
- Willingness to participate in prayer sessions and other spiritual building activities as deemed necessary by the Pastor / Elder Board as appropriate
- Willingness to participate in Team Leader Board meetings, yearly planning retreat, and other meetings as requested by the Pastor / Elder Board as appropriate
- Willingness to use effective communication techniques to come to consensus in difficult situations
- Willingness to turn in the provided agenda and minutes completed for each meeting to the Pastor / Elder Board monthly.

Members of the Team Leader Board may request to be removed from the board with approval by the Pastor / Elder Board pending review. Team Leader Board membership may be reviewed by the Pastor / Elder Board if after a meeting with the member and a Pastor / Elder and a witness a person is found to be living a lifestyle that is not patterned after the beliefs, standards and teachings from the Word of God and provided at Highland Community Church. This review will include the possibility of removal from leadership responsibilities during which time the restoration process found in Article IV, Section 7 of these by-laws will be implemented.

Section 3

Team Leaders are the delegated spiritual covering of their respective Ministry Teams. Persons are assigned to team leadership based on their gifting. Persons are then interviewed by the Pastor / Elder Board. Once assigned, Team Leaders are to operate within the vision of the church and the Pastor / Elder Board as well as their fellow team members shall hold them accountable. Team Leaders are responsible for maintaining, planning and heading up the decision-making process for their assigned team. Team Leaders will confer with those who are a part of their respective teams in order to administrate (alongside their team members) the functions of the ministry. Team Leaders also will sit on the Team Leader Board to serve as part of the spiritual covering. Team Leaders must be members of the church and will serve on a rotating basis for a three-year term or as deemed appropriate by the Pastor / Elder board and individual Ministry Team vote.

When decisions affect that given Ministry Team, Team Leaders will meet with their teams for deliberation. All recommendations of that Ministry Team require consensus of those present for approval (if they cannot agree, a Pastor / Elder will be called in to bring the team to consensus). A minimum of 75% must participate when making major decisions to be presented to the Team Leader Board.

At this point, the Team Leader will submit a summary to the Pastor / Elder Board if item is not included in the annual review and/or budget and accepted. When accepted by the Pastor / Elder Board, the Team Leader will then bring that plan before the Team Leader Board needing full consensus for approval from the Team Leader Board if the item was not included in the approved annual calendar and/or budget. Finally, (if necessary) the Pastor / Elder Board will bring the proposed plan before the church for a vote in a business meeting format needing 90% approval from the full members present at the meeting.

Section 4

Ministry Teams are made up of a specific group of people who administer the roles and duties of the ministry they are assigned to. Persons are assigned to teams based on their gifting. Persons are interviewed by the Pastor / Elder Board. They support, offer counsel, and are a part of the decision making process within the Ministry Team based on issues regarding this given area of ministry. Team members must be members of the church and will serve on a rotating basis for a two-year term or as deemed appropriate by the Pastor / Elder Board and individual team vote.

- Member in good standing of the church and church participation for at least 6 months.
- Beliefs, attitudes and lifestyle which supports a desire to live within the Biblical beliefs, guidelines and standards taught at HCC.
- Willingness to be a member of a team and team participation in meetings and activities.

- Willingness to participate in prayer sessions and other spiritual building activities as deemed necessary by the Pastor / Elder Board as appropriate.
- Willingness to participate in Team meetings and other meetings as requested by the Pastor / Elder Board as appropriate.
- Willingness to use effective communication techniques to come to consensus in difficult situations.

Article VI – Church Employment

When a vacancy occurs in the position of Pastor / Elder, a Search Committee is to be formed by the nomination of five (5) persons by the Pastor / Elder Board and Team Leader Board and confirmed by the church. The Search Committee should be made up of church members as follows:

- A member of the Team Leader Board
- A Ministry Team Member from the local community
- A Budget Team member
- A youth or college member
- A member at-large

The committee will present only one candidate to the Pastor / Elder Board at that time. For election a candidate must receive 90 percent of the votes cast. Any church member can recommend Ministerial and Pastoral Church Staff. Should dismissal of a Pastor / Elder or ministerial staff members become necessary, a majority vote by the church will be necessary. This consideration can only be done when all possible attempts at reconciliation have been exhausted. Proper notice of

this vote will be made known to members of the congregation at least two (2) weeks in advance of the vote. Support staff work at the call of the Personnel Committee or Team Leader Board, with recommendation of the Pastor / Elder Board.

Article VII – Church Meetings

Section 1

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship of the one, true God. These meetings will be open to everyone and shall be conducted under the direction of the Pastor / Elder Board. Exceptions can be made by recommendation of the Team Leader Board.

Section 2

All church meetings which are essential to the promotion of the objectives of the church shall be placed on the church website, published in the church newsletter at least once prior to the meeting being held and announced at all services on the Sunday prior to the special service being held.

Section 3

Regular business meetings shall be held quarterly on the second Saturday morning of the month. Matters of significant nature must be publicized as in Article VII, Section 4 of these by-laws.

Section 4

A specially called business meeting may be held to consider matters of a significant nature. Notice of the subject, date, time and location must be published in the church newsletter or website for the specially called business meeting at least one (1) week before the meeting and announced at all services on the Sunday prior to the special business meeting.

Section 5

A quorum consists of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Ministry Team who attends the business meeting, provided it is a regular meeting or one that has been properly called.

Article VIII – Ordinances

Section 1

Baptism is a symbolic act of obedience. A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, shall be received for baptism. Baptism shall be by immersion in water. Baptism may be administered by a Pastor / Elder or whomever he shall authorize. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service. Baptism, preferably, shall be as soon as possible after the public confession of faith.

Section 2

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of

Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly, preferably on the first Sunday of the quarter. The Pastor / Elder Board, church staff, and team leaders shall be responsible for administration of the Lord's Supper.

Article IX – Financial Accountability

The Team Leader overseeing Finances has the primary responsibility for financial accountability both to the remaining Leaders and to the church body as a whole. However, any expenditure made under the direction of this Team Leader must be made under the guidelines (Article V, Section 3) established and monitored by the Team Leader Board. Any major expenditure (a number for the Team Leaders to decide) must be presented and approved by the:

1. Financial Team
2. Pastor / Elder Board
3. Team Leader Board
4. Final approval by the body in a business-meeting format.

Each quarter the Team Leader Board shall secure the services of a Certified Public Accountant, who is not a Team Member, to conduct a financial review of the financial statements of the church. On a quarterly basis, a member of the Budget Team shall give a report of the financial condition of the church to the membership and shall make the annual financial report conducted by the Certified Public Accountant available upon request.

On a monthly basis, a member of the Finance Committee shall give a report to the Pastor / Elder Board, Team Leader Board and individual teams either in hardcopy, electronic copy or through verbal presentation for the balance and expenditures of each department and other information as deemed requested.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee will consist of a minimum of four (4) members. The Pastor / Elder Board shall submit nominations for the Finance Committee to the Team Leader Board, and the Team Leader Board shall come to a consensus on the individual(s) nominated. The Finance Committee is responsible for developing a balanced budget (based on historical as well as forecasted income & spending, and input from each Team Leader) and presenting it to Team Leader Board and the Pastor / Elder Board for acceptance and approval. Once the final budget is approved by the Leader Board, the Finance Committee will monitor all spending to ensure accurate maintenance of accounting records and bank accounts, the reviewing and approval of expenditures above and beyond budgeted items, and reporting of financial results to the Team Leader Board.

The Finance Committee will be responsible for managing and overseeing all church financial matters to ensure budgetary constraints are considered and applied prior to any potential expenditures, as appropriate. In the instance that an expenditure is outside of budgetary guidelines and has a limited timeline, the Finance Committee will be contacted to review availability of funds, appropriateness of request and approval along with input and approval from at least 3 members of the Team Leader Board or Pastor / Elder Board.

Guidelines for approval of non-budgeting items during the year:

At the Elder Board meeting at least thirty (30) days prior to the planned activity not included in the annual budget or prior to the annual budget submission, a proposed activity should be submitted to the Pastor / Elder Board for acceptance or return.

The Pastor / Elder Board should consider the proposed expenditure to determine if it is in line with Highland's Vision, and pray for direction in moving forward with the proposal.

The Pastor / Elder Board will not deny requests unless they are in direct conflict with the Bible and/or the current Vision of Highland.

They will provide written documentation of questions, concerns, and commentary for any proposal sent back to a Team/person.

The Pastor / Elder Board will send the accepted proposal to the Team Leader Board for review.

The Team Leader Board will review the activity and budgetary proposal.

Upon review and approval by the Team Leader Board, the proposal is sent to the Finance Committee to review HCC's financial health and determine if funds are available for the approved expenditure and in line with annual budgetary allocations.

If funds are available, proceed with the approved expenditure. (If funds are not available at that time, the proposed expenditure will be tabled and should not be pursued until such time as the financial status of the church changes. At such time, the proposed expenditure should be resubmitted to the Team Leader Board to ensure it is still in line with the current plans.)

If the Team Leader Board has concerns or questions, the proposal is returned to the Team/person recommending with written comments for review to be resubmitted as the Team/person decides.

The Team Leader Board will not deny requests, but will provide written documentation of questions, concerns, and commentary for any proposal sent back to a team/person.

The Team Leader Board will return the original proposal and budgetary guidelines with a signature indicating acceptance. In the event that the church is purchasing or selling property, the Pastoring Elder and the Chairman of the Finance Committee will be authorized to sign documents to complete these types of transactions.

Article X – Amendments

Section 1

Proposed amendments to the bylaws shall be drafted by the Pastor / Elder Board and Team Leader Board and presented to the members present at a special meeting of the church, called for that purpose, and voted on by those present.

Section 2

Notice of the proposed amendment(s) must be given to the church membership in writing at least two (2) weeks prior to a special called meeting for discussion. During that period any church member may express their conviction concerning the proposed amendment(s). The Team Leader Board shall then meet to hear out the opposed members and decide if a change is needed in the proposed amendment(s). If changes are made these changes will be given to the membership.