



## **Statement of Faith and Practice**

The following information is for the purpose of defining the convictions and commitments of this local body of Christ, Hilton Head Island Community Church. Whereas the Bible is our final and absolute authority for all truth and doctrine, this is not intended to supersede that authority. Nor is there intention to give final resolution on all truths contained in the Bible. The purpose herein is to hold up the truths that are considered the “essentials” of this body of believers.

### **STATEMENT OF FAITH**

#### **1. The Bible**

The sole basis of our belief is the Bible, composed of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament. We believe that Scripture in its entirety originated with God. It was given through the instrumentality of chosen men. Scripture thus at one and the same time speaks with authority of God and reflects the backgrounds, styles, and vocabularies of the human authors. We hold that the Scriptures are infallible and inerrant in the original manuscripts. They are the unique, full, and final authority on all matters of faith and practice, and there are no other writings similarly inspired by God.

#### **2. The God-Head (Holy Trinity)**

There is one true, holy God, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—each of Whom possesses equally all the attributes of deity and the characteristics of personality. In the beginning God created out of nothing the world and all the things therein, thus manifesting the glory of His power, wisdom, and goodness. By His sovereign power He continues to sustain His creation. By His providence and mercy He is operating throughout history to fulfill His redemptive purposes.

Jesus Christ is the eternal second Person of the Trinity who was united forever with a true human nature by a miraculous conception and virgin birth. He lived a life of sinless perfection and obedience to the Father and voluntarily atoned for the sins of all by dying on the cross. His substitutionary death was God’s perfect plan for satisfying divine justice and thereby accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him alone.

He rose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He lived and died. He ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father, where He, the only Mediator between God and man, continually makes intercession for His own. He shall come again to earth, personally and visibly, to consummate history and the eternal plan of God.

The Holy Spirit was sent into the world by the Father and the Son to apply to mankind the saving work of Christ. The essential accompaniment of a genuine saving relationship with Jesus Christ is a life of holiness and obedience, attained by believers as they submit to the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity. He enlightens the minds of sinners, awakens in them a recognition of their need of a Savior and draws them to redemption in Christ. At the point of salvation, He permanently indwells every believer to become the source of assurance, strength and wisdom, and uniquely endows each believer with gifts for the building up of the body. The Holy Spirit guides believers in understanding and applying the Scripture. His power and control are appropriated by faith, making it possible for the believer to lead a life of Christ-like character and to bear fruit to the glory of the Father.

### **3. Salvation**

The central purpose of God's ultimate revelation of Himself through His Son, Jesus, is to call all people into fellowship with Himself. Originally created to have fellowship with God, man defied God. Deceived by Satan, he chose to go his independent way, and was thus alienated from God and suffered the corruption of his nature, rendering him unable to please God. This fall took place at the beginning of human history, and all individuals since have suffered these consequences. Therefore, all are born into this sinful state and have need of the saving grace of God.

The salvation of mankind is, then, wholly a work of God's free grace through Jesus Christ. It is not the result, in whole or in part, of human works or goodness. Salvation must be personally appropriated by repentance, confession, and faith. When God has begun a saving work in the heart of any person, He give assurance in His Word that He will continue performing it until the day of its full consummation.

### **4. Human Destiny**

Death seals the eternal destiny of each person. For all mankind, there will be a resurrection of the body into spiritual world and a judgment that will determine the fate of each individual. Unbelievers will be separated from God into condemnation. God's judgment will reveal His justice in consigning them to perpetuate in eternal retribution their own rejection of God. The Bible calls this hell. Believers, through faith in the atoning work of Christ, will be received into eternal communion with God and will be rewarded for works done in this life.

### **5. Faith and Practice**

Christ is the head of the church. The corollary of union with Jesus Christ is that all believers become members of His body, the church. There is one true church universal, comprised of all those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The Scripture commands believers to gather together to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, and observance of baptism and communion, ordinances given by Jesus Christ. Additionally, fellowship of the body, ministry to the body through development and use of spiritual gifts, and outreach to the world are mandates of the church.

The word "church" used in the New Testament usually refers to a local assembly or congregation of the followers of Christ associated and covenanted together, for religious

worship and work. Each church is a local, independent body, subject to no central power; governed by the New Testament code, and amenable only to Christ, the living Head of the church. Such is Hilton Head Island Community Church.

## **6. Church Ordinances**

We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed in the Church during the present age. We do not believe, however, these ordinances are to be regarded as the means of receiving salvation (Matthew 28:19; Galatians 3:27; Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 11:26). Baptism by immersion is taught and practiced as the scriptural mode. Baptism is a holy ordinance, in which immersion in the water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, signifies our being joined to Christ (Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27). Baptism is to be administered to all those who actually profess repentance towards God, faith in, and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ and to no other (Acts 2:38; 8:12, 36; 10:47, 48; Matthew 3:6; Mark 16:16). The Lord's Supper is administered regularly. By eating the bread and drinking the cup according to Christ's example we commemorate His death. Those who eat and drink in a worthy manner partake of Christ's body and blood, not physically, but spiritually in that by faith they are nourished with the benefits He purchased and grow in grace (1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 10:16).

## **STATEMENT OF PRACTICE**

### **I. The Church**

The church exists for the four-fold purpose of worship, education, proclamation and ministry.

#### **A. Worship: The Church Exists for Christ**

*"Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment" (Matthew 22:37-38).*

The highest calling of each child of God, and therefore collectively as His church, is worship. Because God's Word teaches in John 4:23 that *"The Father is seeking worshippers,"* it is ours to respond in joyful obedience to His loving quest. That means that we are passionate to worship God through both personal and corporate worship. As we worship Him *"in spirit and in truth,"* we recognize that our love for Him will be demonstrated by transformed lives desiring to share His love with others.

We are committed to being a worshipping people, declaring His praises! *"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9).* (Additional references: Philippians 2:8-10; Ephesians 1:22,23; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Colossians 2:8-10; Colossians 1:18; 1 Peter 1:18-19; John. 4:19-21; Mark 14-16; Matthew 27-28)

#### **B. Discipleship: The Church Exists to Edify**

*"And He gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain the unity of the faith to a mature man, to the measure of stature which belongs to*

*the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13).*

One of the primary goals of Hilton Head Island Community Church must be the life-transformation of each of its members. This requires consistent Bible teaching, training in discipleship, personal evangelism and spiritual leadership. The body of Christ is thus composed of interdependent members, each having received from the Holy Spirit gifts which are to be exercised for the building up of the whole body and for the bearing of one another’s spiritual and temporal burdens.

We desire to encourage in one another the development and use of each other’s abilities, knowing that *“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body” (1 Corinthians 12:12).* (Additional references: 1 Corinthians 12-14; Romans 12:4-8; Hebrews 10:24-25; Hebrews 3:13; Titus 3:14; Acts 4:34-35; Joshua 1:8; Ephesians 4:16)

### **C. Evangelism: The Church Exists for Evangelism**

*“Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:19-20).*

We accept this commission as a priority of Hilton Head Island Community Church, individually and collectively. It is our desire to share as widely and effectively as possible the Good News of God’s forgiveness in Christ—just as Christ has commanded us.

God equips and call believers into a variety of vocations and ministries; and within that context, each person is to be a witness by word and deed to the Lord Jesus Christ. God offers His love to all without distinction and is concerned that believers achieve their full potential in Christ. The proclamation of the Gospel should be accompanied by genuine love and concern for all, and for the whole person. (Additional references: Acts 1:8; Colossians 4:3-6; Matthew 5:13-16; Matthew 9:36; Romans 10:14-17; Matthew 22:37-39; Ephesians 3:16-19; Ephesians 4:1)

### **D. Ministry: The Church Exists to Serve**

*“Then the King will say to those at His right hand, ‘Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me” (Matthew 25:34-36)*

Christ has commissioned the church to extend into the world His own ministry of compassion and of prophetic protest against evil. The church can never settle for its own comfort in a world wracked by problems such as moral decay, political corruption and oppression, violence and crime, unjust resource use and wealth distribution, and other social scourges that require solutions and interventions

informed by scriptural imperatives. Without manipulating political power to impose Christian standards on a secular and pluralistic society, the church is commanded to act as a conscience to the world by demonstrating the love and righteousness of God in both word and sacrificial deed. (Additional references: Luke 3:10-14; Luke 4:16-21; Acts 4:34-35; 2 Corinthians 10:4; Galatians 6:10; James 2:14-26; James 5:1-5; I John 3:16ff)

## II. Principles of Church Membership

- A. Christ is the Head of the Church. He is the true source of all the church is and does. His glory is to be the objective of every act, function, and motive of the body, both individually and corporately. (See Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 2:19)
- B. The Church receives its guidance from Scripture. The Bible reflects and contains His commands, His counsel and His purpose for the church and for each believer. (See 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Timothy. 2:15; Matthew 22:37-39; Psalm 119)
- C. The source of the Church's power is the Holy Spirit. We believe that the Holy Spirit's role is to indwell and control believers in order to conform them to the character of Christ. (See Acts 1:8; Romans 8:10-11; Ephesians 1:13; Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:16)
- D. Membership in a local body of believers is presented in the New Testament as definable groups of people who, once committed to the Lord, identified themselves with and committed themselves to a particular local body. (See Acts 2:44, 46) In order to implement the principles of worship, education, proclamation, and ministry, Hilton Head Island Community Church recognizes the need for formal membership. Further, as taught in the New Testament, accountability and commitment are realized by membership in a local body. (See Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1; Philippians 1:1; Acts 11:26)
- E. **Membership in Hilton Head Island Community Church requires the following:**
- Public confession of faith, having repented of sin and having accepted, by faith, Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
  - Completion of the Membership Agreement and the SHAPE Assessment.
  - Express a willingness to submit to and minister within the framework of the *Statement of Faith and Practice of Hilton Head Island Community Church*.
  - Baptized, as a believer, following the membership candidate's personal salvation experience. While practicing and believing the Bible teaches baptism by immersion, we recognize other forms as legitimate modes of baptism (sprinkling, dipping, and pouring), providing the membership candidate has been baptized **following** his or her conversion prior to making application for membership.

- F. Doctrinal unity is foundational to relational unity in the body of Christ. At Hilton Head Island Community Church, we hold to the historic doctrines of orthodox Christianity. We consider commitment to these doctrinal essentials to be necessary for membership in the church. We hold to the position of “agreement in the essentials and dialogue in the non-essentials.” Essentials are identified in our Statement of Faith.
- G. Various expressions of commitment to the body of Christ honor Christ and encourage the body. As we “grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ Jesus,” we aspire to the following: Development of a personal devotional life is a vital aid to individual growth. “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing...If you abide in me and My words abide in you, ask, whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.” (John 5:7)
- The spiritual discipline of private prayer and Bible study enables one to abide in Christ. Members at Hilton Head Island Community Church are committed to pursue a regular practice of abiding.
  - Regular participation in the corporate fellowship of worship of the church is essential. “And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near”. (Hebrews 10:24-25)
  - Relational commitment and connectedness with other members of the local body is a high value at Hilton Head Island Community Church. Both corporate gatherings of the church in worship as well as small group and one-on-one relationships, formal or informal, are essential to the health of the individual and to the church as a whole. (See Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 3:13)
  - Faithful stewardship of self and possessions is a calling on our lives by Christ. Each of us has been given supernatural abilities (spiritual gifts) and natural resources (talents and material possessions). It is our goal as members of Hilton Head Island Community Church to maximize the return on these by investing them in such a way they will have eternal impact.
  - Each believer should seek to identify, develop and utilize his or spiritual gifts and abilities and to seek a place of service within the body. In turn, the body is responsible to support and affirm each member of the body in their unique gifting and calling. (See Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 14; Ephesians 4:11-13)
  - Managing our material resources faithfully is the commitment of ours as members of Hilton Head Island Community Church. Having been bought with the price of Christ’s blood, everything we are and have belongs to Him. His Kingdom should become the true treasure we pursue.

- We recognize the tithe (10% of one's earnings) as the biblical standard of giving for the support of the local body. Beyond that, we desire to increasingly seek to submit our personal resources to His Lordship, displaying a spirit of generosity and cheerfulness. (See Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 6:38; Philippians 3:7-8; Matthew 6:33; Matthew 13:44; 1 Peter 1:17-19; Hebrews 9:11-14; Malachi 3:8-10; 2 Corinthians 8; 2 Corinthians 9; Proverbs 3:9-10; Luke 21:1-4)

### III. Principles of Church Government

- A. God's plan for leadership of His church is outlined in Scripture. He launched the church by giving certain individuals specific gifts — *“apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.”* As churches were established in the faith, elders were appointed to continue the pastor-teaching ministry in each local church. To the elders was given the ultimate responsibility for the spiritual oversight of that particular church body and the shepherding of its members. That is the pattern that serves as our model for Hilton Head Island Community Church. (See Ephesians 4:11-13; Romans 15:20; Titus 1:5; Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28-32)
- B. The role of Pastor is viewed in the light of the plurality of leadership according to calling and gifting. According to the New Testament, some elders were required to give more time to the spiritual leadership than others and would be called to fill more demanding responsibilities. They therefore would be worthy of *“double honor,”* usually understood as monetary compensation. *“Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.”* (1 Timothy 5:17)
- C. Hilton Head Island Community Church recognizes this biblical pattern for the plurality of godly leadership, under the oversight and watch care of elders and key leaders. In response to the biblical pattern of leadership, members of the body are taught in Scripture to lovingly support their leaders and to submit to their leadership. (See Hebrews 13:17; 1 Corinthians 16:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13)
- D. HHICC recognizes the biblical role of the Elders:
- To shepherd the flock (1 Peter 5:1-3)
  - To lead through example (1 Peter. 5:3)
  - To teach and exhort (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9)
  - To refute those contradicting truth (Titus 1:9)
  - To manage the church of God (1 Timothy 3:5; 1 Timothy 5:7)
  - To pray for the sick (James 5:14)
- E. HHICC recognizes the biblical qualifications of an Elder:
- To be self controlled (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
  - To be hospitable (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
  - To be able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:9)

- To not be violent, but gentle (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- To not be quarrelsome (1 Timothy 3:3)
- To not be a lover of money (1 Timothy 3:3)
- To not be a recent convert (1 Timothy 3:6)
- To have a good reputation with outsiders (1 Timothy 3:7)
- To not be overbearing (Titus 1:7)
- To not be quick-tempered (Titus 1:7)
- To love what is good (Titus 1:8)
- To be upright, holy (Titus 1:8)
- To be disciplined (Titus 1:8)
- To be above reproach (blameless) (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6)
- To be the husband of one wife (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6)
- To be temperate (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7)
- To be respectable (1 Timothy 3:2)
- To not be given to drunkenness (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- To manage his own family (1 Timothy 3:4)
- To see that his children obey him (1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6)
- To not pursue dishonest gain (Titus 1:7)
- To keep hold of the deep truths (Titus 1:9)

#### **IV. Procedure for Elder Selection**

The process for elder selection in Scripture gives evidence that those first elders were appointed by the founders of the church. By this example, it is implied that the existing spiritual leadership of a church be closely involved in the selection process. That insured that spiritual, not superficial qualifications, were the only criteria. Beyond this, there are no specific guidelines given regarding selection procedures. It would appear that freedom is given to the individual church to develop a process that will best serve its own unique needs and situations. (Acts 14:21; Titus 1:2)

HHICC has requested that Elders be nominated by the Lead Pastor for consideration to the existing Elder Board. At HHICC, the Lead Pastor serves as both the leader of the Elder board and as an Elder on the board. The current Elders will interview each candidate and prayerfully consider their nomination to the Elder Board. After interviewing the candidate and if the Elders feel that the candidate is (1) in agreement with the Elder requirements, (2) his family is supportive of this position, and (3) he is willing to assume the responsibilities, then after an unanimous vote by the Elder Board, the candidate will be submitted to the active membership of HHICC as a candidate for Elder via email. The letter will specify a date in which active members may notify the Lead Pastor and Elders in writing of any reason (i.e - reputation, moral issue, personal situation) why they do not feel that the candidate should be nominated to the Elder Board. Once the date has passed, the candidate becomes an Elder.

Elder terms are three consecutive years with a minimum of one year rotation off. After a one year rotation off, that elder may be considered again for another three-year term. Under special circumstances and by a special vote of by the Elder Board, an Elder may be asked to continue his term past the three-year mark.

## **V. Church Structure**

HHICC is Staff-led and Elder-protected. This means that the HHICC staff make the day-to-day decisions for the church under the leadership of our Lead Pastor. The Elders provide oversight concerning financial matters, staffing, spiritual unity, accountability for the Lead Pastor, and prayer for the staff and church. A Stewardship Team works as an extension of the Elder Board that gives a “Second-Look” to all financial matters and accounting as well as assists with Benevolence, Facility, and Fundraising. It is the role of the staff to raise up and equip volunteers, leaders, and teams to do the work of the ministry in our church and in our community.

*Note: Throughout this document biblical references have been included. The references are used as illustrations of biblical themes. As such, they are not intended to be used as isolated proof-texts.*