

# HILLSBOROUGH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CONSTITUTION

## ARTICLE I NAME

**Section 1** This congregation shall be known as the Hillsborough United Church of Christ meeting at 200 Davis Road, Hillsborough, North Carolina, hereinafter referred to as "this congregation", "this church", or "the church".

## ARTICLE II MISSION AND PURPOSE

**Section 1** Guided by the teachings and example of Jesus Christ, and open to new insights, HUCC is committed to being a congregation engaged in an on-going spiritual growth that fosters a tolerant, loving atmosphere and is inclusive and affirming of persons of all races, backgrounds, social classes, physical and mental abilities and health, ages, sexual orientations, and cultures. We strive to be the whole people of God, welcoming all into the full life and ministry of the church. This congregation interprets full life and ministry to be active membership, leadership, and employment, with all the attendant responsibilities and privileges. All members are entitled to all sacraments and holy celebrations of the church, including such examples as baptisms, ordinations, and marriages or holy unions; all members are invited into full service in the church, including such examples as teaching Sunday School, leading youth groups, and participating in mission activities.

**Section 2** Purpose -- The aim of this congregation shall be to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ by:

- a. maintaining regular services of worship
- b. preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- c. celebrating the sacraments
- d. providing religious instruction
- e. nurturing Christian fellowship and unity within this congregation and the Church Universal
- f. tendering loving service to humanity, striving for righteousness, justice, peace, and freedom.
- g. using open, inclusive, and gender-neutral language in its pronouncements, prayers, hymns, and Scripture readings.

## ARTICLE III POLICY

**Section 1** Relationship to National Body -- This congregation shall be a part of the

United Church of Christ, and it shall sustain that relationship to the United Church of Christ described in those portions of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Hillsborough United Church of Christ.

**Section 2** Government -- The government of this congregation is vested in its members who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject, however, to the Laws of the State of North Carolina relating to religious societies.

## **ARTICLE IV DOCTRINE**

**Section 1** Hillsborough United Church of Christ acknowledges as its sole head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Savior. It acknowledges as kindred partners in Christ all who share in this confession. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds, and expressed in the contemporary Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ. It acknowledges the need for each generation to make this faith its own in reality of worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of heart before God. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, it recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

## **ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1** Church Policy

**a.** Membership -- Membership in this congregation is open to any person who has been baptized and has been confirmed and has made a public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. In accordance with the gospel covenant which binds into unity "faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races," membership is open to all without regard to race, background, social class, physical and mental ability and health, age, sexual orientation, and culture. Members shall pledge themselves, insofar as they are able, to attend the regular worship of the congregation and the celebration of the Lord's Supper; to live the Christian life; to share in the life and work of the congregation; to contribute to its support and benevolence; to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the congregation and community; and to continue to nurture one's Christian faith and understanding.

**b.** Admission of Regular Members -- Those uniting with this congregation may do so in one of three ways after membership orientation:

**(1)** baptism and profession of faith;

(2) confirmation of baptismal vows; or

(3) reaffirmation of faith, either by presentation of a letter of transfer from another church or personal attestation of prior church membership.

c. Prospective members shall, following the membership orientation, meet with the Minister and/or the Church Council and then may be received into this congregation at any service. This congregation recognizes both infant, child and adult baptism performed in the manner selected by the individual or adult sponsor for an infant or child. Baptism shall be by sprinkling, pouring or immersion.

d. New members and a church representative will sign a covenant of membership on the day the new member takes the vows of the church.

e. Associate Members -- Persons who desire to keep membership in their home church but who wish to affiliate with this congregation may become associate members of this congregation. Associate members shall adhere to the policies and principles of this congregation, shall enjoy all its rights and privileges, and shall share in its responsibilities. Prospective associate members shall meet with the Minister and/or the Church Council following the membership orientation and then may, at any service, be received into the congregation as associate members. If associate members later decide to become full members, they may follow the process as outlined in Article V Section 5.1(b).

f. Absentee Members

(1) Persons who have moved away but wish to remain a member may do so by participating through annual financial contributions to the church.

(2) Missionaries who are members of HUCC shall retain full membership at HUCC as long as they are on the mission field and filing an annual mission report with the church. When the missionary is no longer serving on the mission field, regular expectations of members will be applicable.

g. Transfer of Membership -- Any member so requesting shall be granted a letter of transfer. Or, if preferred, a member may depart with a certificate of membership.

## **ARTICLE VI GOVERNMENT**

**Section 1** Administration -- The government of this congregation is vested in its members, and is executed according to the government and principles of the United

Church of Christ. While this congregation controls its own affairs, it generally recognizes and cooperates with the Eastern North Carolina Association, the Southern Conference, and the General Synod of the United Church of Christ and their instrumentalities. This congregation further seeks to cooperate in fellowship and service with interdenominational and interfaith groups.

**Section 2** Governing Body -- The governing body of this congregation shall be the membership assembled in congregational meeting. Its administration is by its officers, staff, boards, Church Council and the membership, duties of which are described in the by-laws of Hillsborough United Church of Christ.

**Section 3** Operation -- This congregation shall operate through the efforts and activities of the Minister(s), Church Council, Church Officers and other groups as defined in the by-laws.

**Section 4** The Church Year -- The Church Year shall be from January 1 to December 31, and all financial and historical records shall be kept by the Church Year. The annual budget will be determined at the November or December business meeting and will be implemented the following January 1st. Officers and members of the council and ministry members shall be elected at the May meeting of the congregation and shall take office on July 1 of the same year.

## **ARTICLE VII BUSINESS MEETINGS**

### **Section 1** Business Meetings

**a.** Scheduling -- The congregation shall have a business meeting on a Wednesday night or Sunday in November or December which shall be called a Budget Meeting and a Wednesday night or Sunday in May which shall be called a Program Year Meeting. The time and date of these meetings will be determined by the Church Council.

**b.** Notification -- The membership will be notified no less than the two Sundays prior to all business meetings of the congregation. Such notification shall be by letter or through the church newsletter.

**c.** Special Meetings -- Special congregational meetings may be called by the Minister, the Church Council, or the Clerk upon the written request of any fifteen members of the church specifying the reasons for which the meeting is to be called. The Church Council, at its next meeting, shall authorize notification of the congregation of the time, place, and purpose of such meeting. Such meetings must be preceded by a notice published in the bulletin or announced from the pulpit on each of the two Sundays immediately prior to the meeting.

**d. Meeting Place, Quorum, and Required Vote** -- The meeting place for all church business meetings shall be the church, and a quorum, which shall consist of fifteen members eligible to vote, shall be required for all congregational business meetings to transact business. All motions shall be carried by a simple majority, except motions to call a minister, amend the Constitution or by-laws, or to sell or encumber real property each of which will require a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.

## **ARTICLE VIII THE MINISTER**

**Section 1** The congregation shall call a minister to preach freely the Word of God as the minister's conscience directs; to administer the Sacraments; to cooperate with individuals, groups, and agencies in bringing about Christian practices in daily living. The minister shall be the chief administrative officer of the church and as such shall be responsible for the supervision of all the church staff as for the day-to-day program of the church.

## **ARTICLE IX PROPERTY**

**Section 1** Upon dissolution of the congregation, its assets and all property and interests of which it shall then be possessed after retirement of outstanding obligations, including any devise, bequest, gift or grant contained in any will or other instrument in trust or otherwise, made before or after such dissolution, shall be transferred to the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ.

## **ARTICLE X AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1** Amendments to the constitution and by-laws may be made at any regular or special meeting of the congregation by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting. Notice of proposed text of such amendments shall be made available to the membership in writing at least two weeks in advance of the meeting and said notice shall include the date for official consideration. All proposed amendments shall be brought before the Church Council prior to notification, but do not require approval of the Church Council to be presented to the congregation.