

Constitution and Bylaws

HARVEST BAPTIST CHURCH OF GRANDE PRAIRIE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

PREAMBLE

Placing our complete trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation and believing the Holy Bible to be the uniquely inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God, we band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers and hereby adopt this Constitution and By-Laws as our method of labour for the Lord.

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this church shall be Harvest Baptist Church of Grande Prairie.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be the glorification of God through the proclamation to all the world of the gospel of Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation; the administration of the New Testament ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper; the discipling of believers through the preaching and teaching of the whole council of God as revealed by the Holy Scriptures; and the holy worship of the Triune God in word and in music.

ARTICLE III – ASSOCIATIONS

Harvest Baptist Church, as long as it exists, shall remain an Independent Fundamental Baptist Church, free of any organized religious movement, conventions, fellowships, associations, etc. This church will be subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical (church) body. The head of this church is Christ, the authority of this church is the Word of God, and the guidance of this church is from the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE IV – COVENANT

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour (John 1:12; Eph. 2:8; John 3:16; Acts 16:30-31; Rom. 10:9-10) and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36-38, 16:31-34), we do now in the presence of God and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ. (John 15:5; Rom. 12:4-8; I Cor. 12:14-27).

We pledge, therefore, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in brotherly love; (Amos 3:3; Rom. 15:5-6; 1 Cor. 1:10; 1 John 2:10); to exercise Christian care and watchfulness over one another (Rom. 14:7; Gal. 6:2; II Thes. 3:14-15); to remember each other in prayer (Col.1:9; I Thes. 5:25; II Thes. 3:1; Heb. 13:18); to share in one another's joys and sorrows; (Rom. 12:15; Phil. 4:16); and to be slow to take offense and always ready to make reconciliation (Matt. 18:15,21-22; Rom. 14:19; I Cor. 6:7).

We pledge to strive for the advancement of Harvest Baptist Church in grace, knowledge, and holiness (I Sam. 12:23; Gal. 5:13; Heb. 10:24; Jam. 5:16; II Pet. 3:18); to promote its prosperity and spirituality (1 Thes. 5:14; 1 Cor. 16:2; Eph. 4:11-12); to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3); to support its worship, doctrine, ordinances, and discipline (Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:42; 1 Pet. 2:9; Matt. 18:15-17); and to contribute cheerfully and faithfully to the financial support of its ministries, giving special attention to the care of its pastor, the care of its needy, and the evangelism of the world (2 Cor. 8:14, 9:7; Mal. 3:10; Gal. 6:6; Luke 10:7; Acts 6:14; 1 Tim. 5:17; Jam. 1:27).

We further pledge to maintain personal devotions (Psa. 1:1-3; Matt. 6:6) and to educate our children in the Word of God, bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Deut.6:7; Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4; II Tim. 3:15); and to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances (Matt. 5:16, 28:19-20; Rom. 9:3).

Finally, we pledge to walk circumspectly and watchfully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts (Matt. 26:41; Col. 3:17; I Thes. 5:15; Tit. 2:12; I John 2:15); to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment (Phil. 3:16-18; I Pet.2:12; Heb.13:21;); to refrain from gossip, backbiting, and excessive anger (Prov. 26:20; Matt. 12:36; Rom. 1:30; Eph. 4:26); to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage (Prov. 20:1, 23:29-32; Habakkuk 2:15; Eph. 5:18); to maintain a clear separation from all religious apostasy and all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations (II Cor.6:14-18; I Thes. 5:22); endeavoring by example and by word to win souls to Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:58; II Cor. 5:20).

To these and all other Christian duties we do humbly and cheerfully submit ourselves, promising to perform them, not in our own strength, being aware of our weakness, but in the strength of the Lord, whose we are, and whom we serve; to whom be glory through all ages, world without end. Amen.

ARTICLE V – STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section 1 – Doctrine of the Scriptures

We believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. The Scriptures are the inspired Word of God and they are infallible and inerrant in all matters. The Bible was written by holy men of God, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit in such a way

that their writings were supernaturally and verbally inspired and free from error (2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:20-21). We believe the Bible, the collection of sixty six books from Genesis to Revelation, constitutes the complete and only authoritative revelation of God to man (1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Pet. 3:15-16); that it does not only contain and convey the Word of God but is the very Word of God (John 17:17); and that anyone who adds to or takes away from this completed revelation is cursed of God (Rev.22:18-19). God has preserved His Word down through the ages (Psa. 12:6-7, 119:140; Matt.5:18, 24:35; I Pet.1:23) in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts which underlie the King James Version (the Masoretic text of the Old Testament and the Textus Receptus of the New Testament). We also believe that the King James Version of the Bible is the divinely preserved Word of God for the English speaking people and that it has enjoyed a miraculous manifestation of God's approval all during its history and use and therefore, it shall be the official and only English translation of the Holy Scriptures used by this church and all of its ministries.

We believe that the Bible is the absolute, authoritative standard of faith and practice, to be studied, proclaimed, obeyed, and defended (Deut. 6:69; Josh. 1:8; Psa. 19:7-11; John 17:17; Jude 34); that it is to be understood literally, historically, and grammatically (Matt. 12:39-41; II Pet. 1:16) unless the context clearly indicates otherwise (John 6:35,51-58; 10:7; 15:1); and that every portion is without exception profitable for doctrine and Christian growth (II Tim. 3:16).

Section 2 – Doctrine of God

We believe that there is one, and only one, true and living God (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 44:6, 45:21-22; Jer. 10:10; John 17:3; I Thes. 1:9), the Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth (Psa. 104; Prov. 21:1; Dan. 4:25,35; Matt. 6:26-30), whose existence is clearly evident from what He has created and innately recognized by the conscience of man (Rom. 1:19-20), who has always been and shall always be (Gen. 21:33; Deut. 33:27; Psa. 90:2,4; II Pet. 3:8;). We believe that God is a Spirit (John 4:24), and as such is an immaterial (Luke 24:39), invisible (John 1:18; Rom. 1:20; 1 Tim. 1:17, 6:16), living (Psa. 84:2; Matt. 16:16), and lifegiving (Psa. 36:9; John 5:26; 1 John 1:12) Person. We believe that God possesses the absolute attributes of holiness and immutability (Exod. 15:11; Psa. 99:9; 102:27; Isa. 6:3; Mal. 3:6; I Pet. 1:15-16; Jam. 1:17); omniscience (Prov. 15:3; Isa. 46:9-10; Heb. 4:13); omnipotence (Job 42:2; Isa. 40; Matt. 19:26; Eph. 3:20;); and omnipresence (Psa. 139). In relation to His creation God reveals His attributes of trustworthiness (John 17:3; I John 5:20; Rom. 3:4); righteousness (II Chron. 12:6; Ezra 9:15; II Tim. 4:8), love (1 John 4:7-8), goodness (Psa. 100:5; Psa. 145:9; Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:17), mercy (Eph. 2:4; Jam. 5:11; 1 Peter 1:3), and grace (Rom. 5:21; II Cor. 12:9; Tit. 2:11).

Section 3 – Doctrine of the Godhead

We believe that in the unity of the Godhead there are three distinct Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, co-equal in every Divine perfection and fulfilling distinct yet harmonious functions within the Godhead (Matt. 28:19; John 10:30, 15:26; Acts 17:29; Rom.1:20; I Cor.12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Col.2:9; I John 5:7).

Section 4 – Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is God, co-equal with the Father and the Son, as demonstrated by His attributes (Psa. 139:7; I Cor. 2:10, Heb. 9:14), works (Luke 1:35; John 3:56, 16:8; Rom.8:26-27; II Thes. 2:13; Tit. 3:5; II Pet. 1:21), and association within the Trinity (Matt.28:19 II Cor.13:14; Eph. 4:30). We believe that the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person of the Godhead and as such possesses the attributes of personality (Matt. 12:31; Acts 5:3,9, 7:51; I Cor. 2:11; Eph.4:30; John 14:26, 15:26, 16:13-14). We believe that the Holy Spirit participated in the creation of the universe; that He empowered the writers of Scripture to write the Word of God; that He bears witness to the truth; and that He testifies of Christ and brings honour to Him (Gen.1:2; John 15:26, 16:13-15; II Pet. 1:19-21). We believe that the Holy Spirit is the agent of the new birth (John 3:5-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Tit. 3:5); that He indwells true believers (John 14:16-17; I Cor. 3:16, 6:19), sealing them unto the day of full redemption (Rom. 8:16; II Cor. 1:22; Eph.1:13, 4:30); that He intercedes for and gives gifts to each believer (Rom. 8:26, 12:6-8); empowering (Acts 4:31; Eph. 5:18), guiding (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:16,25), and teaching them (I Cor. 2:12-13). We believe that the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and that He restrains the evil one in the world until God's purpose is fulfilled (Gen.6:3; John 16:7-11; II Thes. 2:6-7).

Section 5 – Doctrine of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is the unique, eternal Son of God (John 1:14,18; 3:16, 18; Heb.11:17; I John 4:9), one Person consisting of two natures, human and Divine. We believe that as God the Son, Jesus Christ is completely God, Possessor of Divine attributes and Agent of Divine works, to be worshipped and honoured as God Himself (Gen. 3:15; Psa.68:18, 102:25,27; Isa.6:lff., 7:14, 9:6, 40:3, 42:5, 45:12, 21,23; Micah 5:2; Matt. 3:3; John 1:3, 14,18; 3:16,18, 12:41; Eph. 4:78; Phil. 2:10,11; Heb. 1:8, 10,12; I John 5:20). We believe that by virtue of His incarnation and virgin birth, Jesus Christ is completely man, yet without sin, able to function as both our mediating Advocate and sustaining Comforter (Isa. 7:14; Matt.1:18,25; Luke 1:35; John 1:14; Rom. 8:34; Phil.2:6,8; Heb.7:25; 9:24; I John 2:1). We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Ghost in miraculous manner, being born of Mary, a virgin, as no other person has ever been born or ever will be born of woman. (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:30,35). We believe that according to the will of the Father, Jesus Christ took upon Himself human nature, laying aside His glory (John 17:3-5); that He lived His earthly life without sin, and voluntarily sacrificed Himself on the cross through the shedding of His blood and His death once and for all on behalf of mankind, bearing the sins of the entire human race in His own body; that in so doing He paid sin's penalty and appeased the wrath of God; that He

rose again bodily from the grave to die no more and is exalted to the right hand of God the Father to reign forever; that only in Him, by virtue of His exalted Person and vicarious work, can man find salvation from sin and death and receive eternal life (Isa. 53; Matt.28; Mark 10:45, 16:1-14; Luke 24; John 5:39, 10:11, 14:6; John 20; Acts 4:12; Rom. 5:8; I Cor. 15:38; II Cor. 5:21; Phil. 2:811; I Pet. 3:18; 1 John 2:2).

Section 6 – Doctrine of Man

We believe that man was created in the image of God and is, therefore, unique among all God's creation; that in Adam man willfully sinned against God, thus forfeiting his original innocence and alienating the entire race from God; that every man from Adam's fall onward is a sinner by birth and by choice, utterly incapable apart from God of escaping his sinful condition or its rightful eternal punishment (Gen. 1:26; 2:7; 3:119; 9:6; Psa. 51:5; 58:3; Eccl. 7:20; Isa. 64:6; Rom.3:1023; 5:12, 1719; I Cor.15:2122; Jam. 3:9).

Section 7 – Doctrine of Angels

We believe that angels are spirit beings, created by God to serve as His ministers (Job 38:4,7; Psa. 104:4; Heb. 1:14); that although some rebelled against God and thus are forever wicked and doomed, they all were created sinless and pure (Gen. 1:31; Jude 6); that their ministries and ranks differ, but they are not to be worshipped (Rev. 19:10); that their strength, appearance, and travel are beyond human capabilities (II Thes. 1:7; II Pet. 2:11); that they are immortal and do not marry (Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:36); and that their proper abode is in heaven (Jude 6). We believe that the good angels (those that kept their first estate) are the spirit ministers of God: as such they proclaimed the birth of Jesus Christ (Luke 1:2633; 2:13) and His resurrection (Matt. 28:2,6), as well as protecting and strengthening Him (Matt. 2:13; 4:11; 26:53; Luke 22:43); they take interest in Christians' prayer and witnessing and give aid in danger and death (Luke 15:10, 16:22; Acts 12:7; I Cor. 4:9; I Tim. 5:21; Heb. 1:14); and they also execute God's will toward and judgment on the nations (Gen.19:13; Dan. 10:21; Matt. 13:39; Acts 12:23; Rev. 8,9,16; 14:67).

Section 8 – Doctrine of Satan

We believe in one literal, personal Devil, once a holy angel with God, who, through pride and ambition, led the angelic rebellion against God; that the Devil is the accuser of the brethren, the destroyer of men's souls, the god of this world who blinds "the minds of them which believe not," whose network of devils (fallen angels) carry out his battle against God and man; that Satan is the author of all false religions, of apostasy, and the author of the powers of darkness; that just as he cannot exceed the prescribed limits of God on his activity, so he also will be ultimately defeated at the hands of God's own Son; that he will be bound for the thousand years of the millennium and then will be freed to lead one final rebellion against Christ, after which he will be cast into the lake of

fire to burn forever in utter torment (Job 1-2; Isa. 14:1214; Ezek.28:1217; Matt. 4:111, 25:41; Luke 10:18; John 8:44; II Cor. 4:4, 11:14-15; I Thes. 2:18; I Pet. 5:8; 1 John 3:8; Rev. 12:910, 20:110). We believe that when Satan rebelled against God, a great number of angels followed in his sin; that they are confirmed in unrighteousness, some chained in darkness awaiting their final judgment and others free to aid Satan in his efforts to thwart the purposes of God, inflicting disease and pain, possessing humans and animals, opposing God's children, promoting immorality, and spreading false doctrine; and that their future doom in the lake of fire is certain (1 Sam. 16:14; Dan. 10:1014; Matt. 8:29, 9:33, 12:22, 25:41; Mark 5:814; Acts 8:7; II Cor. 4:3-4; 12:7; Eph. 6:1112; I Tim. 4:13; I Pet. 5:8; Rev.16:1316).

Section 9 – Doctrine of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is a gift of the grace of God; that it is received through repentance (by turning from sin unto God) through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work (John 1:12; Acts 20:21; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:89; Heb. 9:2425, 10:19, 12:24; I Pet. 1:1819; Rev. 1:5). We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again by the Spirit of God; that the new birth makes one that is dead in trespasses and sins a partaker of the divine nature and of eternal life, the gift of God; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and newness of life (John 3:18,33; Rom. 6:23; II Cor. 5:19; Eph. 2:19; Col. 2:13; Tit. 3:5; Jam. 1:18; I Pet. 1:3). We believe that justification is the judicial act of God whereby He declares one to be righteous, thereby pardoning his sin and imputing to his account Christ's righteousness (Acts 13:3, 9; Rom. 5:1, 811; II Cor. 5:1821; Eph. 1:7). We believe in the eternal security of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ; that when a person is born again, they have everlasting life which cannot be taken away from them; that God's children are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation and sealed unto the day of redemption. (John 5:24; 10:2728; Eph.4:30; Rom.8:2839; Phil.1:6; 2 Tim.1:12; I Pet. 1:5).

We believe that God sanctifies us (sets us apart) at the time of our salvation from the penalty of our sin (Rom. 5:8-9; I Cor. 6:11; Eph. 4:24); that sanctification continues as we yield to God and grow in wisdom, knowledge, experience, and grace, therefore having power over sin (II Cor. 6:7;

Psa. 119:9,11; II Cor. 3:17-18); and that we will finally be set apart from the very presence of sin at Christ's coming when we will be transformed in a moment into His likeness, our bodies being made immortal and incorruptible (Rom. 8:30; I Cor. 15:5154; Phil. 1:6, 3:20-21; I John 3:2).

Section 10 – Doctrine of the Church

We totally reject the false doctrine of the universal invisible church. We believe that each local New Testament church is the body of Christ; that it is composed of baptized

believers associated together by a covenant of faith and fellowship in the Gospel, that meet together to worship God, to receive instruction, to observe the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, and to do their part in making sure the Great Commission is carried out; and that each local church is a selfgoverning, independent body having Christ as the head, the Holy Spirit as its guide and the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice (Acts 2:41-42, 4:137; I Cor. 11:2334; 12:12-27; Eph.4:1116; I Tim. 3:14-15).

Section 11 – Church Ordinances

The New Testament teaches that there are only two ordinances for the church—baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that these ordinances are not sacraments, but are sacred commands, pointing to the Saviour. We believe that baptism is only for born-again believers; that it is to be done only by immersion; that it is to be administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; that it places a believer into the membership of a New Testament church; that it constitutes the public declaration of one's faith in Christ; that it symbolizes the Gospel by identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection; and that it pictures the believer's death to sin, the burial of his old nature, and his resurrection unto a new life (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:41; Rom. 6:3-10). We believe that the Lord's Supper, consisting of unleavened bread and drink from the fruit of the vine (unfermented grape juice), symbolizes Christ's broken body and shed blood sacrificed on our behalf to deliver us from sin and death; that it looks forward to His soon return for us; and that it is open to all baptized believers who are members of New Testament churches of like faith and practice who are in right relationship with God (Matt. 26:2628; Mark 14:2224; Luke 22:1720; 1 Cor. 11:2334).

Section 12 – Church Offices

The two Scriptural offices of the New Testament church are that of pastor and deacon. The qualifications of each are found in 1 Timothy 3:113. In the Bible the words, pastor, elder, and bishop describe three different aspects of the pastor's work. "Pastor" refers to his role as the shepherd of the flock, speaking of his work of teaching and nurturing and protecting the assembly.

"Elder" refers to his maturity and responsibility and the fact that he is to be an example to the flock.

"Bishop" refers to the fact that he is to rule or oversee the church. Deacons are to help meet the needs of the church that do not require the direct involvement of the pastor and that would distract the pastor from his primary pastoral duties (Acts 6:1-6, 20:17ff.; Rom. 12:8; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim.3:113, 4:14, 5:17; Tit. 1; Jam. 5:1416; 1 Pet. 5:3).

Section 13 – Personal and Ecclesiastical Separation

We believe that true believers are called to a life of separation from all worldly and sinful practices. A person, once he has truly accepted Christ as Saviour, is a new creature in Christ and should live a holy, consecrated life. He should separate himself from the world and its lust in obedience to the command of God. (Rom. 12:12; II Cor.5:17, 6:1418; II Tim. 2:19; I John 2:1517). We believe that the church should practice separation from this world's unrighteous system, repudiation of those that teach false doctrine and that spread discord among the brethren, and corrective disassociation from professing brethren that are flagrantly disobedient; and that those professing Christian groups or individuals that refuse to obey these commands are erring brethren and should be treated as such (Matt. 7:1520; Acts 20:2830; Rom.16:17; Gal.1:89; Eph. 5:11; I Cor. 5; II Cor. 6:1418;11:1315; II Thes. 3:6, 1415; 1 Tim.1:37,20, 6:35; II Pet. 2:13; I John 2:1517; II John 911).

Section 14 – Creation

We believe that approximately 6000 years ago God directly created out of nothing (not a re-creation) the entire universe, including mankind, in six 24-hr days, as literally described in Genesis 12; that the Noahic Flood was a literal world-wide flood that covered every mountaintop; that all theories of evolution, secular or religious, not only deny observable natural law, but also deny the truthfulness of the Scriptures and undermine the rightful authority of God over His own creation (Gen. 1:31; Isa. 45:1112,18; John 1:3; Rom. 5:12; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11). We reject the 'Gap Theory' as a false teaching which adds to God's inspired Word and thus also seeks to take away from His authority. We also reject 'Theistic Evolution' which suggests that God was the "first cause" and then He stepped back and allowed evolution to take over.

Section 15 – Doctrine of Last Times

We believe in the imminent, pretribulation, premillennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ in the air, accompanied by the bodily resurrection of deceased church-age believers, followed by the catching away of living believers to meet the Lord in the air (I Cor. 15:5154; I Thes. 4:1318; II Thes. 2:1;). Then all church-age believers will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ in heaven for rewards, or the loss of them, for their service to Him (Rom. 14:10; II Cor. 5:10). We believe in a literal sevenyear Tribulation, during which God will pour out judgment upon the earth. During this time the man of sin (Antichrist) will reign over the world, aided by the false prophet. He will persecute Israel and those who have accepted Christ during this time. Both he and the false prophet shall be cast alive into the lake of fire after their unsuccessful rebellion at the battle of Armageddon against the Lamb of God, who returns from heaven with His saints to set up His Millennial kingdom, and to resurrect all Old Testament saints (Rev. 619). We believe in a literal thousandyear reign of Jesus Christ upon this earth, during which Satan shall be bound and believers shall serve as administrators of Christ's kingdom. Satan will be loosed to mount a final unsuccessful rebellion against Christ and His

people at the end of the Millennium, followed by him being cast into the lake of fire, where the man of sin (the Antichrist) and the false prophet are, to burn forever (Rev. 20:110). Unbelievers of all ages, whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life, shall stand before the Great White Throne Judgment to be sentenced by Christ to burn in torment forever in the lake of fire (Rev. 14:911, 20:1115). Following the Millennium, the redeemed of the ages, in glorified bodies, shall dwell with the triune God forever, to serve and to enjoy Him in perfect peace and happiness (Rev. 21:22).

Section 16 – Marriage and the Home

We believe that the home was the first institution God established for man; that marriage is a sacred relationship between one man and one woman for life to the exclusion of all others; and that remarriage is only allowable when the marriage union has been broken by death. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity should be engaged in outside of the marriage of a man and a woman; and that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography is a sinful perversion of God's gift of sex. (Gen. 2:24, 19:5,13; Lev. 18:630; Matt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18; Rom. 1:2629; I Cor. 5:1, 6:9-10; I Thes. 4:18; Heb. 13:4)

Section 17 – Sign Gifts of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary; that they were only used during the period of the inspiration of the New Testament, and that they ceased with the completion of the New Testament; that speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit; that all believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit from the moment of their personal salvation, and are to be filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit continually, in relation to their surrender to His absolute will; and that ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, though God frequently chooses to answer the prayer of believers for physical healing (Mark 16:1720; I Cor.1:22, 13:8-10, 14:2122; Heb.2:34).

Section 18 – Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society, and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honoured and obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the Kings of the earth (Exod. 18:21-22; Dan. 3:17-18; Matt. 22:21; Acts 4:19, 5:29; Rom. 13:1-7).

Section 19 – Authority of Statement of Faith

This Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final authority of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible, and therefore, is binding upon all members.

ARTICLE VI – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 – Admission into Membership

Persons wishing to become members of the church shall notify the pastor of their desire. Upon such notification they shall become candidates. A candidate shall meet with the pastor and deacons to verify that he or she meets the following conditions of membership:

A. Conditions of Membership

1. Public profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour at Harvest Baptist Church at a properly called meeting.
2. Baptism by immersion in water as a confession of faith in Christ and declaration of purpose to walk in newness of life.
3. Acceptance of the Church Covenant, Constitution and By-laws, and Statement of Faith.
4. Conduct befitting a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ; by this we mean behaviour which becomes a child of God, yielding to the instruction of the Holy Spirit as found in Titus 2:12.

B. Reception of Members

1. By baptism as a born-again believer
2. By letter of recommendation from another independent Fundamental Baptist church of like faith and order
3. By statement of Christian testimony, having already been saved and baptized by immersion
4. By restoration – upon public confession and evidence of repentance

Upon recommendation of the pastor and deacons, the church members shall vote on granting membership during a properly called business meeting of the church.

Section 2 – Dismissal from Membership

A member may be dismissed as a member only upon the occurrence of one or more of the following:

A. Death of a member

Membership is automatically removed at the death of a member.

B. Request from a member to be removed from the membership.

If a member in good standing wishes to transfer to another church of like faith and order, a letter of recommendation shall be granted upon vote of the church in a properly called business meeting. (No letters are to be granted personally to a member.) A member may resign their membership at any time, but no letter of recommendation will be issued upon such resignation.

C. Habitual absence of a member for a period of 8 weeks without due cause

Habitual absence would involve attending less than two services a month without due cause, i.e. sickness or other legitimate reason. Recommendation for dismissal will come only after efforts have been made to restore the member to faithfulness. A person who chooses to disregard the importance of faithfulness to the church of God will be automatically removed from membership after an 8 week absence.

D. Uniting of a member with another church

No member may hold membership in another church. If any member unites in membership with another church, that person's membership is automatically terminated without notice.

E. Involvement of a member in apostasy, heresy, or becoming an offense to the church by reason of flagrant nonChristian conduct without repentance

Dismissal may occur only in accordance with the provision of section 3 below.

Section 3 – Discipline of Members

A. Reasons for Church Discipline

The purpose of church discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined; for the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them; for the purity of the church as a whole; for the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians; and supremely for the glory of

God by reflecting His holy character. Church discipline is necessary because of conduct or doctrine contrary to biblical commands. It is instituted when members refuse to settle differences biblically (Matt. 18:15-35); for public and scandalous sins (I Cor. 5:1-13); for heretical beliefs (I Tim.1:18-20); and for divisive actions in the congregation (Tit. 3:9-11).

B. Steps of Church Discipline

1. It shall be the duty of any member of this church, who has knowledge of an erring member's heresy, misconduct, or refusal to be reconciled, to correct such a member in private and to seek their restoration (Matt. 18:15; Gal. 6:1,2). Before he goes, he should spend time in prayer and examine himself. When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration.

2. If the erring member refuses to heed such warnings, then the warning member shall return, privately, with one or two witnesses. Unless the Pastor is unable to attend, or if he should be the errant brother, he should be called upon as one of these witnesses. This second step should also be preceded by prayer and selfexamination, and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.

These witnesses shall adjudicate the matter and seek to reconcile the parties and/or restore the erring member (Matt. 18:16,19-20).

3. If the erring member refuses to heed such warnings, upon the recommendation of the pastor, unless the pastor is the member in question here, the matter shall then be brought before the church. The errant member shall be notified of the time and place of the meeting in the expectation that they will be in attendance at that time. With or without the attendance of the errant member the matter shall be prayerfully and humbly dealt with by the church. If the errant member still refuses to heed the warnings, he/she will be removed from membership and treated as an unbeliever by the membership. (Mat.18:17-20)

4. If, during any of the steps of corrective discipline, the erring member seeks to resign from membership of the church, the resignation shall be accepted, but the reasons for the resignation shall be reported to the membership, who shall be instructed to treat the resigning member according to the commands of our Lord (Matt. 18:17, I Cor. 5:9-11).

C. Restoration of Members

1. The church shall lovingly regard any individual dismissed from membership, endeavoring by prayer and invitation to restore the errant individual back into fellowship with Christ and the church. However, all contact with him from that point forward should only be for the purpose of restoration (except for family members).

2. If the erring member repents at the informal and private level of discipline (i.e., one-on-one and witness stage), then repentance, confession and restoration shall be private (Matt 18:15-16; Luke 17:3,4; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).

3. If the discipline proceeds to the formal level of public disclosure before the congregation, then the repentance, confession and restoration must also be public and before the congregation (II Cor. 2:5-11).

4. On whatever level restoration occurs, the members of the church are commanded to forgive the offender upon their confession and repentance (Luke 17:3-4; II Cor. 2:5-11; Eph. 4:32).

5. Upon confession to God for the personal offenses that resulted in dismissal, along with satisfactory evidence of repentance, and demonstrating the desire for restoration as a member, the individual that has been dismissed from the membership may be restored to membership by a majority vote of the members at a properly called business meeting of the church, following a recommendation by the pastor.

ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS

Section 1 – Regular Services

Regular Services (for instruction, worship, evangelism, and fellowship) shall include the following:

- A. Sunday services, morning and evening
- B. Weekly Bible studies as determined by the pastor
- C. Baptismal services when needed, usually in conjunction with other regular services
- D. The Lord's Supper, as often as the pastor deems necessary
- E. Special emphasis meetings such as mission conferences, Bible conferences, music conferences, and revival meetings, as the pastor senses the Lord's leading to meet the needs of the church

Section 2 – Business Meetings

A. Regular Business Meetings

Regular business meetings of the church shall be held in October, January, April, and July, unless otherwise voted by a majority of members of the church at a properly called

business meeting. The annual business meeting shall be held in January. The time and place of the regular business meetings shall be announced from the pulpit on at least two consecutive Sundays prior to the day of the meeting. Written notice shall also be given in the weekly church bulletins from the date of the first announcement until the meeting.

B. Special Business Meetings

Special business meetings of the church may be called by the pastor, by a majority vote of the deacons, or by the presentation of a written petition to the church clerk containing the signatures of at least fifty percent of the active eligible voting members of the church and providing the particular object(s) of the business that shall be transacted in such a meeting. Notice for special business meetings shall be given in the manner required for regular business meetings.

C. Annual Business Meeting

The annual business meeting shall be held during the quarterly business meeting in January. The time and place shall be announced from the pulpit on at least two consecutive Sundays prior to the day of the meeting. The financial summary of the previous year shall be discussed.

D. Rules of Order

1. The pastor shall moderate all business meetings described in this Section 2. In his absence a person appointed by the pastor shall serve as moderator pro tem. If the church is without a pastor the deacons shall choose one from among themselves to act as moderator.
2. It shall be the duty of the moderator to keep order, and in case the church is equally divided on any question, he shall give the deciding vote.
3. The meeting shall be opened and closed with prayer.
4. The order of the business shall be:
 - a. Reading of the minutes of the previous meeting if called for by the moderator
 - b. Reports of committees if any
 - c. Unfinished business
 - d. New business

5. A motion before the church must be disposed of before another motion can be entertained, unless the motion to amend, postpone, adjourn, or call for the previous motion.

6. Every member who speaks shall rise and first address the moderator.

7. The church shall entertain no proposition for discussion which has not been presented for the consideration of the pastor and deacons ahead of time. (No new business may be brought up from the floor.)

8. All motions shall be carried by the vote of the majority of voting members present, unless stated otherwise in the Constitution and Bylaws.

9. In matters not covered by this Constitution and By-laws, Robert's Rules of Order shall be the authorized procedure for all church business meetings.

E. Fiscal Year and Quorum

The fiscal year of the church shall begin on the first day of January. In all business meetings, the eligible voting members present shall constitute a quorum, providing such a meeting has been called according to the Constitution and By-laws of this church.

F. Voting

All members of the church in good standing and present in person who are 18 years of age and older may vote on matters of business that are properly presented at any business meeting. All business meetings will be conducted without the involvement of those outside of church membership.

G. Rescheduling of Meetings

Business meetings may be rescheduled by the pastor by a majority vote of the congregation.

H. Unauthorized Meetings

Action taken at a meeting called or held in a manner other than as set forth in this article is void.

ARTICLE VIII – CHURCH OFFICERS AND WORKERS

Church officers and workers are in positions of respect and example. All those elected or appointed to offices or positions as workers must conscientiously endeavor to live

faithfully to the Lord. All officers and workers must be church members living in dedication to the Lord. They shall:

- A. Abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the abuse of drugs;
- B. Abstain from worldly practices and amusements that hinder their own spiritual life and testimony or that set a poor example for young Christians;
- C. Be faithful in personal Bible study and prayer, soulwinning efforts, stewardship responsibilities, and attendance at all regular church services unless hindered by sickness, poor weather conditions, or traveling distance from the church;
- D. Be willing to follow a dress standard as set forth by the leadership of the church; and
- E. Set the example in all matters of Christian conduct as set forth in, but not limited to, the Church Covenant.

Section 1 – Pastor

A. Qualifications

The pastor shall be a male, having never been divorced, having been called of God to preach, and meeting the Scriptural qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:17 and Titus 1:511. He must believe and strictly adhere to the Word of God, the Constitution and Bylaws, the Statement of Faith, the spiritual and moral standards set forth in this document, and be uncompromising in preaching these truths.

B. Call

In the event that the church is without a pastor, the deacons shall call a special business meeting in order to select a pulpit committee. The deacons shall choose one from among themselves to act as moderator. The church shall select a pulpit committee composed of the deacons and two other spiritually minded male members elected by the church. After careful and prayerful consideration of all applicants they shall at a properly called business meeting unanimously recommend a qualified man to pastor the church. After careful examination of his person, family, ministry, doctrine, and character, they shall bring him to preach at all Sunday services as a candidate and have him interviewed by the congregation. The committee shall inform the congregation of his credentials prior to his visit. They shall have already informed him about the proposed call, the pastoral responsibilities, tenure, and financial stipulations, along with all other matters pertaining to the church's ministry and stand. Upon proper announcement by the pulpit committee, the membership shall vote on the candidate's call to the pastorate by secret ballot. Voting shall take place at a special business meeting called for that purpose. He shall be elected by no less than a threefourths

majority of the qualified voting members present. The church shall notify the candidate in writing whether they have voted to extend a call to him or not. The candidate shall notify the church in writing whether he accepts the church's call or not. Only one man shall be considered at a time. Each must be voted on prior to another being permitted to be a candidate for the position.

C. Responsibilities

The pastor, as undershepherd responsible to Jesus Christ, shall preach the Word and administer the ordinances of the church. He shall be the spiritual leader of the church and shall advance the spiritual life of the congregation. He is the overseer of all phases of the church work. He is at liberty to schedule special meetings such as Bible conferences, revivals, missionary conferences, and special guest speakers as he is led of the Lord. The pastor is the ex officio member of every committee and organization of the church.

D. Salary

The pastor's salary and allowances shall be set prior to the time of his election and may be changed at any properly called business meeting of the church according to the recommendation of the deacons and approval of the members, provided the pastor is properly notified in advance of such action. The pastor shall appoint a temporary moderator and shall excuse himself while the issue is being discussed and voted upon.

E. Leaving the Field

The pastor shall be entitled to an annual vacation of two weeks after one year of service; three weeks after three years; and four weeks after five years. More time may be arranged at the discretion of the church. The pastor shall consult with the church regarding being absent from any of the regular services of the church for purposes such as speaking at special services and conferences elsewhere. Consideration shall be given to him for missionary trips and attendance at conferences that benefit him and the church. As funds are available, the church shall assist in paying for such professional expenses. Any other absences also need to be arranged so that the church functions continue properly.

F. Tenure

Having been properly elected, the pastor shall serve until he resigns his office or the church requests him to do so by a threefourths majority vote in a special meeting called for that purpose and announced in advance. The notice requirements of Article VII, Section 2 for special meetings shall be modified to four Sundays, instead of two, and the announcement shall be made at each Sunday service before the special business meeting.

G. Deacon's Recommendation of Termination for Cause

Upon submission of evidence of immorality, apostasy, heresy, unfaithfulness to his duties, departure from the Statement of Faith, or Constitution and Bylaws, or if he no longer agrees with the uncompromising stand of this church, by at least three witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19) to the satisfaction of the majority of the deacons, the deacons shall make a determination to recommend the pastor's termination to the members. After making such determination the deacons shall notify the pastor to cease pastoral duties immediately. Upon receipt of such notice the pastor shall immediately cease such duties. Thereafter the procedure for terminating the pastor's tenure shall be the same as set forth in paragraph 1 F above.

Section 2 – Staff

In order to meet the needs of the congregation adequately, the pastor is at liberty to fill positions with spiritually qualified personnel equipped for the various tasks, including but not limited to Sunday school teachers, church secretaries, youth leaders, music directors, and assistant pastors. Since any assistant pastor will be helping the pastor in the spiritual oversight of and care for the church, he must meet the Scriptural qualifications of a pastor. All salaried positions must be voted on and approved by the members at a properly called business meeting. The pastor is entrusted with the responsibility of dismissing staff members, salaried and unsalaried, that violate the standards required of church officers or that are remiss in their duties.

Section 3 – Deacons

A. Qualifications

Deacons must be men who meet the Scriptural qualifications for the office as set forth by example in Acts 6:17 and by command in I Timothy 3:8-13 and shall have been active members for at least one year. Deacons must be "blameless" and the "husband of one wife" and, therefore, not divorced. Deacons must have positive Christian testimonies in all personal and public matters.

B. Election and Tenure

The pastor identifies the need for deacons. The membership chooses a list of men to recommend to the pastor as prospective deacons. The pastor examines the qualifications of the men recommended based on Acts 6:1-3 and I Tim.3:8-13 and appoints deacons as required.

C. Responsibilities

The deacons shall assist the pastor in carrying on the work of the church, as is illustrated in Acts 6. They shall relieve the pastor of the responsibilities he delegates to them in order to better meet the needs of the church. They shall serve the pastor only in an advisory capacity, and shall not seek to determine church policy on their own. But a wise pastor will carefully and wisely consider their advice. They shall be faithful in personal Bible study and prayer, soulwinning efforts, stewardship responsibilities, and attendance at all regular church services unless hindered by sickness, weather, or traveling distance from the church. They shall assist the pastor in the ordinances of the church. The deacons shall meet with the pastor as often as the pastor deems necessary. The deacons may not meet together to discuss church business without the pastor being present or giving his consent for them to meet without him. The pastor shall select the church clerk and the church treasurer from among the deacons, or from the members if necessary.

D. Dismissal

Upon submission of evidence of any deacon's immorality, apostasy, heresy, unfaithfulness to his duties, departure from the Statement of Faith, or Constitution and Bylaws, or if he no longer agrees with the uncompromising stand of this church, the pastor shall recommend to the church members that the errant deacon be dismissed from his position as a deacon at a special business meeting. At the pastor's sole discretion, a special business meeting may be called to fill the dismissed deacon's position.

Section 4 – Trustees

The pastor and deacons shall also serve as trustees of the church. They shall be responsible for the maintenance and safekeeping of the church's legal papers and valuables. The trustees shall serve as the officers of the church in any legal matters.

Section 5 – Church Treasurer

The church treasurer is responsible to keep an accurate account of all monetary receipts and disbursements. The church treasurer is to post financial statements monthly and provide them at the regular and annual business meetings. Financial records are to be available to the pastor and deacons upon request, or to others authorized by the pastor, deacons, or a vote of a majority of the members at any business meeting, to examine them. The pastor shall personally sign all checks. At least two people shall count the offerings. The books of the treasurer shall be audited or examined annually, as deemed necessary by and under the direction of the pastor or members.

A. It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the ministries of the church with regular, proportionate giving.

No record will be kept of individual giving apart from the record in heaven. The joy of faithful tithing and giving of offerings will be taught to the members of the church as we strive to be good stewards of God's blessings in our lives and for the advancement of His kingdom.

B. All funds received for any purpose will pass through the hands of the church treasurer where there will be an itemized record of all funds received and disbursed.

Section 6 – Church Clerk

Upon the election of new deacons at the annual business meeting, the pastor shall select the church clerk from among the deacons, or from the members if necessary. The appointment will last for approximately one year until the next annual business meeting. The church clerk shall take minutes and preserve records of the business proceedings of the church and shall report the records at the business meetings. The church clerk shall also maintain the record of the church membership, adding or deleting the names of members at the direction of the membership. The church clerk shall issue letters of dismissals and shall preserve on file all communication and written official reports.

ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES SECTION

Upon the recommendation of the pastor (or majority of deacons if the church is without a pastor) committees can be established by the vote of the members at a regular or special business meeting in order to carry out special needs of the church. All committees are responsible and answerable to the pastor and the members for carrying out their appointed responsibilities. The pastor has the right to veto the decisions of any committee if he determines it is in the best interest of the church.

ARTICLE X – GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF MINISTRIES

All ministries, departments, organizations, classes, and groups of the church are subject to and shall function in harmony with the members and the pastor. The pastor and members may add ministries to the church as the need and opportunity arise. None shall be promoted without the recommendation of the pastor and the approval of the members at a properly called business meeting. All workers in these ministries must meet and adhere to the standards set forth in Article VIII.

ARTICLE XI – CHURCH AUTONOMY

This church shall be a nonprofit religious organization. It shall not become an official member of any denomination, convention, fellowship, or other religious body. This church is an independent Baptist church that is totally self-governing and subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body. This church recognizes and sustains the

obligations of mutual conviction, counsel, and cooperation with other independent Baptist churches of like mind and practice. It encourages fellowship with those organizations that consistently uphold the truth of God's Word and the spirit of this constitution and bylaws. Such cooperation with churches of like mind and practice shall in no wise sanction any undue influence or jurisdiction over this local assembly.

ARTICLE XII – LITERATURE

Any literature that officially represents this church or that is used by any ministry of this church must first be approved by the pastor.

ARTICLE XIII – FINANCIAL POLICY

The financial needs of this church shall be met by the voluntary tithes, offerings, and contributions of its members and friends. No sales or bazaars shall be permitted in the name of this church. The pastor may approve special offerings to be taken apart from those received in the regular services.

ARTICLE XIV – LICENSING AND ORDINATION

Any male giving evidence of a Divine call to the gospel ministry and manifesting the gifts and grace belonging to the ministry may be licensed or ordained, or both, to the ministry of this church. He must first state that he accepts without reservation the Statement of Faith of this church, and must be recommended by the pastor of this church. The ordination council, composed of ordained ministers (which may be members) selected or approved by the pastor, shall thoroughly examine the candidate in regard to his doctrinal soundness, moral and spiritual qualifications, and personal fitness for the ministry. After satisfactory examination by the council, he shall be recommended to the church for ordination. The candidate's ordination shall require ratification of the recommendation of the council by the members.

ARTICLE XV – PROPERTY, BUILDINGS, AND EQUIPMENT

Decisions relative to the acquisition or sale of real property shall require a two-thirds majority vote of the members at a properly called business meeting. All buildings, property, and equipment shall be used only by permission of the pastor. They shall be principally for the use of this church, its functions, and its related activities.

ARTICLE XVI – ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1 – Adoption

Upon adoption, this constitution bears immediate and complete constitutional authority upon this church.

Section 2 – Procedure for Amending

This constitution may be revised or amended at any regular business meeting of the church by a three-fourths vote of members present and voting, provided the proposed amendments have been announced at a previous business meeting and have been announced from the pulpit and posted in the weekly church bulletin for four consecutive Sundays prior to the vote of the members. No amendment of any nature shall be made in Article V without unanimous approval of members present and voting at a business meeting, provided the proposed amendments have been announced at a previous business meeting and have been announced from the pulpit and posted in the weekly church bulletin for four consecutive Sundays prior to the day of the business meeting.

Section 3 – Adding of Amendments

All amendments shall be added to later editions of the constitution with the amendment date noted.

ARTICLE XVII – DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH

In the event of the dissolution of this church, first, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. Then the assets shall be given to another independent Baptist church of like faith and order, approved by the remaining membership. None of the assets or holdings shall be divided among its members. The meeting to vote on dissolution shall be carried out according to the guidelines in Article VII, Section 2, on business meetings.