

CHURCH CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

1/1/2026

The Highlands Community Church Covenant of Membership

Having given ourselves to God, by faith in Jesus Christ, and adopted to the Word of God as our rule in faith and practice, we now give ourselves to one another by the will of God in this solemn covenant.

We promise, by his grace, to love and obey Him in all things, to avoid all appearances of evil, to abstain from all sinful amusements and unholy conformity to the world, provide things honest in the sight of men, condemn drunkenness, and encourage sobriety in all areas of life.

We agree Faithfully to discharge our obligations in reference to study of the scriptures, secret prayer, family devotions, social worship, self denial, faith, and good works endeavor to “grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together for church conferences, public worship, and the observance of the ordinances of the gospel; nor fail to pay according to our ability for the support of the church, of its poor, and all of its benevolent works.

We agree to accept Christian admonition and reproof with meekness, and to watch over one another in love, endeavoring to “keep the unity of the spirit” in the bonds of peace, to be careful of one another’s happiness and reputation, and seek to strengthen the weak, encourage the afflicted, admonish the erring, and as far as we are able to promote the success of the church and of the Gospel.

We will everywhere hold Christian principle and sacred and Christian obligations and enterprises supreme; counting it our chief business in life to extend the influence of Christ in society; constantly praying and tolling that the Kingdom of God may come, and His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

To this end we agree to labor for the promotion of educational and denominational enterprises, the support of missions, the success of Sunday schools, and evangelistic efforts for the salvation of the world. And may the God of peace sanctify us wholly, and preserve us blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE PREAMBLE

Placing our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation and believing in the teachings of the Holy Bible as the plenary and verbally inspired Word of the living God, we have united ourselves with one another as a body of believers and we adopt this constitution as a declaration of our convictions so that we may carry on the Lord's work.

Article I - The Name

Section 1: Name

The name of the church shall be "Highlands Community Church" hereinafter called the church.

Section 2: Principle office

Highlands Community Church was incorporated on March 22, 2005 and the principle office is located at 2150 Joye Lane SE, Lancaster Ohio 43130.

Article II - Mission, Purpose, Values, and Vision

OUR MISSION-

1. To lead people to salvation through Christ and maturity through teaching of Biblical principles

OUR PURPOSE-

1. Give honor to God through worship.
2. Give hope to all through God's word.
3. Give help to others by sharing the love of Christ.

OUR VALUES-

1. The authority of the Bible.
2. The people in and surrounding the community of Lancaster, Ohio.
3. Personal integrity.
4. The importance of healthy relationships, both with God and one another.
5. The Biblical model for ministry and organization.

OUR VISION-

1. We will honor God by meaningful and creative worship services.
2. We will give hope to all through challenging Biblical preaching and teaching.
3. We will give help to others by sharing Christ through lifestyle

witnessing, local and world missions, and community involvement.

Article III - Government

The government of the church is vested in the appointed and elected representatives of the body of believers who compose its membership and the congregation under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Article IV - Doctrine

This church looks to the Scripture as its authority in all matters of faith and practice.

WE BELIEVE IN:

1. -The divine inspiration and authority of the scriptures as originally given and their supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
2. -The unity of God in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. -The creation of all things, both visible and invisible, by the Word of God; all creation being in, through and for, Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God.
4. -The universal sinfulness and guilt of man since the Fall, rendering him subject to God's wrath and condemnation and necessitating the regeneration of his whole being.
5. -Redemption from the guilt, penalty, and power of sin only through the sacrificial death (as our representative and substitute) of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God.
6. -The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
7. -The expectation of the personal return of Jesus Christ.
8. -The resurrection of the just and the unjust.
9. -The eternal punishment of the impenitent.
10. -The necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit to make the death of Christ effective to the individual sinner, granting him repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ.
11. -The indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit, granting new life to the believer and giving gifts to the church.
12. -The unity of all believers who together form The Church, the

body of which Christ is the head.

Article V - Membership

Section 1: Covenant Membership

- A. -Becoming a member in this congregation is based on a certificate of membership. Each year, during the month of January, members will renew their covenant in accordance to our by-laws on the church's annual membership rolls.
- B. -New members may be received and added to the membership roll anytime throughout the year by signing a covenant and receiving a membership certificate.
- C. -Any person who professes faith in Jesus Christ and is baptized may become a member.
- D. -Potential new members will complete church membership sessions with the Senior Pastor and/or Elders before becoming a member.

Section 2: Termination of Membership

- A. -Membership in this church may be severed by death, letter, personal request of the member, failure to renew the membership covenant from each year, or by expulsion.
- B. -In case a member of this church is found in default and not living as a Christian should live, the Pastor and the Elders are to counsel with said member and scriptural steps are to be taken to restore them according to Matthew 18.

Section 3: Non-Members

- A. -We understand that there are those who desire to be a part of a congregation but do not desire to become a member. We welcome these people into our fellowship to share in the activities of this church and have the freedom to express their ideas.
- B. -Non-members have a welcome voice on any issue, but cannot vote.

Section 4: Additional Regulations

- A. -It is the duty of all members to abide by their Covenant of Membership, our Doctrine of Faith, and this Constitution and By-Laws.
- B. -No person shall be permitted to hold office, teach, or maintain membership in this church that has given their lifestyles contrary

to the teachings of the scriptures. (I Corinthians 5:1-13, 6:8-20, Ephesians 5:11-12)

- C. -Only active members fourteen (14) years of age or older shall be entitled to vote.
- D. -No change in the established policy of this church shall be made by any member, nor should any question involving such a change be brought before any church meeting without a written submission to the Board of Elders for sanction. Neither shall there be any solicitation or petition circulated in the membership for any purpose whatsoever without the knowledge and sanction of the Board of Elders.

Article VI - The Church Staff

Section 1: The Senior Pastor

- A. **Qualifications** - The Pastor of this church will be a firm believer and preacher of the fundamental truths of the Holy Scripture and our Doctrine as outlined in Article IV.
- B. **Duties** -
 - 1. -The Pastor will first and foremost give himself to the ministry of the word.
 - 2. -The Pastor will be an ex-officio member of all boards, councils, and committees.
 - 3. -The Pastor will examine all candidates for baptism and their conversion.
 - 4. -The Pastor will present a philosophy of ministry to the Board of Elders before being hired, which if accepted will be used as the Pastor's job description. This job description will be used for annual evaluations.
 - 5. -The Pastor will be responsible for the day to day administrative matters of church operations.
- C. **The Call and Election** -
 - 1. -Whenever a vacancy occurs, a candidate for the office of the pastorate will be recommended to the Board of Elders by a search committee appointed by the Board of Elders.
 - 2. -Before the candidate is recommended to the congregation for

employment, a trial sermon and a written proposal with the terms of employment should be obtained.

3. -After consideration of the Search Committee, an affirmative decision of the Board of Elders and a seventy-five percent (75%) majority vote of the members present at a congregational meeting the candidate will be extended the call.

D. Termination -

1. -The service of the pastor will continue until he or the Board of Elders give a ninety (90) day notice (unless negotiated otherwise) for a desire

2. -The church may at any time dismiss the Pastor from all duties, if he is found guilty of conduct unbecoming a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

3. -In addition, if there is heresy in his preaching, immorality, or any undesirable conduct against the beliefs of this church, the relationship will cease at once. Recommendation for such actions must come from the Board of Elders. A meeting must be held by the Board of Elders with the pastor to inform him that they will be calling a special Congregational meeting, and inform him of the subject of the meeting. A majority vote of the members present at this meeting will be the final decision. Upon termination, he will immediately return all church property. He will be given one month's pay with benefits.

E. Evaluation -

-Annually, the Board of Elders will perform an evaluation of the Pastor. This will include a review of the state of the church, the performance of the pastor according to his philosophy of ministry, and a review of his salary and benefits. This will be done at a meeting with the Pastor. Any suggestions or changes from either the Pastor or the Board of Elders will be discussed at that time and reported to the Ministry Council and the Congregation.

Section 2: Other Pastoral Staff

A. -There may be a need for other pastoral staff members to serve the church in various capacities from time to time as such, but not limited to, an Associate Pastor, an Assistant Pastor, a Minister of Music, etc.

- B. -Whenever a need occurs, the Senior Pastor and the Board of Elders with assistance from the Ministry Counsel may seek and interview applicants for such positions. Upon finding an acceptable candidate, the Board of Elders will establish the terms and conditions of employment including compensation and benefits for the person being hired.
- C. -Persons filling such positions will:
 - 1. -Agree to be fully committed and supportive of the total church program as a pastoral staff member.
 - 2. -Agree to teach, practice, and influence church members and those attending towards the doctrines and practices as stated in our Covenant of Membership, our Church Constitution, and our Senior Pastor's philosophy of ministry.
 - 3. -Agree to serve under the direct supervision and guidance of the Senior Pastor and under the authority of the Board of Elders.

Section 3: - All Other Staff

- A. -There may be a need for other staff members to serve the church in various capacities from time to time such as, but not limited to: Church Secretaries, Department Directors, Musicians, Custodians etc.
- B. -Whenever a need occurs, the Pastoral Staff and the Board of Elders, with assistance from the ministry council may seek and interview applicants for such positions. Upon finding an acceptable candidate, the Board of Elders will establish the terms and conditions of employment.
- C. Persons filling such positions will:
 - 1. -Agree to be fully committed and supportive of the total church program as a staff member
 - 2. -They will at no time teach, practice or influence church members or those attending towards doctrines or practices contrary to those stated in our Covenant of Membership, our Church Constitution, or our Senior Pastor's philosophy of ministry.

Article VII - Officers of the Church

Section 1: General Regulations Regarding all officers of the Church

- A. -No one will be elected to office that has not been a member of this church for at least one year except upon approval of the Board of Elders and who has reached the age of twenty-one (21)
- B. -All officers will be spiritually mature, of unquestioned Christian character, loyal to the Word of God, dedicated and devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the spiritual and material welfare of this church. They are encouraged to be faithful in attendance and participation in both regular and special services of the church.

Section 2: The Board of Elders

- A. -Biblical qualifications are I Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:6-9, I Peter 5:1-3.
- B. -Duties of Elders are:
 - 1. -To serve the Congregation with spiritual leadership according to the above mentioned scriptures.
 - 2. -To serve as liaisons between all church staff and the Congregation.
 - 3. -To act as the human resource team for staffing the church.
 - 4. -To legally hold in trust, maintain, and insure all property, real and personal, of the church.
 - 5. -To decide all church financial matters with assistance from a committee of three consisting of a treasurer, secretary, and an elder with the assistance from the pastors within all Congregational and Constitutional limitations.
 - 6. -To select their own chairman when needed.
- C. -Affirmation - The Board of Elders will consist of no less than three (3) but not more than five (7) members. At the time of a vacancy or need for an Elder, the Elders, along with the Pastor, will prayerfully under the leadership of the Lord seek a candidate for the office. Once a person has met the qualifications of an Elder, he will be interviewed by the Elder board and Pastor and presented to the church for a seventy-five (75) affirmative vote by secret ballot during the annual or a special congregational meeting. Elders will serve for a three (3) year term and after a one

year layoff may be reconsidered for another term.

- D. Dismissal - The church may at any time dismiss an Elder from all duties of he is found guilty of conduct unbecoming a church Elder or if there is any heresy in his teachings or beliefs which the church considers detrimental to its progress or well being.

Section 3: The Treasurer

- A. Selection - The Board of Elders will select a Church Treasurer at the recommendation of the Senior Pastor.
- B. Duties: The Treasurer is:
 - 1. -Authorised to pay all bills approved by the Board of Elders
 - 2. -Authorised to sign checks
 - To keep an accurate account of all transactions
 - 3. -To report regularly to the Board of Elders and the congregation.
 - 4. -To prepare all required payroll and tax forms
- C. The church will provide a fiduciary bond for the treasurer.

Section 4: The Church/Financial Secretary

- A. Selection - The Board of Elders will select a church/financial secretary at the recommendation of the Senior Pastor.
- B. Duties: The church/financial secretary is:
 - 1. -To count and record all money received by the church from offerings or individuals with the help of the Church Treasurer and Elder before it leaves the church.
 - 2. -Treasurer, Elder, or church/financial secretary to deposit all such funds in the bank.
 - 3. -To provide the Church Treasurer with a record of all money received and deposited, specifying the distribution into various funds as indicated from both special and regular offerings.
 - 4. -To report regularly to the Board of Elders and the Congregation.
 - 5. -To provide a statement of giving to contributors at the end of each calendar year.
- C. The church will provide a fiduciary bond for the church/financial secretary.

Section 5: The Church/Financial Secretary

- A. Selection - The Board of Elders will select a church/financial secretary at the recommendation of the Senior Pastor.
- B. Duties: The Church/Financial Secretary is:
 - 1. -To record and keep minutes of all annual and special called congregational meetings.
 - 2. -To maintain an accurate list of the names, addresses and phone numbers of the church membership.

Section 6: Other officers - Other officers that are needed by the church will be selected by the Board of Elders at the recommendation of the Senior Pastor to perform such duties as their office requires and will be subject to the Board of Elders.

Article VIII - Committees and Organizations

Section 1: committees - As the need arises, the Senior Pastor and the Board of Elders may create committees to meet specific needs in the church specifying qualifications, membership, duties, and tenure.

Section 2: Auxiliary Organizations:

- A. -The definition of an auxiliary organization is any organization of the church that is not under direct supervision of any Pastoral Staff or the Board of Elders, such as, but not limited to the Women's, Men's, and Youth groups.
- B. -All auxiliary organizations will be subject to the church's control ultimately through the Board of Elders.
- C. -Failure to work in harmony with the church will be cause for their disbandment.
- D. -The Elders should have a list of all auxiliary organizations and assign an Elder to each to act as oversight, support, and liaison to them.

Article IX - Church Meetings

Section 1: Church Services

- A. -There will be regularly scheduled services of worship. Other services will be scheduled at various times in the year by the

- pastor.
- B. -In case of inclement weather or other circumstances that causes the schedule to change, such notice will be given to the congregation by a decision of the Senior Pastor and the chairman of the Board of Elders.

Section 2: Church Ordinances

- A. -Baptism
 1. -Baptisms will be scheduled as the need arises.
 2. -This church practices Baptism by immersion.
 3. -This church does not baptize infants but practices infant dedication.
- B. The Lord's Supper
 1. -Communion will be observed regularly as arranged by the Pastor.
 2. -Communion is open to all who know Jesus Christ as their personal savior and lord.

Section 3: Congregational Meetings

- A. -An annual Congregational meeting will be held once per year during the month of January.
- B. -Special Congregational meetings will be called as need arises. They are limited to address only the pre-announced issue(s) at hand (announced at least two Sundays in advance in the Morning Worship Service).
- C. -A quorum is 51% of the church membership present at annual or special called meetings.
- D. The chairman of all Congregational Meetings will be the Chairman of the Board of Elders.

Article X - Church Property and Buildings

Section 1:

- A. -Personal use by members - The church property and buildings may be used by a member or regular attending non-member for a personal event with the approval of the Board of Elders.
- B. Services, meetings and gatherings of any outside groups - The church property and buildings will be used only for such services, meetings, and gatherings as approved by the Senior Pastor and the

- Board of Elders.
- C. Alcohol and Tobacco - The use of alcohol, tobacco in any form, and profanity are not permitted on church property or within any of its buildings.

Section 2:

- A. -No secret society will be permitted to hold services, meetings, or gatherings upon church property.

Section 3:

- A. -No Pastor or pulpit orator will be permitted to preach in the church who fails to confess clearly the fundamentals of our faith. Any visiting worship participant must have the prior approval of the Senior Pastor.

Article XI - Miscellaneous Provisions

Section 1: Monetary Principles -

- A. -The systematic giving of financial resources for the support of the work of the Lord is both an act of worship and a sacred responsibility. All members are encouraged to give regularly and faithfully to the financial support of the church and to the advancement of the ministries and projects it sponsors.
- B. -The Holy Scriptures affirm the practice of the tithe in the Old Testament, wherein one-tenth (10%) was set apart as customary and commanded under the Law (Malachi 3:10; Leviticus 27:30; Proverbs 3:9-10). In the New Testament, believers are instructed to give not reluctantly or under compulsion, but as each has purposed in his or her heart, cheerfully and in accordance with the grace and provision of God (2 Corinthians 9:6-8; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Acts 20:35).
- C. -Therefore, while this church affirms the tithe of ten percent (10%) as a scriptural and practical standard and recommends it as a foundational guideline for Christian stewardship, members are ultimately called to give prayerfully, generously, and joyfully, in keeping with the leading of the Holy Spirit and the abundance with which the Lord has entrusted them. Such faithful stewardship will prosper both the ministry of the church and the

spiritual life of the giver.

Section 2: Legal Provisions

- A. -This church will have the right to own, buy, or sell tangible property, both real and personal, in its own name and through the Board of Elders under the direction of the Congregation.
- B. -No profit will ever accrue to the benefit of any individuals from the assets, holdings, or other transactions in which this corporation may become involved.
- C. -In the event of the dissolution of this corporation, all of its debts will be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings will be divided among the members or any other individuals, but will be irrevocably designated by corporate vote prior to dissolution to such other nonprofit religious corporation as are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the articles of faith adopted by the church, and in conformity with the requirements of the United States Internal Revenue Service Code of 1954 (Section 501 ©(3)).

Section 3: Fiscal Year

- A. -The fiscal year of the church will be January 1st through December 31st each year.

Section 4: Amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws

- A. -This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended or repealed by a seventy-five percent (75%) affirmative vote of the members present at the regular annual or a special congregational meeting called for that purpose. (See Article V, Section 4D and Article IX, Section 3B)

Section 5: Interpretation -

- A. -Any question as to the meaning or proper interpretation of any provisions of this Constitution and By-Laws will be determined by the Board of Elders.