

The By-Laws of
HILL CHURCH

I. Purpose

Hill Church exists to make disciples of Jesus so that the Gospel is declared in word and deed, throughout Kewanee, in all our surrounding communities, and among unreached people groups.

II. Strategy

To make disciples of Jesus (Matt. 28:19), Hill Church's ministries are committed to three strategic areas: **Gather, Grow, Go**. We **Gather** to worship God and care for our community; we **Grow** to be like Jesus; we **Go** to share the gospel and serve the world. We will measure the success of our Strategy by (1) baptisms showing co-identification with Jesus's death and resurrection (Matt. 28:20; Rom 6:1-6) and (2) participation in the various ministries that manifest Gather, Grow, Go.

III. Statement of Faith

GOD THE FATHER

We believe in God the Father - an infinite, personal spirit; perfect in holiness, justice, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of each person, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves all who come to Him through Jesus Christ from sin and death. (Exodus 34:6-7; Isaiah 40:21-31; John 3:16-17)

JESUS CHRIST

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and teachings. We believe that He is true God and true man. We believe in His atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, continual intercession for His people and personal visible return to earth. (Philippians 2:6-8; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 9:24-28; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11)

THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit, sent from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and sent to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ and that He is our Helper, Teacher and Guide. (John 14:15-21; 16:5-16; Ephesians 1:13-14)

THE TRINITY

We believe that there is one living and true God who exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that these are equal in every divine perfection and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption. (Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19-20; Ephesians 4:5)

THE BIBLE

We accept the entire Protestant Canon as God's revelation to us. It is the supreme authority in matters of Christian belief and practice, fully capable for instruction and correction. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

SALVATION

We believe that all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation (Romans 1-3). We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ alone (apart from works) as their Savior are made new by the Holy Spirit. They are then reconciled to

God, forgiven, justified, and will spend eternity in heaven. (Romans 3:23-4:7; 5:12; 6:23; Titus 3:4-8, Ephesians 2:8-9)

THE CHURCH

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, which consists of a company of believers in Jesus Christ who are baptized on a credible profession of faith and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of extending the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world and making disciples. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 2:42-47; I Corinthians 12:12)

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

We believe that Christian marriage is a sacred institution ordained by God for the happiness of mankind and the propagation of the human race. It is the spiritual and physical union of one man and one woman; this is the only legitimate sexual relationship according to scripture (Genesis 2:24-25, Matthew 19:4-6, Ephesians 5:22-33, Romans 1:18-32). Accordingly, we affirm this biblical view of marriage as the only legitimate form of marriage. No paid Hill staff can officiate same-sex marriage ceremonies at any time and at any place. No property owned, rented, or associated with or by Hill Church may be used for any marriage ceremony except for those sanctioned by Hill Church.

END TIMES

We believe in the personal, visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ when he will establish His Kingdom on earth. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal well-being of the righteous and the endless suffering of the wicked. (I Thessalonians 4:13-5:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12; Romans 14:9-12)

CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

We believe that Christians should live for the glory of God and the well-being of others, that their conduct should be blameless before the world, that they should be faithful stewards of their possessions and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. This process of growing to be more like Christ as the Holy Spirit convicts, teaches, and guides us is a journey of grace that is called sanctification. (I Peter 1:13-16; Philippians 1:8; John 13:1-17)

THE ORDINANCES

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: Baptism and Communion.

Baptism

We believe that water baptism is being immersed into water to publicly demonstrate an identity change that has already taken place when a believer has repented and trusted in Christ's payment for their sin. Being immersed in the water represents their old identity as someone estranged from God and under His judgement completely gone and crucified with Christ. Coming out of the water represents and declares to the community of believers that they are now a new creation, forgiven, redeemed, and made righteous by Christ (Romans 6). Water baptism is not required for salvation, but is important in the life of the believer. Any disciple of Jesus can perform a baptism. Immersion is the preferred mode of baptism when physically able.

Communion

We believe that Communion was instituted by Christ to commemorate His death. It is for the purpose of remembrance of Christ's payment for our sin. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:16-20; I Corinthians 11:23-32)

- IV. Church Year
The church year begins on January 1 of each year to coincide with the fiscal year.
- V. Qualifications for Elected Leadership
Elected leadership in the church includes certain members of the Elders and Deacons. Elected leaders are required to be members of the Church as defined by the current By-Laws. Specific requirements for the leaders can be found in each section below.
- VI. Property
The membership shall have, in the corporate name, the right to own, buy, lease and sell property. In case of dissolution, the property and its assets will be transferred to ministries the Elders choose.
- VII. Membership
The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

A. CANDIDACY

Any person may offer themselves as a candidate for membership in this church. Such candidates will be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership, after they have attended a New Members Class or have met with an Elder, in any of the following ways:

- 1. By profession of faith (conversion).
- 2. By baptism by immersion.
- 3. By promise of a letter of recommendation from another church.
- 4. By personal statement, which is accepted by the church, that the person comes from another church and was baptized as a believer, trusting in the grace of God alone for salvation. Acceptance of a candidate for membership would be contingent upon recommendation by the pastor or by another group as designated by the church.
- 5. By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism when membership has lapsed, terminated, been lost, or when no letter is otherwise obtainable.

B. PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS

Becoming a member is a way of demonstrating loyalty to the Vision and community of Hill Church. In addition to moral responsibilities (listed below), members enjoy certain privileges. Only members can suggest Elders and Deacons. Only members are able to serve as a Deacon or Elder. Only members can administer the ordinances of the church (unless approved beforehand by the Elders). Every member of the church is given discounts at events (e.g., rental prices, event costs, etc.).

C. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership will be terminated in the following ways:

- 1. Death
- 2. Granting a letter to another church

3. Erasure (upon request in writing or proof of membership in a church of another denomination)
4. Exclusion by action of this church, or, after contact or attempt to contact member, at the discretion of the Business Administrator/Office Administrator.

D. DISCIPLINE

It will be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that reasonable measures will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Pastor, other members of the church Staff, and Elders are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another will be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.

Should some serious condition exist, which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, every reasonable measure should be taken by the pastor and the Elders to resolve the problem. Such proceedings will be confidential and pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. Should it be determined that the welfare of the church will be best served by the exclusion of a member, the church may exclude such member by a majority vote of the Elders.

Any person whose membership has been terminated for any reason, which has made it necessary for the church to exclude that person, may upon that person's request be restored to membership by a vote of the Elders upon evidence of that person's repentance and reformation.

E. MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

This covenant represents a goal that the Church Body should strive to attain:

Therefore, having been led, as I believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord, and on the profession of my faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, I do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

Members of HILL CHURCH strive:

- To share the gospel with non-Christians on a regular basis;
- To be actively, regularly involved in the various ministries of Hill Church, proactively using my spiritual gifts for the Body (e.g., Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12);
- To advance the health and success of Hill Church (e.g., Rom. 14:19; 15:2; 1 Thess. 5:11);
- To live a life of holiness, abstaining from sin (e.g., Eph. 1:4; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 Pet. 1:16; 2:5);
- To be a “generous giver, sharing with others” (1 Tim. 6:18 NET), especially via the ministries of Hill Church (1 Tim. 6:18);
- To remain “devoted to one another with mutual love, showing eagerness in honoring one another” (Rom. 12:9-10); so as to “live in harmony with others,” by “not being conceited” (Rom. 12:16);
- To not gossip, malign, or damage the reputation of any other person (cf. 2 Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:15, 19-20); but, instead, if a person has sinned against me, I will only follow Jesus’s instructions to attempt to “regain my brother/sister” (Matt. 18:15-22);

- To commit to growing in my discipleship: i.e., I will do whatever it takes to be more like Jesus (e.g., personal devotional life, prayers, worship, service, evangelism, being disciplined by others, *et al.*)

VII. Church Officers, Staff, and Organizational Structure

Hill Church is led by Elders (see organizational chart at end of By-Laws). The Staff are to implement the Strategy under the leadership of the Elders.

ELECTION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

Elders and Deacons are suggested by any Member of Hill Church to the Elders once the Elders announce that there is an opening. At least two weeks' time will be given for the Members of Hill Church to submit their name(s). For Deacons, the deacons will screen and limit their choice(s) and get final approval for the Deacon(s) from the Elders. Elders will choose the Elder(s) necessary. New Deacons and Elders will be presented to the Church for a public interview (either live or pre-recorded) and a biography will be made public. Deacons and Elders will be chosen predicated chiefly upon the duties and requirements explained in their respective sections below.

Deacons are asked to serve two years. If they wish, they may continue to serve an additional two consecutive years with majority approval of the Deacons. If an extenuating circumstance arises, a Deacon may temporarily take a leave of absence without losing their position by majority approval of the Deacons. When a Deacon's second consecutive term has ended, they are not eligible to serve as Deacon for at least one year. A deacon can be removed from office at any time by majority vote of the Deacons or Elders.

Elders are asked to serve for four years. If they wish, they may continue to serve an additional four years with majority approval of the Elders. If an extenuating circumstance arises, an Elder may temporarily take a leave of absence without losing their position by majority approval of the Elders. When an Elder's second consecutive term has ended, they are not eligible to serve as Elder for at least one year. An Elder can be removed from office at any time by majority vote of the Elders.

The following explains the primary function of each Office:

A. DEACONS (Financial/Facilities Leadership)

In the New Testament the Deacons were administrative servants (the Greek term for "deacon" means "waiter" or "servant"). The earliest servants to the ministry of the Apostles in Acts 6 were probably considered Deacons. The fullest treatment of the character traits demanded of the Deacon are found in Paul's letter to Timothy:

Deacons likewise must be dignified, not two-faced, not given to excessive drinking, not greedy for gain, holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And these also must be tested first and then let them serve as deacons if they are found blameless. Likewise also their wives must be dignified, not slanderous, temperate, faithful in every respect. Deacons must be husbands of one wife and good managers of their children and their own households. For those who have served well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. (1 Tim 3:8-13 NET)

Deacons serve Hill Church by being administrative servants of the finances and facilities of the Church. *The Deacons are responsible for making sure the various ministries and church entities are remaining fiscally responsible to the annual budget, and to the maintenance, betterment, and security of the facilities of the church. Concerning the various ministries, the Staff in each ministry area has full discretion to spend their budgeted amount. Concerning the facilities, the Deacons have full discretion to spend monies necessary and available for the*

maintenance and betterment of the facilities. The Deacons may consist of no more than five people and the Business Administrator. Deacons report to the Elders. In the case that *all* Elders resign, are removed, or die, the Deacons will become *de facto* Elders until the Deacons establish a new Elder Team following the steps outlined in the Bylaws.

Duties would include, but are not limited to, the following: give input as needed (especially at it relates to the Facilities) to the Elders in forming the Budget; improve or repair facilities; maintain proper insurance coverage; manage endowment and trust funds; recommend incurrence of long-term debt, or the sale or purchase of property, to the congregation (for feedback and eventual Elder [dis]approval); handle lawsuits or other legal actions; develop and maintains personnel and administrative policies and procedures.

Certain persons will have a specific role as determined by the Deacons, such as:

- The Chair of the Deacons, as corporate chair, signs legal documents and represents the Deacons in financial and legal matters in meetings of the congregation and the Elders.
- The designated Facilities Coordinator oversees the use, maintenance and repairs of the building and equipment.
- The designated Treasurer signs the checks, reviews and signs the Pastor's expense report and works closely with the Business Administrator.

The Business Administrator is typically not a Deacon, but works alongside the Deacons, signs checks, maintains corporate records, provides financial reports as needed, and drafts the unified budget for approval by the Deacons.

The designated Security Coordinator is typically not a Deacon, but works alongside the Deacons, oversees the maintenance and operation of the facility security and fire protection systems.

B. ELDERS (Spiritual Leadership)

In the New Testament the Elders were ministerial overseers of various ministries (the Greek term for "Elder" means "older person"). The term is used ca. twenty times in the New Testament as an honorific title for an office of various leaders in churches across the Mediterranean, especially those at Jerusalem. The Christian Elder was one who was considered wise, a devout disciple of Jesus, and able to lead and teach others because of their knowledge of the faith (1 Tim 5:17). The fullest treatment of the character traits demanded of an Elder is found in Paul's charge to Titus:

An elder must be blameless, the husband of one wife, with faithful children who cannot be charged with dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be blameless as one entrusted with God's work, not arrogant, not prone to anger, not a drunkard, not violent, not greedy for gain. Instead he must be hospitable, devoted to what is good, sensible, upright, devout, and self-controlled. He must hold firmly to the faithful message as it has been taught, so that he will be able to give exhortation in such healthy teaching and correct those who speak against it. (Titus 1:6-9 NET)

Peter's charge to Elders emphasizes the shepherding aspect of Elders:

Give a shepherd's care to God's flock among you, exercising oversight not merely as a duty but willingly under God's direction, not for shameful profit but eagerly. And do not lord it over those entrusted to you, but be examples to the flock. (1 Pet 5:2-3 NET; also see Acts 20:28)

Elders are the spiritual shepherds of the church. At Hill Church, the Elders are responsible for making certain the Vision and Strategy of Hill Church is being accomplished in the various ministries. This group may consist of

no more than four Elders and the Lead Pastor. The Elders hire or dismiss Executive Staff by a majority vote of Elders. When the Lead Pastor position is available, they will select a Lead Pastor Search Team of five people.

Elder duties would include, but are not limited to, the following: prays for the needs and people of the church; sets an example to others in the Church in making disciples; actively evangelizes; leads or participates in Small Groups and other ministries; receives monthly reports from the various ministries to see how they might support/encourage/challenge them; decides *which* ministries take place; mediates disputes within the congregation (according to Matt. 18:15-22); approves changes to the By-laws; approves changes to the constitution; decides which Causes the church would be involved with and/or support financially; decides theological stances the Church adopts; decides the annual budget each year; etc. If the Lead Pastor resigns or is dismissed, the Elders are responsible for supplying a preacher until the Pastor Search Team nominates another Lead Pastor (and is hired by the Elders).

Elder Qualifications

Including, but not limited to, the following:

- Must be a baptized disciple of Jesus, and meet the qualifications (both skills and character traits) outlined in the New Testament (e.g., see Acts 20:17; 28-31; I Timothy 3:2-7; 5:17; Titus 1:6-9; I Peter 5:1-2; James 5:14).
- Must be fully committed to, and actively participating in, the Vision and Strategy of Hill Church.
- Must have volunteered in a significant capacity in a ministry, preferably in a leadership or mentoring role.
- Must be recommended by a Member of Hill Church. They cannot recommend themselves.
- Must have the flexibility and availability to serve in the Elder role. The time commitment required can be delineated as: a monthly evening meeting; a retreat one weekend per year; approximately four-to-six hours per month for review of Elders materials, policies, correspondence, and meeting preparation; and other time requirements when needs arise.
- Must be able to keep confidential information.

STAFF

The Staff are responsible for implementing the Strategy of the Church in their respective ministry areas. While Staff recruit, train, and nurture as many servants as possible for their ministry areas, Executive Staff (= those who supervise the ministry area) maintain final jurisdiction on strategic details of the respective ministry area. The Supervisor of the particular ministry, with the input of the Lead Pastor, composes necessary job descriptions (with the approval of the Elders), recommends for hiring or dismissal to the Elders, evaluates, and recommends pay raises to Deacons. Remunerations, salaries, and financial packages are negotiated between the potential employee and Supervisor with the input of the Chair of the Deacons. The Lead Pastor serves as the supervisor for Executive Staff (e.g., Worship Pastor, Care and Connections Pastor, et al).

Duties would include, but are not limited to, the following: recruits and trains necessary servants from among the Church; makes and implements plans to accomplish the Strategy in the respective ministry; suggests the annual budget to the Deacons, and utilizes the budget within the constraints given; designs logos, signage, and marketing for the ministries; decorates the stage, room, or space necessary for the ministry; chooses where and how marketing and sign-ups occur; chooses which curriculum to use or create when teaching; chooses which camps to attend; etc.

The following is a list of each Executive-level Staff (see job descriptions):

EXECUTIVE STAFF

Lead Pastor: This person is the spiritual leader of Hill Church. The Lead Pastor, along with the Elders, decides the overall Vision and Strategy of the Church, and oversees the various ministries of the church in implementing the Vision and Strategy. The Lead Pastor is also the primary preacher.

Worship Pastor: This person is the leader and coordinator for the music ministries of Hill Church. This person selects and supervises the various musicians in each service. This person works with the input of the Lead Pastor to plan and implement the worship services, making certain the musical, media, and audio-visual needs are fulfilled by the necessary servants.

Director of Care and Connections: This person is the leader and coordinator of the Care and Connections ministries of Hill Church. This person implements programs that connects members and church guests to each other across the Church. This person assists in physical and emotional needs (e.g., coordinating funeral dinners, meals for families with new babies or those recently released from the hospital, short-term transportation, and shut-in visitation). This person supervises the various Care ministries that are needed (e.g., Divorce Care, Grief Share, *et al.*). This person also advises those who seek membership and seeks to connect them to the various Small Groups and ministries available. This person helps coordinates church-wide events (e.g., Fifth-Sunday meals).

Director of Adult Discipleship: This person is the leader and coordinator of the adult Small Groups ministry. This person works with the input of the Lead Pastor and Elders to make certain the Small Groups are teaching orthodox theology according to the statement of faith given in the By-Laws. This person starts new groups, trains leaders, and monitors the health of the small group ministries available at the Church.

Director of Children's Ministry: This person is the chief teacher and facilitator of the Children's Ministry. This person recruits and trains teachers and servants to serve in the Children's Ministry. This person plans events for the children that would give the opportunity to receive the gospel and become baptized, and/or allow for learning the teaching of Jesus. This person plans parenting events that equip parents to disciple their own children with confidence.

Youth and College Pastor: This person recruits and trains teachers and servants to serve in the Youth Ministry and College Ministry, along with being the chief teacher and facilitator of the Youth and College Ministries. This person plans events for the youth and college that gives the opportunity to receive the gospel and become baptized, and/or allow for learning the teaching of Jesus.

Director of Local and Global Outreach: This person is the leader and administrator of the ministries which focus on those outside of Hill Church. This person provides training and equips the Church's members in personal evangelism, plans public evangelism events that incorporate the entire Church, and keeps the Church abreast of events in the lives of the missionaries the Church supports. This person also oversees the various Outreach ministries of the Church, recruiting and training servants to lead and serve where necessary.

Business and Office Administrator: This person is the administrator of the day-to-day financial decisions of the church. This person works closely with the Executive Staff in maintaining a fiscally-responsible budget, maintains accounting records, and prepares financial reports. This person works as an integral helper of the Deacons in financial decisions that affect the Church. Moreover, this person is the administrator of the day-to-day office needs of the Church, serving as an integral servant for the Staff.

VIII. Amendments

The Bylaws will be reviewed every three years by the Elders. Any significant change to the By-Laws will be communicated to the congregation in print.