

# Hockinson Community Church Bylaws

(Approved June 3, 2018)

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## Article 1 NAME

The name, by which this organization shall be known in law as “Hockinson Community Church”, referred to herein as “the church”.

## Article 2 THE BYLAWS, FAITH, AND THE WORD

The bylaws of "the church" are subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. We are united in striving to know all the teaching of God as taught in the Holy Scriptures and in our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church to proclaim the gospel to all mankind. (Matthew 28:19-20).

These bylaws shall be interpreted so as to be consistent with the Scriptures; should any bylaw be found to contradict a provision of the Scriptures, the Scriptures shall prevail, and the bylaws will be modified accordingly.

## Article 3 ORGANIZATION AND INCORPORATION

The organization shall be organized as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Washington.

## Article 4 LOCATION OF OFFICE

The registered office of "the church" shall be located within the State of Washington at 15918 NE 182nd Avenue, Brush Prairie, WA 98606. The Council of Elders may change the corporation's registered agent and the address of the registered office from time to time, upon filing the appropriate statement with the Secretary of State.

## Article 5 PURPOSE AND LIMITATIONS

### Section 1

The purposes of "the church" are to:

- (1) Recognize the Lord Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church, which is His body, and this local assembly of believers. We shall be united for the worship of God, ministry to the believers, and the work of evangelism both at home and abroad. (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 4:16; 5:18-21; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)
- (2) Bring glory and honor to the triune God by promoting true worship, mutual edification, and gospel witness. And, turn the hearts of people to God, to their families and to others, so that they may know Christ. (Revelation 4:11; Ephesians 4:11-16)
- (3) Be an instrument used by God to unite a man and a woman in holy matrimony. We believe the Bible teaches that God's intended design for marriage is between one man and one woman, and that sexual intimacy has its proper place only within the context of marriage. We believe the Bible teaches that all sexual activity outside the covenant of marriage is sinful and offensive to God; and therefore, ultimately destructive to the parties involved. (Genesis 2:24; Leviticus 18:1-30; Mark 10:6-9; Romans 1: 26-32; 1 Corinthians 5:1-2; 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4)
- (4) Proclaim that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. And, that hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the church. (Colossians 1:9-14; 3:5-17; 4:2-6)

(5) Operate exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the classification of legal charities; and no part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of any member or individual; and no substantial part of the activities of the church, or any receipt of its funds, shall be utilized for any other purpose except those purposes mentioned above.

(6) Handle affairs pertaining to property and other temporal matters as required by the civil authorities

## **Section 2**

"The church" shall not have or issue shares of stock, and no dividends shall be paid. No part of the income or assets of "the church" shall be distributed to any member or officer without full consideration. "The church" is prohibited from lending money to guarantee the obligation of any member or officer of "the church." No member or officer of "the church" has any vested right, interest or privilege in or to the assets, property, functions, or activities of "the church." "The church" may contract in due course, for reasonable consideration, with its members or officers without violating this provision.

## **Article 6 MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1 Membership**

We hold that membership in the Church of Jesus Christ is not dependent upon being enrolled by a particular congregation or denomination but is, rather, dependent upon a personal relationship with God, the Father, through Jesus Christ, His Son. Membership shall not be required for full participation by anyone in all spiritual activities of "the church." However, it shall be required for the holding of office or council position or participating in the legal affairs of "the church," including the right to vote.

### **Section 2 Voting Members**

"The church" may receive into voting membership any person, 18 or more years of age, who professes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, purposes to live by the Word of God and who is willing to submit to the spiritual leadership of "the church" (Hebrews 13:17).

### **Section 3 Reception of Members**

A. A person who has attended church services for three consecutive months or more may be received into membership by confession of faith, or by reaffirmation of faith. In order to be received into membership, a person must submit a signed Membership Application and Covenant (see attachment A), attend a membership orientation, and be presented to "the church".

B. All members, 18 years of age or older, in good standing in "the church" shall be voting members. ("Good standing" means that a member is not presently under church discipline or has failed to attend church services for a period of 3 months without adequate reason.) Any voting member in attendance at a duly called meeting shall be entitled to one vote on matters brought before the congregation. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted. The pastors shall also be entitled to one vote each.

C. The Council of Elders shall maintain and update the membership roster.

### **Section 4 Accountability of Members**

A. Members may be removed from membership at their own request by informing the Council of Elders in writing of their intention to withdraw and the reasons therefore. If a member requests to withdraw because of specific problems or disappointments with "the church," the Council of Elders shall attempt to resolve those matters so that the member may remain in "the church."

B. Members may also be removed from membership by the Council of Elders when they:

- (1) Persistently, over an extended period of time, and without adequate reason absent themselves from the stated services of "the church";
- (2) Unite with another church;
- (3) Are removed for persistent unrepentant sin or serious doctrinal error (See Article 13, Church Discipline).

## **Article 7 GOVERNMENT AND OFFICERS**

### **Section 1**

A. The Lord Jesus Christ is the ultimate authority in "the church." He exercises His authority through the instrument He Himself ordained for that purpose, the eldership. The task of the elders is not to run "the church" themselves, but to determine how the Lord in their midst wishes to run His church. In the day-to-day decisions that face "the church," elders are to seek and find the mind of the Lord in any and all decisions, reached after thorough and biblically related discussion and prayer. Thus, ultimate authority in the day-to-day operations of "the church" is vested in the Lord and no one else.

B. "The church" strives to make decisions by seeking the mind and will of Christ through the Holy Spirit, acting together in unity of thought and purpose. (Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4; John 17:20-23). On occasion where a decision is at an impasse, the elders, deacons and ministry councils may find it necessary to resolve an issue through a majority vote

C. There shall be a Church Leadership Council consisting of the Council of Elders, the Council of Deacons, and the overseers of the ministry councils established within "the church."

D. The officers of the corporation shall be the President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, and they shall be appointed by the Council of Elders and their length of service will be established at the time of appointment. The President may sign, with the Secretary or any other proper officer of "the church" that the Council of Elders has authorized, corporation deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other Council of Elders authorized instruments. Under no circumstances can both signatories be related.

## **Section 2 Elders, Deacons and Ministry Councils**

A. The work of ministry belongs to the entire body of the believers, who should be equipped, guided, and encouraged by those who are gifted by God to expound and apply His Word with wisdom and power. The entire body has received gifts from the Spirit, and it is the task of the leadership to encourage the entire body to discover and exercise those gifts which are used in the different and varied ministries of "the church" represented by the Council of Deacons and the various Ministry Councils established to fulfill the commands of Christ. (Romans 11:29; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-27).

(1) Elders: Elders must be male voting members. "An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless – not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." (Titus 1:6-9)

(a) In order to be eligible for appointment, a man shall have been a member in good standing in "the church" for at least one year and shall have served "the church" in functions requiring responsible leadership. Any member of "the church" can recommend to the Council of Elders someone for consideration. He shall be nominated and examined by the Council of Elders. His name will be placed before the congregation for examination and comment for 30 days prior to Council of Elders' final approval and appointment.

(b) Elders, individually and jointly with the pastors are to lead "the church" in the service of Christ. They are to watch diligently over the people committed to their charge to prevent corruption of doctrine or morals. Elders are to counsel and offer Biblical correction to members struggling with sin issues which have been unresolved through private admonition.

(c) Elders should visit the people, especially the sick, instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourning, and nourish and guard the children of the covenant. They should pray with and for the people. They should have particular concern for the doctrine, conduct and needs of the pastors and help them in their labors.

(2) Deacons: Deacons must be male or female voting members. "Deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. Female deacons are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy. Deacons must show fidelity in relationship with their spouses (be a "one woman man" or a "one man woman") and manage their children and household well. (1 Timothy 3:8-12)

(a) In order to be eligible for appointment, a man or woman shall have been a member in good standing in "the church" for at least one year, and shall have served "the church" in functions requiring responsible leadership. Any member of "the church" can recommend to the Council of Elders someone for consideration. He or she shall be nominated and examined by the Council of Elders. His or her name will be placed before the congregation for examination and comment for 30 days prior to the Council of Elders' final approval and appointment.

(b) Deacons shall show the compassion of Christ in ministries of mercy and service toward the saints and strangers on behalf of "the church." As delegated and directed by the Council of Elders, they shall minister to the temporal needs of members and friends, manage "the church" finances, and see to the care and maintenance of church property.

(3) **Ministry Council Leaders:** In order to be eligible for appointment, a man or woman shall be a member in good standing in "the church." They shall be appointed by the Council of Elders. They will receive encouragement, support and direction from the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may, after examination and prayer, certify and appoint men and women who are members in good standing in other biblically centered fellowships who elect to participate in specific areas of church ministry with broad based community involvement.

(4) An Elder, Deacon or Ministry Council Leader may be removed from office by church discipline for an offense in doctrine or life. He or she may also be removed upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the congregation. An Elder, Deacon or Ministry Council Leader may resign his or her office.

### **Section 3 Pastors (Senior and Associate)**

A. The Council of Elders shall determine the specific roles and responsibilities for the senior and any associate pastors. The church will have one designated Senior Pastor and may have associate pastors with specifically defined duties as determined by the Elder Council. For example, a youth pastor would be identified as an "associate pastor."

B. Selection of Pastors – As the governing body of the church, the Council of Elders shall establish the process by which new pastors (senior and associate) will be selected. The congregation will be asked to join the elders in prayer to seek the heart of God and His direction and guidance for the church. As the Lord gives guidance, a select group (composed of church members with at least one elder) will be formed to seek the person or persons God is leading to our church, who will then be presented to the elders for consideration and examination. Final approval and appointment will be made by the Council of Elders.

C. It is the charge of the pastors: to feed and tend the flock as Christ's minister and, with the other elders; to lead them in all the service of Christ; to be responsible for the public worship of God; to pray for and with Christ's flock as the mouth of the people unto God; to feed the flock by the public reading and preaching of the Word of God; to teach, convince, reprove, exhort, comfort, and evangelize, expounding and applying the truth of Scripture with ministerial authority, as a diligent workman approved by God; to administer the sacraments; to bless the people from God; to shepherd the flock and minister the Word according to the particular needs of groups, families, and individuals in the congregation, mentoring and teaching plainly the first principles of the Word of God to all, visiting in the homes of people, instructing and counseling individuals, and training them to be faithful servants of Christ; to minister to the poor, the sick, the afflicted, and the dying; and to make known the gospel to the lost.

D. A pastor (senior or associate) may resign his position upon thirty days' written notice. If a significant portion of the congregation believes that a pastor's services are no longer edifying to the congregation and, if private efforts to remedy the situation are unsuccessful, the ministerial relationship may be dissolved as follows:

(1) Those requesting a pastor's resignation shall be required to state in writing the biblical reasons for their request. A special congregational meeting shall be called within two weeks as provided in the bylaws on congregational meetings.

(2) The pastor shall be given the opportunity to respond, as shall other members of "the church."

(3) A second congregational meeting shall be held two weeks later. Further appropriate debate shall be allowed, and a vote shall be taken;

(4) The ministerial relationship may be dissolved upon a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.

(5) If the ministerial relationship is dissolved, "the church" shall provide the pastor with at least one month's severance pay, and shall consider providing such other assistance as is necessary for his needs and the needs of his family while he seeks other employment.

(6) If the ministerial relationship with the pastor is maintained, members of the Church Leadership Council shall continue to strive together to resolve and bring remedy to any outstanding issues. Members are advised to first search their own heart. (Matthew 7:5)

### **Section 4 Council of Elders**

A. The Council of Elders is the governing body of "the church" and consists of the pastors (senior and designated associate) and duly appointed elders. The Council of Elders shall have the authority to make rules and regulations not inconsistent with the laws of the State of Washington, the Word of God (Article 2), and these bylaws. The Council of Elders shall manage the business affairs of the corporation, oversee all matters concerning the conduct of public worship, and shall seek through unity of heart the best measures for promoting the spiritual growth and evangelistic witness of the congregation. It shall receive, dismiss, and exercise discipline over the members of "the church," supervise the activities of the deacons, all Ministry Councils and all other organizations of the congregation, and have final authority over the use of all church property. The Council of Elders shall appoint the overseer of the Council of Deacons and shall approve the overseers of all the Ministry Councils.

- B. The Council of Elders shall choose its own Overseer, Moderator and Clerk from among its members.
1. The Overseer will usually be the senior pastor, but the Council of Elders can appoint anyone from among its members for this duty. The Overseer has just one vote and no authority greater than any other member of the council. The role of Overseer is to provide guidance and direction to the council.
  2. The Moderator shall be subject to the control of the Council of Elders. The Moderator shall preside at all meetings of the Council of Elders, and shall conduct such meetings so as to facilitate free and respectful debate and decision-making. If the Council of Elders appoints a Vice-Moderator, he shall perform, in good faith, the Moderator's duties if the Moderator is absent, unable or refuses to act. If the Vice-Moderator acts in the absence of the Moderator, the Vice-Moderator shall have all of the authority of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the Moderator. If there is no Vice-Moderator, or the Vice-Moderator is unable or refuses to act, then the Clerk shall perform the Moderator duties.
  3. The Clerk shall maintain the minutes of the proceedings of the Council of Elders, keep a current register of each member and in general perform all duties the Council of Elders may assign.

### **Section 5 Leadership Structure**

A. The Council of Elders shall have final authority for affairs pertaining to property and other temporal matters as required by the civil law for nonprofit corporations. In particular, the Council of Elders shall be responsible for the acquisition and disposition of church property, which includes the management of its financial resources. Neither the Council of Elders nor its delegates shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, pledge or in any manner encumber any church property worth more than \$10,000, nor to incur any indebtedness exceeding the sum of \$10,000, unless first authorized to do so at a congregational meeting, either through the adoption of the annual budget or by special action of the congregation. The Council of Elders will normally delegate to the deacons or to other members such of these responsibilities as it deems appropriate.

B. The Council of Elders shall consist of three (3) or more members. In no case may the Council of Elders proceed with fewer than a majority present. If at any time there are less than three men on the Council of Elders, the remaining members of the Council of Elders and the Council of Deacons shall provide for the examination of potential elders from within the congregation, or may appoint elders from within the congregation, to be "acting" members of the Council of Elders to augment the existing Council of Elders temporarily.

C. The Corporate Secretary will be appointed by the Council of Elders and shall in good faith maintain one or more books for the minutes of the proceedings of the members; provide that all notices are served in accordance with these bylaws or as required by law; be custodian of "the church" and corporate records; when requested or required, authenticate any records of "the church;" keep a current register of the post office address of each member; and in general perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and any other duties that the Council of Elders may assign to the Secretary.

D. The Treasurer shall not be an elder or a pastor in "the church." The Treasurer, who shall ordinarily be a deacon, will be appointed by the Council of Elders. The Treasurer shall have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds and securities of "the church;" receive and give receipts for moneys due and payable to "the church" from any source, and deposit all moneys in "the church's" name in banks, trust companies, or other depositories that the Council of Elders shall select; submit the books and records to a Certified Public Accountant or other accountant as directed by the Council of Elders; and in general perform all of the duties incident to the office of Treasurer and any other duties that the Council of Elders may assign to the Treasurer. The Treasurer will submit monthly financial reports to the Council of Elders and the Council of Deacons.

E. The Council of Elders may establish such Ministry Councils or committees as it deems necessary for the work of "the church."

### **Section 6 Council of Deacons**

The Council of Deacons shall oversee the ministries of mercy and service in "the church." Other forms of service for "the church" may also be committed to the deacons.

### **Section 7 Ministry Councils**

Ministry Councils, as designated by the Council of Elders, shall attend to those specialized areas of ministry and body life of "the church." All individuals involved with children and youth ministries shall be required by "the church" to submit to a background check. Expense for this will be the responsibility of "the church."

## **Article 8 CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

A. Meetings for worship, prayer, teaching, fellowship and other spiritual or corporate purposes shall be at such time and place as determined by the Council of Elders.

B. The Church Leadership Council shall meet quarterly at such time and place as they determine to spend time in worship, prayer and fellowship with one another, to report on the different Ministry Councils and to bring forth any needs or decisions and transact business as may concern "the church". A report of all business transacted, decisions made, and the financial status of "the church" shall be made available to members of "the church" upon request.

C. An Annual Meeting of "the church" shall be held in the first quarter of each year at a date, time, and place to be determined by the Council of Elders. At the Annual Meeting, the Church Leadership Council and the members shall interact together about the scope and direction of church ministries.

D. Special meetings of "the church" shall be called at a date and location to be determined by the Council of Elders whenever the Council of Elders deems it to be in the best interest of "the church" or when requested in writing to do so by one-fourth (1/4) of the church's voting members in good standing.

E. The purpose of a special meeting shall be announced to "the church" in advance. Examples include, but are not limited to: proposed amendment to the bylaws or articles of incorporation; the election or removal of officers; the calling or removing of a pastor; the acquisition or disposition of property worth more than \$10,000; or the dissolution of "the church."

F. When a meeting is called for the transaction of specific matters of business, no business shall be conducted except that which is stated in the notice.

G. Unless provided otherwise in these bylaws, a simple majority vote of those in attendance is sufficient to decide any matter. Matters that require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present are: removal of a pastor, elder, deacon, or ministry leader (Article 7) and amending these bylaws (Article 16).

H. The Moderator and the Clerk of the Council of Elders shall serve as Moderator and Secretary respectively in congregational meetings.

## **Article 9 CHURCH RECORDS**

A. The Council of Elders shall keep the following records: minutes of its meetings and changes in the membership of the congregation; minutes of the meetings of the congregation; rolls of the members in the congregation; resolutions adopted by the Council of Elders; appropriate accounting records; its articles or restated articles of incorporation and all amendments to them currently in effect; its bylaws or restated bylaws and all amendments to them currently in effect.

B. Any member of "the church" shall be entitled to inspect and copy, at a reasonable time and location specified by the Council of Elders, any of "the church" records described above, provided the Council of Elders finds that the member has a proper purpose and is acting in good faith. The Council of Elders may limit access to any records that contain confidential information about a particular person or persons.

## **Article 10 BIBLICAL COUNSELING**

A. All Christians struggle with sin and the effect it has on our lives and our relationships (Romans 3:23; 7:7-25). Whenever a Christian is unable to overcome sinful attitudes or behaviors through private efforts, God commands that he should seek assistance from other members, and especially from the pastors and elders, who have the responsibility of providing pastoral counseling and oversight (Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:1-2; Colossians 3:16; II Timothy 3:16-4:2; Hebrews 10:24-25; 13:17; James 5:16). Therefore, this church encourages and enjoins its members to make confession to and seek counsel from each other and especially from our pastoral counselors.

B. We believe that the Bible provides thorough guidance and instruction for faith and life. Therefore, our counseling shall be based on scriptural principles rather than those of secular psychology or psychiatry. Neither the pastoral nor the lay counselors of this church are trained or licensed as psychotherapists or mental health professionals, nor should they be expected to follow the methods of such specialists.

C. Although some members of "the church" work in professional fields outside "the church," when serving as pastoral or lay counselors within "the church" they do not provide the same kind of professional advice and services that they do when they are hired in their professional capacities. Therefore, members who have significant legal, financial, medical, or other technical questions should seek the advice from independent professionals. Our pastoral and lay counselors shall be available to cooperate with such advisors and help members to consider their advice in the light of relevant scriptural principles.

## **Article 11 CONFIDENTIALITY**

A. The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them. Protecting confidences is a sign of Christian love and respect (Matthew 7:12). It also discourages harmful gossip (Proverbs 16:28; 26:20), invites confession (Proverbs 11:13; 28:13; James 5:16), and encourages people to seek needed counseling (Romans 15:14). Since these goals are essential to the ministry of the Gospel and the work of this church, all members are expected to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of others. In particular, our pastors and elders, and their wives, who are required to sign the confidentiality agreement (stated here in sections A and B), shall carefully protect all information that they receive, subject to the following guidelines:

(1) Although confidentiality is to be respected as much as possible, there are times when it is appropriate to reveal certain information to others. In particular, when the pastors and elders of this church believe it is biblically necessary, they may disclose confidential information to appropriate people in the following circumstances:

- (a) When a pastor or elder is uncertain of how to counsel a person about a particular problem and needs to seek advice from other pastors or elders in this church;
- (b) If the person attends another church, then to the pastors or elders of that church (Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; Proverbs 19:20; 20:18; Matthew 18:15-17);
- (c) When the person who disclosed the information or any other person is in imminent danger of serious harm unless others intervene (Proverbs 24:11- 12);
- (d) When a person refuses to repent of sin and it becomes necessary to institute disciplinary proceedings (Matthew 18:15-20) or seek the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (Romans 13:1-5);
- (e) When required by law.

B. Scripture commands that confidential information is to be shared with others only when a problem cannot be resolved through the efforts of a small group of people within the Church (Matthew 18:15-17). Therefore, except as provided, a pastor or elder may not disclose confidential information received during the Council of Elders meetings to anyone outside this church without the approval of the Council of Elders or the consent of the person who originally disclosed the information. The Council of Elders may approve such disclosure only when it finds that all internal efforts to resolve a problem have been exhausted (1 Corinthians 6:1-8) and the problem cannot be satisfactorily resolved without the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (Romans 13:1-5).

## **Article 12 CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

A. This church is committed to resolving in a biblical manner all disputes that may arise within our body. This commitment is based on God's command that Christians should strive earnestly to live at peace with one another (Matthew 5:9; John 17:20-23; Romans 12:18; Ephesians 4:1-3) and that when disputes arise, Christians should resolve them according to the principles set forth in Holy Scripture (Proverbs 19:11; Matthew 5:23-25; 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Galatians 6:1). We believe that these commands and principles are obligatory on all Christians and absolutely essential for the well-being and work of the Church. Therefore, any and all disputes in this church shall be resolved according to biblical principles, as provided in this bylaw.

B. When a member of this church has a conflict with, or is concerned about the behavior of another member, he shall attempt to resolve the matter as follows:

- (1) The offended or concerned person shall prayerfully examine himself and take responsibility for his contribution to a problem (Matthew 7:3-5), and he shall prayerfully seek to discern whether the offense is so serious that it cannot be overlooked. (Proverbs 19:11; 12:16; 15:18; 17:14; 20:3; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13; 1 Peter 4:8; 1 Corinthians 13:4-5).
- (2) If the offense is too serious to overlook, the offended or concerned person shall go, repeatedly if necessary, and talk to the offender in an effort to resolve the matter personally and privately, having first confessed his own wrongdoing (Matthew 18:15).
- (3) If the offender will not listen and if the problem is too serious to overlook, the offended or concerned person shall return with one or two other people who will attempt to help the parties resolve their differences (Matthew 18:16); these other people may be members of "the church," other respected Christians in the community, or trained mediators or arbitrators (conciliators) from a Christian conciliation ministry.

C. At the request of either party to the dispute or in the event of continued strife, the Council of Elders shall act as final arbitrators and make every effort to assist the parties in resolving their differences and being reconciled.

### **Article 13 CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

- A. The threefold purpose of church discipline is to: (1) glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6); (2) edify believers by deterring sin and promoting purity (1 Timothy 5:20); and (3) promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).
- B. The Lord Jesus has entrusted the local church with the authority and responsibility to discipline members for flagrant sin or serious doctrinal error, with the goal of restoration of the offender. This discipline is entrusted to the Council of Elders and is to follow the biblical pattern as set forth in Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:7-8; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 3:10-11; and 2 John 7-11. Any member of this church who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct that, in the judgment of the Council of Elders, is opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, is threatening to the testimony of this church, or is divisive to the body, shall be subject to church discipline.
- C. Discipline may involve exclusion from participation in ministry, removal of formal membership, up to removal from fellowship of this church. Degree of discipline will be determined by the Council of Elders as deemed appropriate for the specific circumstances. The Council of Elders, as is required by Scripture, may report to the congregation the names of those who have lost membership, or have been removed from fellowship, by reason of church discipline, and the reason for that discipline, as described in Matthew 18:15-20.
- D. By becoming a member of this church, members knowingly and voluntarily agree to be subject to this disciplinary process (Hebrews 13:17).

### **Article 14 INDEMNIFICATION**

#### **A. DEFINITIONS (THIS ARTICLE ONLY)**

- (1) "Covered Person" – means Hockinson Community Church and its "leaders", its appointed persons (such as, but not limited to, its deacons), its employees, and its volunteers; and any spouse of its leaders, its appointed persons, its employees and its volunteers; in relation to any "leadership activity" undertaken on behalf of Hockinson Community Church, hereafter referred to as, "the church".
- (2) "Proceeding Expenses" - includes counsel fees (those incurred as a result of the "proceeding" or any appeal thereof), all fines, judgments, penalties, and settlements, and actual and reasonable expenses incurred by the person in connection with, and/or defense of, such "proceeding".
- (3) Indemnify - to compensate for financial damage, financial loss sustained, or expense incurred; and to guard or give security against future financial damage or liability.
- (4) "Leader" – means a person serving as a member of "the church's" governing board (the board of elders), or "the church's" corporate officers, but only if acting on "the church's" behalf and within the scope of their delegated authority as such.
- (5) "Leadership Activity" – includes the decision-making acts of "the church's" "leaders" and other "covered persons" regarding the operation of "the church," and includes related and authorized activities undertaken by "covered persons" for the purpose of implementing such decisions.
- (6) "Proceeding" – any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, and whether formal or informal.

**B. GENERAL STATEMENT:** In accordance with the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act, "the church" may indemnify and hold harmless to the full extent permitted by applicable law (subject to the LIMITATIONS identified below) any "covered person" against "proceeding expenses" due to any "proceeding" resulting from the course and scope of his or her duties or functions pertaining to a "leadership activity" within "the church." The provisions of this article shall be deemed to be an agreement between "the church" and each "covered person" who serves in such capacity at any time while this article is in effect, and any repeal or modification thereof shall not affect any agreements then existing. Such indemnification will continue as to an individual who has ceased to be a "covered person" and shall inure to the benefit of his or her heirs and personal representatives. Individuals no longer considered "covered persons" will only be indemnified if the "leadership activity" took place while they were recognized as a "covered person." The provisions of this article identify the scope and limit of "the church's" indemnification of its "covered persons," but shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which such person may be entitled by separate agreement, insurance policy, or law (such as, but not limited to, the Federal Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 and Washington State's Special Immunities Law).

**C. LIMITATIONS:** "The church" may indemnify its "covered persons" whether or not they successfully defend against a suit, so long as the individual acted in good faith and did not engage in an act or omission that was intentionally or willfully grossly negligent, and reasonably believed that actions taken on behalf of "the church" were in "the church's" best interests. In a criminal proceeding, indemnification is allowed only if the individual had no reasonable cause to believe the conduct was illegal. "The church" retains the right to decide on all requests for indemnification, as set forth in section E herein. "The church" may not indemnify an individual if "the church" is

the entity which initiated a “proceeding” against the individual, or if the individual has been found liable for willful or intentional misconduct in the performance of his or her duty to “the church.” “The church” also may not indemnify an individual if it is determined that that individual received an improper personal benefit in money, property or services which he or she was not legally entitled to, or restricted from receiving, elsewhere in these bylaws.

D. INSURANCE: “The church” may purchase and maintain insurance, at its expense, to protect itself and any “covered person” against any expense, liability or loss.

E. INDEMNIFICATION PROCESS AND PAYMENT OF “PROCEEDING EXPENSES”: Indemnification and advancement of expenses shall be subject to the following process:

- (1) The individual seeking indemnification (or his or her heir or personal representative) must do so by written request to the elder board. Included in that request the individual (or heir or personal representative) must state that he or she acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct:
  - (a) was acting within the scope of his or her delegated authority,
  - (b) was implementing an authorized “leadership activity”, and
  - (c) that such person’s conduct was in “the church’s” best interest.

The person must also state in writing that he or she will repay the advance if it is subsequently determined that the conduct of the individual was outside the LIMITATIONS defined above, or otherwise determined to be ineligible. And,

- (2) The elder board must review all requests for indemnification by complying with the LIMITATIONS defined above, and by answering the following questions:
  - (a) Did the individual’s actions further the purpose of “the church?”
  - (b) Was the individual implementing an authorized “leadership activity” within his or her delegated authority? And,
  - (c) Were the actions free of any gross negligence or criminal activity?

The elder board may conduct a meeting with the requestor if they determine that such a meeting would be beneficial in the decision process.

- (3) Indemnification requests will be decided by the elder board. If a request is made by a member of the elder board, that person will be excluded from the decision process. If a situation occurs that a majority or greater number of elders are seeking indemnification, then “the church” will call a special meeting (as set forth in Article 8 of these bylaws) to appoint a minimum of five members in “good standing” to serve as a review panel to decide whether or not to approve the request. The review panel will follow the same instructions outlined in section E(2) above. All decisions of the elder board or review panel will be by “simple majority,” detailed in writing, and final.
- (4) The elder board (or review panel) will review and respond to all requests for indemnification within 30 days of receipt.

F. REIMBURSEMENT OF PAYMENTS: “The church” retains the right to review and potentially reverse indemnification and seek repayment of any and all funds paid if it is subsequently determined that the conduct of a person previously indemnified by the board was outside the LIMITATIONS described above, or otherwise determined to be ineligible. This process will be conducted by the same entity (elder board or review panel) that made the initial determination. The elder board or review panel will approve a reasonable repayment schedule and provide it to the previously indemnified person. If payments are not made within the timeframes identified, “the church” retains the right to implement other courses of action including, but not limited to, formal litigation.

G. NOTIFICATIONS: If “the church” indemnifies or pays the “proceeding expenses” of a “covered person,” “the church” will provide a written report to its members before the next members’ meeting.

## **Article 15 OWNERSHIP AND DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY**

A. “The church” shall hold, own, and enjoy its own personal and real property, without any right of reversion to another entity, except as provided in these bylaws.

B. “Dissolution” means the complete disbanding of “the church” so that it no longer functions as a congregation or as a corporate entity. Upon the dissolution of “the church,” its property shall be applied and distributed as follows. All liabilities and obligations of “the church” shall be paid and discharged or adequate provision shall be made. Therefore;

- Assets held by “the church” upon condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance, which condition occurs by reason of the dissolution, shall be returned, transferred, or conveyed in accordance with such requirements.
- Assets received and not held upon a condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance by reason of the dissolution, shall be transferred or conveyed to one or more domestic or foreign corporations, societies, or organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the responding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), and are engaged in activities substantially similar to those of the corporation.

This distribution shall be done pursuant to a plan adopted by the Council of Elders, provided that no assets are distributed to any organization governed by a member of the Council of Elders; and any assets not otherwise disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, for such purposes and to such organizations as said court shall determine.

**Article 16 AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS**

These bylaws may be amended or repealed only by the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members present at a duly called meeting of "the church" called for such purposes.

# HOCKINSON COMMUNITY CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

## Application for Membership

(Date application received \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_)

*(To be completed individually by those 18 and older. Please review HCC Bylaws, Article 6 – Membership.)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

DOB: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Children? \_\_\_\_\_ *(Please list names and DOB's for each child under 18 on back of this form.)*

Are you presently a member of any other church? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, what church? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you experienced salvation by faith and the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been baptized since your conversion? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you read the "HCC Doctrinal Statement" and "Core Values" documents, and are you in agreement with and committed to live by these principles? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you read the HCC Bylaws and are you submissive to the Word of God as addressed in the bylaws? \_\_\_\_\_

*Complete one of the following:* I have attended services here for \_\_\_\_\_ Sundays over the last \_\_\_\_\_ months.  
~OR~ I have attended services here regularly for more than one year. \_\_\_\_\_

Have you completed the Hockinson Community Church New Member Class? \* \_\_\_\_\_

*\* If you have attended HCC for more than one year you are exempt from this requirement.*

## Covenant of Membership

Having been led to repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

1. I covenant, by the aid of the Holy Spirit: to work together in Christian love; to join mutually in labor for the kingdom of Christ; to strive loyally for the advancement of this church in holiness, knowledge, and love; and to sustain its spiritual growth through worshiping, teaching and assembling together.
2. I covenant to contribute cheerfully and faithfully in support of this church and its ministries, in realization that all I possess is from God and that I am accountable to Him for its proper stewardship.
3. I covenant to strive toward maintaining personal devotions and family devotions as possible; to endeavor to bring saving knowledge of Christ to all those under my care and influence; and to walk circumspectly in the world (i.e. to be just in my dealings and faithful in my engagements).
4. I covenant to care for others in love: to remember others in prayer; to aid others in sickness and distress, to be courteous in speech, and to be slow to take offense and be ready for reconciliation.
5. I covenant to witness faithfully (in my words and actions) to the saving and sustaining power of my Lord Jesus Christ, so that in every way I may bring others to a saving knowledge of Him.

**I desire, as an expression of my commitment to Jesus Christ and His Church, to become a member of Hockinson Community Church and to join with this church body in doing the work of Christ in the world by living my life as an example of commitment to this body.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Attachment A)