

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF**

**HARVEST HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH OF**

**OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA**

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## **PREAMBLE**

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the teachings of the Holy Bible, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish this Constitution and By-Laws.

## **ARTICLE 1 – NAME AND PURPOSE**

### **SECTION 1.01—NAME**

This congregation of believers shall be known as the Harvest Hills Baptist Church of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

### **SECTION 1.02—PURPOSE**

This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law), including, but not limited to, for such purposes, the establishing and maintaining of religious worship; the establishment of churches and schools; the evangelizing of the unsaved by the proclaiming of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; the educating of believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture, both in Sunday and weekday schools of Christian education; and the maintaining of missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country.

## **ARTICLE 2 – STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT**

### **SECTION 2.01—STATEMENT OF FAITH**

The following comprise the Scriptural beliefs of this church and its members.

- (A) **The Holy Scriptures** We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant in the original writings, infallible, and God-breathed and, therefore, are the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament are the complete and divine revelation of God to man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Matthew 5:18; John 16:12-13)

**(B) The Godhead** We believe in one triune God, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; John 14:10, 26; Mark 12:29; John 6:27,38; Luke 1:31,32; 1 Peter 1:2,3; Heb. 6:20-7:3; John 1:1,14)

**(C) The Person and Work of Christ**

1. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-3, 14; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 2:5-8)
2. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (Acts 2:18-36; Rom. 3:24-26; 5:1,2,9-11; 1 Pet. 2:24; Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3-5)
3. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Acts 1:9-10; Heb. 9:24; 7:25; Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2)

**(D) The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit**

1. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person Who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption. (John 16:8-11; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14)
2. We believe that He is the divine Teacher who assists believers in their understanding and appropriation of the Scriptures and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit. (Eph. 1:17-18; 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27)
3. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the assembly in order that they can do the work of the ministry. (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:7-12)

4. We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary. Speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit, and 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 prayers of believers for physical healing. (1 Cor. 1:22; 13:8; 14:21-22)

**(E) The Total Depravity of Man** We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God but that in Adam's sin, the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. Man is totally depraved (meaning not that man is as depraved as possible but that every part of his nature is affected) and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12; 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3,12; 4:17-19)

**(F) Salvation** We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by the grace of God and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. His precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of the sins of the people. We believe that all sins, except blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, are forgivable. (John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Matt. 12:31-32; 1 John 1:9)

**(G) The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers**

1. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power, and are thus secure in Christ forever. (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1, 38-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; 1 Pet. 1:4-5)
2. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Rom. 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-15)

**(H) The Believer's Two Natures** We believe that every saved person possesses two natures with provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit and that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are not Biblical (Rom. 6:13; 8:12,13; Galatians 5:16-25; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; I John 3:5-9)

**(I) The Church**

1. We believe that the true church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is made up solely of born-again persons. (1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27)

2. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures. (Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28-32; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9)
3. We believe in the autonomy of the local church, free of any external authority or control. (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Rom. 16:1, 4; 1 Cor. 3:9, 16; 5:4-7, 13; 1 Pet. 5:1-4)
4. We recognize water baptism and the Lord's Supper as the only Scriptural ordinances of obedience for the church in this age. (Matt. 3:6; 3:13-17; 28:19,20; Mark 1:9-11; John 3:23; 6:35; Acts 8:36-38; Col. 2:12; Matt. 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19,20; John 6:63; Acts 2:41,42; Acts 8:36,37; 1 Cor. 11:23-29)

**(J) The Lord's Day** We believe that the first day of the week, the day upon which Christ was raised from the dead, is to be observed as the Lord's Day and is a day of rest, training, Christian fellowship, worship, service, communion, and evangelism (John 20:1-10; 20:26; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1,2)

**(K) Separation**

1. We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord. God commands His people to separate from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations, and to refrain from all immodest and inappropriate dress. (Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11; Lev. 19:28; 1 Cor. 6:19-20)
2. We believe that the local church should not be aligned with or belong to other denominations, conventions, churches, persons, schools, mission boards, or associations of any kind which deny any of the cardinal doctrines of the faith from the Bible and as outlined in this article of faith. (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1)

**(L) The Personality of Satan** We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the Fall of Man; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10)

**(M) The Second Advent of Christ** We believe in the "blessed hope," the personal, imminent return of Christ Who will rapture His church prior to the seven-year tribulation period. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will personally and visibly return with His saints to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom, which was promised to the nation of Israel. (Ps. 89:3-4; Dan. 2:31-45; Zech. 14:4-11; 1 Thess. 1:10; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6)

**(N) The Eternal State**

1. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men: the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28, 29; 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-13)
2. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited, they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting, conscious punishment and torment. (Matt. 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15)
3. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:4-6)

**(O) Creation** We believe that God created the universe in six literal, twenty-four hour periods. We believe in the Biblical account of creation, and we reject all theories of evolution as being un-Scriptural. (Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11)

**(P) Civil Government** We believe that the civil government is of Divine appointment for the interest and good order of human society, and magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of God, who is the Lord of the conscience and the Prince of kings of the earth. (2 Samuel 23:3; Matt. 22:31; Titus 3:1; 1 Tim 2:1-7; Rom. 13; 1-7; Acts 4:18-20; Rev. 19:16)

**(Q) Human Sexuality**

1. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography is sinful perversion of God's gift of sex. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4)
2. We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23)

**(R) Family Relationships**

1. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for



men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12)

2. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and for leading them through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction. (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mk. 10:6-12; I Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4, Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; I Pet. 3:1-7)

- (S) **Divorce and Remarriage** We believe that God disapproves of and forbids divorce and He intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon. (Mal. 2:14-16; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6)
- (T) **Abortion** We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well being of the mother are acceptable. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)
- (U) **Lawsuits Between Believers** We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe that the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32)
- (V) **Missions** We believe that missions [the evangelizing, baptizing, and discipling of new converts in local churches (Matt. 28:18-20)] is the obligation of every Christian to every creature without regard to race, color, or creed. (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Cor. 5:19,20)
- (V) **Giving** We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support his local church financially. We believe that God has established the tithe as a basis for giving, but that every

Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of the tithe or offering once the gift has been made. (Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17)

## **SECTION 2.02—AUTHORITY OF STATEMENT OF FAITH**

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible. All curriculum used in the church shall be subject to the approval of the pastor(s).

## **SECTION 2.03—COVENANT**

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of our Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions, to raise our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, exemplary in our deportment to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, from every questionable practice or indulgence, and from all appearance of evil; to abstain from the use and sale of pornography; to be set for the defense of the Gospel; and to be zealous in all of our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy of speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior; and to secure reconciliation without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## **ARTICLE 3 – MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION 3.01—QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP**

Upon a majority vote of the members present at any church service or meeting, membership shall be extended to all who have had a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior; who evidence this experience of regeneration in their lives; who renounce sin; who endeavor to live a life consecrated wholly unto the Lord; who submit to the Statement of Faith and to the authority of the church and its leaders as set forth herein; and who comply with any one of the following conditions:

- (A) By baptism (immersion) as a true believer in Christ Jesus as personal Savior;
- (B) By letter of transfer from another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice, or other written statement of good standing from the prior church if the applicant has been baptized by immersion subsequent to a profession of faith;
- (C) By testimony of faith, having been baptized by immersion; or
- (D) By restoration, if having been removed from membership, upon majority vote of the congregation after confession is made publicly before the church membership of the sin or sins involved, and satisfactorily evidencing repentance to the pastor (or the board of deacons if the office of pastor is vacant). (2 Cor 2:5-11)

### **SECTION 3.02—DUTIES OF A MEMBER**

On becoming a member of this church, in addition to honoring the covenant contained in Article 2, Section 2.03, each one further covenants to love, honor, and esteem the pastor; to pray for him; to recognize his authority in spiritual affairs of the church; to cherish a brotherly love for all members of the church; to support the church in prayer, tithes, and offerings as the Lord enables; to attend the regular services of the church; and, in accordance with Biblical commands, to support through their lifestyle the beliefs and practices of the church.

### **SECTION 3.03—PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP**

- (A) Only members at least sixteen years of age who have been on the active church rolls for at least one regularly-scheduled service and who are physically present at a duly called meeting of the church shall be entitled to vote. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting. The eligible membership of the church has certain limited areas to exercise a vote. Members may not vote to initiate any church action; rather, the vote of a member is to confirm and ratify the direction of the church as determined by the pastor and the board of deacons.

- (B) This congregation functions not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the pastor as the undershepherd with the counsel of the board of deacons. Determinations of the internal affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures. The pastor shall oversee and/or conduct all aspects of this church. The board of deacons and church staff shall give counsel and assistance to the pastor as requested by him.
- (C) Membership in this church does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The pastor (or in his absence, an individual designated by the board of deacons) has the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property. If the person enters or remains on church property after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person may, in the discretion of the pastor (or in his absence, an individual designated by the board of deacons), be treated as a trespasser.
- (D) A member, upon five business days prior written request made to the church, may inspect or copy the prepared financial statements of the church, the minutes of the proceedings of church meetings, and the minutes of the proceedings of board meetings.
  - 1. A member may not under any circumstances inspect or copy any record relating to individual contributions to the church, the list of names and addresses of the church members, the accounting books and financial records of the church, or any information deemed by the pastor or the board of deacons to be of a confidential or personal nature.
  - 2. The church may impose a reasonable charge, covering the costs of labor and material, for copies of any documents provided to the member before releasing the copies to the member.

#### **SECTION 3.04—DISCIPLINE OF A MEMBER**

- (A) There shall be a discipline committee consisting of the pastor and the board of deacons. These men shall have sole authority in determining heretical deviations from the Statement of Faith or willful sinful conduct as forbidden in Scripture. If the pastor or a deacon is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he shall not sit as a member of the discipline committee. The pastor and deacons shall be entitled to the same steps as other church members and be subject to the same discipline.
- (B) Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he is to go alone to the offending party and seek to

restore his brother. Before he goes, he should first examine himself. When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration.

- (C) If reconciliation is not reached, a second member, either a deacon or the pastor, is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.
- (D) If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (B) and (C) have been taken, the discipline committee, as the church representatives Biblically responsible for putting down murmuring, shall hear the matter. If the matter is not resolved during the hearing before the discipline committee, the committee shall recommend to the members of the church that they, after self-examination, make an effort personally to go to the offending member and seek that member's restoration.
- (E) If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (B), (C), and (D) have been taken, such members who refuse to repent and be restored are to be removed from the membership of the church upon a majority vote of the membership present at a meeting called for the purpose of considering disciplinary action.
- (F) No matter may be heard by the discipline committee or the church unless the steps outlined in subsections (B) and (C) have been taken, except in the case of a public offense.
- (G) If an unrepentant offending party is removed from the church membership, all contact with him from that point forward (except by family members) must be for the sake of restoration.
- (H) The procedures provided in this section are based on Matt. 18:15-20; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:1-11; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6, 10-15; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; and Titus 3:10-11.

### **SECTION 3.05—TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP**

A member not under the disciplinary process of Section 3.04 may request that a letter of transfer be sent to another church.

### **SECTION 3.06—TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

- (A) The membership of any individual member shall be automatically terminated without notice if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the church in the preceding six months. Upon good cause being shown to the pastor, this provision for termination may be waived in the case of any individual member at the discretion of the pastor.

- (B) No member of this church may hold membership in another church. If any member unites in membership with another church, that person is automatically terminated without notice from membership in this church.
- (C) The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate without notice if the member states that he or she is actively involved in any conduct described in Section 2.01(Q)1 or files a lawsuit in violation of Section 2.01(U).
- (D) No provision contained in this section shall be subject to or governed by the procedures regarding discipline of members set forth in Section 3.04.
- (E) A member may resign at any time, but no letter of transfer or written statement of good standing will be issued upon such resignation, except at the discretion of the pastor.
- (F) A letter of standing will be granted to those members who desire to unite with churches other than churches of like faith and practice.
- (G) Upon the death of a member, the name is removed from the roll of the church.

## **ARTICLE 4 – OFFICERS**

### **SECTION 4.01—CHURCH OFFICERS**

The church officers are pastor(s) (see Article 5, Section 5.01), deacon (see Article 5, Section 5.02), church clerk (see Article 5, Section 5.03), church treasurer (see Article 5, Section 5.04), and mission treasurer (see Article 5, Section 5.05). One person may hold two or more offices, except that of pastor. The pastor, from time to time as he deems appropriate, may appoint other church officers, subject to a confirmation vote of the church membership.

### **SECTION 4.02—DESIGNATION OF CORPORATE OFFICERS**

As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the church, the pastor shall serve as president of the corporation; the church clerk shall serve as secretary of the corporation; the church treasurer shall serve as treasurer of the corporation; and the chairman of the board of deacons shall serve as vice-president of the corporation.

### **SECTION 4.03—ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICE**

- (A) The church shall not install or retain an officer who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith. All church officers, upon request of the pastor, shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith (as set forth in Article 2).
- (B) Only persons who have been church members for at least six (6) months prior to the election are eligible for election to any church office.

### **SECTION 4.04—TERMS OF OFFICE**

#### **(A) PASTOR**

- 1. The Relationship Between the Pastor and the Church** This relationship shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a month's notice, or less by mutual consent.

## **2. Calling Of The Pastor**

- a. When the pastorate is vacant, a pulpit committee shall take such steps as may be thought best for the securing of a pastor. If there is an assistant pastor on the staff, he shall serve as an interim pastor, carrying out all duties of the pastor as found in the Bible and this constitution and by-laws.
- b. The pulpit committee shall consist of the board of deacons.
- c. The calling of the pastor shall be voted upon by secret ballot of the church members upon the recommendation of the pulpit committee.
- d. Only one candidate may be voted upon at a time and shall be called to serve with no less than a 3/4 majority of those voting.
- e. The pastor's relationship shall continue until dissolved by written request of himself or of the church, in which case either shall have the right to claim thirty (30) days from the time such request is formally made before the relationship between them shall cease.
- f. The pastor shall receive his regular compensation throughout the thirty-day (30) period.

## **3. Effecting Termination Of Pastoral Services**

- a. The church in a duly-constituted business meeting, upon the recommendation of the deacons, may prepare written notice to the pastor setting forth a termination of his services date of not less than thirty days (30) subsequent to the date of the business meeting. Each party will perform its obligations during this thirty-day period unless agreed otherwise by both parties.
- b. Such authorization will have been preceded by two acts of the church:
  1. Passage by 3/4 majority of a preliminary motion of termination at a business meeting.
  2. Passage by a 3/4 majority of a final motion of termination at the next business meeting. The thirty-day notice may be dated from the date of this business meeting. Should either of these motions fail passage or be defective through failure to observe constitutional procedure, they automatically become void.



- c. The church will always insure that a quorum, as defined in section 6.02A, has been clearly established and that the minutes record this fact. The vote will be by secret ballot and counted by current officers and witnessed by two non-deacon members of the church.
- d. The church will always ensure that the originator of either of the motions of termination will have been a member (an active member) of the church for a period of not less than one year and will be at least eighteen (18) years of age. Also, as a matter of personal conscience and the foreseeable continuity and stability in the pastorate, this Constitution requires the originator of the preliminary motion of termination to present himself before the assembled board of deacons for discussion of his considered reasons prior to introduction of the preliminary motion.

**(B) DEACONS**

1. The term of service for deacons shall be three years, at the expiration of which they may be re-elected.
2. Members of the board of deacons may be removed from office for un-Biblical conduct, as determined by the other board members, upon a majority vote of the remaining members of the board of deacons.

**(C) OTHER OFFICERS**

1. The term of service for all offices and positions in the church, except the pastor and deacons, shall be one year, at the expiration of which they may be re-elected or re-appointed.
2. A vacancy occurring in any office or board, except in the case of the pastor, may be filled at any regular church business meeting.
3. All elected and appointed officers shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly elected or appointed.

**SECTION 4.05—ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The annual election of officers by the church membership shall occur during the month of December. The term of office for newly-elected officers will commence the first day of January.

**SECTION 4.06—PASTORAL OVERSIGHT OF OFFICERS AND STAFF**

- (A)** Subject to the approval of the church membership and on the condition that they shall become a member of the church upon assuming their duties, the pastor may

hire associates and assistants to assist the pastor in carrying out his God-given responsibilities.

- (B) All church staff, whether paid or volunteer, shall be under the supervision of the pastor, who has the sole authority to dismiss the same.
- (D) No employee or volunteer shall be hired, appointed, or retained who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith.

## **ARTICLE 5 – DUTIES AND POWERS OF OFFICERS**

### **SECTION 5.01—THE PASTOR**

- (A) The pastor shall preach the Gospel regularly and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God as the Lord leads him. He shall administer the ordinances of the church, act as moderator at all church meetings for the transaction of church matters, supervise the teaching ministries of the church, and tenderly watch over the spiritual interests of the membership.
- (B) The pastor shall appoint the members of the various committees. He shall serve as an ex officio member of all committees and boards. He shall serve as the president of the corporation. He shall publicly inform all newly elected officers of the particular function and the responsibilities of their respective offices. He shall extend the right hand of fellowship to all new members on behalf of the church and perform such other duties as generally appertain to such a position. The pastor shall be free to choose the means and methods by which he exercises the ministry that God has given him to include the adoption of such policies and standards, as he deems necessary.
- (C) The pastor shall make all appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements thereof, including time and place. The use of property belonging to the church, for purposes other than the stated appointments, shall be under the control of the pastor and board of deacons.

### **SECTION 5.02—THE BOARD OF DEACONS**

- (A) The board of deacons shall consist of a minimum of five (5) members. In the event that there are not enough spiritually qualified or willing men in the church to fill all the positions on the board of deacons, any unfilled positions shall remain vacant until such time as qualified men become available to fill them.
- (B) The deacons shall assist the pastor in such manner as he shall request in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in conducting the religious services, and in performing all other work of the church. The deacons shall make provision

for the observance of the ordinances of the church. The deacons shall, if requested by the pastor, consider applications for church membership. The deacons shall, in cooperation with the pastor, disburse benevolence funds. The deacons shall assist the pastor in visitation and other evangelistic efforts of the church. The board of deacons shall assist the pastor in caring for the administrative needs of the church's various ministries, as he requests. The deacons shall provide the pulpit supply and choose a moderator for church meetings if the pastor is unavailable or if the office of pastor is vacant. Upon the death, resignation, or dismissal of the pastor, the board of deacons shall serve as a pulpit committee.

- (C) Immediately following the annual church business meeting, the deacons shall assemble and elect, from their own number, a chairman who shall be vice-president of the corporation and a secretary.
- (D) The board of deacons shall constitute the board of trustees of the corporation. The board of trustees shall exercise only the following specific powers, upon authorization by a majority vote of the members present at a duly called church business meeting:
  1. To purchase, hold, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the church, and to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church;
  2. To sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of, and to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the church, to borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose and the use of the church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness; and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges; and
  3. To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church corporation.

#### **SECTION 5.03—THE CHURCH CLERK**

The church clerk's duties shall include the following:

- (A) Certify and keep (at the office of the church) the original bylaws or a copy, including all amendments or alterations to the bylaws;
- (B) Keep (at the place where the bylaws or a copy are kept) a record of the proceedings of meetings of the board of deacons, with the time, place of holding, and the names of those present at the meetings;

- (C) Sign, certify, or attest documents as may be required by law;
- (D) See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws. (In case of the absence or disability of the secretary, or his or her refusal or neglect to act, notice may be given and served by the pastor or by the chairman of the board of deacons.);
- (E) Be custodian of the records of the church, including the membership roll, baptisms, and certificates of ordination, licenses, and commissions;
- (F) See that the reports, statements, certificates, and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed;
- (G) Exhibit, at all reasonable times to proper persons according to terms provided by law and the bylaws, minutes of proceedings of the board of deacons or the minutes of the meetings of the church members;
- (H) Keep an account of any special events in the life of the church which are of historical interest and give a report at the annual church administration meeting of the status of the church membership roll in the past year;
- (I) Keep all records at the office of the church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office;
- (J) Serve as the secretary of the corporation.

#### **SECTION 5.04—THE CHURCH TREASURER**

The church treasurer's duties shall include the following:

- (A) Have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, all funds of the corporation, and deposit all funds in the name of the church in banks or other depositories as shall be selected by the pastor and the board of deacons;
- (B) Receive and give receipt for all contributions, gifts, and donations to the church;
- (C) Disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of the church as directed by the pastor, the board of deacons, or the budget adopted by the members of the church at the annual church business meeting;
- (D) Make all expenditures of the church (except miscellaneous petty cash disbursements) by check;
- (E) When requested, render to the pastor and the board of deacons accounts of all his transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church;

- (F) Present a written report of itemized disbursements quarterly and make a general report for the year at the annual church business meeting;
- (G) Keep all church financial records at the office of the church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office;
- (H) Serve as treasurer of the corporation.

#### **SECTION 5.05—THE CHURCH MISSION TREASURER**

The church mission treasurer's duties shall include the following:

- (A) Make all expenditures of missions funds by check;
- (B) When requested, render to the pastor and the board of deacons accounts of all his transactions as mission treasurer.
- (C) Present a written report of itemized disbursements quarterly and make a general report for the year at the annual church business meeting;
- (D) Keep all missions financial records at the office of the church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office.

#### **SECTION 5.06—ASSISTANT PASTORS**

Under the direction and guidance of the pastor, the assistant pastor(s) of the church shall assist the pastor in carrying out the ministries of the church.

#### **SECTION 5.07—DUTIES OF ALL OFFICERS**

- (A) All officers shall prepare a written report of their work for the annual church business meeting and shall surrender any records in their possession to the church clerk at the close of their term of office to be filed as a permanent record of the work of the church. All records are the property of the church and must be kept in the church office.
- (B) Any officer who neglects his duties, as outlined in the bylaws, for a period of three months may be removed from his office at the discretion of the pastor, and another may be appointed by the pastor to serve the un-expired term.

## **ARTICLE 6 – MEETINGS**

### **SECTION 6.01—MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP**

Unless otherwise determined by the pastor, the church shall meet each Sunday for public worship both morning and evening and at least once during the week for Bible study and prayer. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once each quarter and at such other times as determined by the pastor.

### **SECTION 6.02—MEETINGS FOR CHURCH BUSINESS**

- (A) The annual church business meeting shall be held no later than the last Wednesday of January at which time the regular church business shall be considered. A quorum shall consist of the members present.
- (B) The moderator shall determine the rules of procedure according to his sense of fairness and common sense, giving all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator is the final authority on questions of procedure, and his decision is final and controlling.
- (C) For any meeting under this article, the moderator, in his sole discretion, shall have full and unilateral authority to require non-members to leave the meeting room and to order the immediate removal of any member or other person present who is deemed by the moderator to be disruptive to the proceedings by act or presence. The moderator shall have full authority to order the removal of all children (ages to be determined by the moderator) if the moderator determines, in his sole discretion, that circumstances so warrant. If the moderator determines that compliance with his order of removal is unsatisfactory, the moderator may, in his sole discretion, revoke the disruptive person's right to remain on the premises in accordance with Section 3.03(C) and treat the person as a trespasser.

### **SECTION 6.03—SPECIAL MEETINGS**

- (A) The pastor (or deacons, if the office of pastor is vacant or the pastor is the subject of possible disciplinary action) may call a special meeting. Notice of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called must be given to the church from the pulpit on a Sunday not less than one week prior to said meeting. A meeting for the calling of a pastor or the severance of the relationship between the church and pastor shall be called in accordance with the provision of Section 4.04(A).
- (B) Bible conferences, missionary conferences, and revivals may be held as the pastor deems beneficial.

#### **SECTION 6.04—FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the church shall begin January 1st and end December 31st.

### **ARTICLE 7 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

#### **SECTION 7.01—PURPOSE**

The church believes that it should provide the members' children with an education that is based upon and consistent with Biblical teachings. The church believes that the home and church are responsible before God for providing a Christian education. In order to assist the church's families with their obligation to Biblically train their children, the church may operate a Christian day school. This Christian day school would operate in keeping with the dictates of sections 7.02 through 7.08.

#### **SECTION 7.02—CHURCH PARTICIPATION**

All educational programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the church shall be primarily for the benefit of the members of the church; however, the pastor may permit non-church members to participate and enroll their children in the church's educational programs or courses of instruction if he deems it in the best interest of the church.

#### **SECTION 7.03—STAFF MEMBERSHIP**

All instructors, teachers, and administrators shall be members of this church. This provision shall not apply to visiting missionaries, evangelists, or preachers engaged for the purpose of delivering sermons, conducting revivals, or conducting other special meetings on a temporary basis. Any exception must be approved by the pastor.

#### **SECTION 7.04—STATEMENT OF FAITH ACCORD**

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be taught and presented in full accord with the Statement of Faith of the church. The church shall not hire, appoint, or retain any employee or volunteer for its educational programs who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith.

#### **SECTION 7.05—UNITY**

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the church.

#### **SECTION 7.06—TEACHING**

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted consistent with the teaching of the inerrant Word of God. It is the responsibility of every teacher to present the Word of God as the infallible source of knowledge and wisdom and therefore the sole authority in all matters of doctrine and practice.

#### **SECTION 7.07—CHRISTIAN WALK**

All administrators, teachers, and other staff, whether paid or volunteer, shall maintain a lifestyle, whether in or out of the classroom, consistent with the precepts taught by the church. All staff shall be under the supervision of the pastor who has the sole authority to hire, appoint, or dismiss the same as stated herein.

#### **SECTION 7.08—HIERARCHY OF AUTHORITY**

The pastor and the board of deacons shall be the final authority on all matters relating to the ministry of education. The pastor shall have the authority to approve or disapprove any recommendation of the board of deacons on all matters relating to the ministry of education.

### **ARTICLE 8 – ORDINATION**

#### **SECTION 8.01—ORDINATION QUALIFICATIONS**

Any member of this church or its mission churches, who gives evidence of a genuine call of God into the work of the ministry and possesses the qualifications stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, may be ordained as a minister of the Gospel.

#### **SECTION 8.02—ORDINATION PROCEDURE**

- (A) If the pastor has approved the candidate for examination by an ordination council, the pastor shall call a council to examine the candidate. The ordination council shall consist of ordained ministers of like faith invited to participate in the examination of the candidate.
- (B) If the candidate is found worthy of ordination by the council, the ordination council may ordain the candidate on behalf of the church.
- (C) The pastor shall arrange for the ordination service.



## **ARTICLE 9 – COMMITTEES**

### **SECTION 9.01—STANDING COMMITTEES**

The pastor (or the board of deacons if the office of pastor is vacant) shall appoint standing committees and designate a chairperson for each standing committee and, except when otherwise specifically provided in these bylaws, shall determine the membership of each standing committee. In addition to the discipline committee, the pastor may appoint other standing committees, as he deems appropriate.

### **SECTION 9.02—SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

The pastor (or the board of deacons if the office of pastor is vacant), in its discretion, may create special committees to provide the board with advice and information regarding matters submitted to the committee by the board for consideration. The committee shall have no authority to act on behalf of the corporation. The members of the committee shall be chosen by a majority vote of the board of deacons and shall serve solely at the pleasure of the board of deacons. The special committee shall be subject to the control and direction of the board of deacons at all times.

## **ARTICLE 10 – FINANCES**

### **SECTION 10.01—BUDGET PROCESS**

A church budget shall be prepared annually, during the January meeting of the board of deacons. The board of deacons and the church treasurer, acting as the finance committee, shall review the previous year's financial statement and prepare the new year's proposed budget. The proposed budget shall be presented to the church for approval at the annual business meeting later in the month.

### **SECTION 10.02— DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS**

From time to time, the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall be subject to the approval of the church upon a recommendation of the pastor and the board of deacons. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Section 1.02.

### **SECTION 10.03— OFFERINGS**

This church shall be supported by voluntary tithes and love offerings of its members and friends. No fundraising activities such as entertainers, entertainments, suppers, bazaars, sales, etc., shall be permitted on church property in the name of this church. If the church is operating a Christian school, an exception is granted to the school to conduct any necessary fundraisers, provided such fundraisers receive prior approval by the pastor (or the board of deacons if the office of pastor is vacant).

## **ARTICLE 11 – BINDING ARBITRATION**

### **SECTION 11.01—SUBMISSION TO ARBITRATION**

Believing that lawsuits between believers are prohibited by Scripture, all members of this church agree to submit to binding arbitration any matter which cannot otherwise be resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bringing any civil disagreement before a court of law. Judgment upon the decision rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.

### **SECTION 11.02—NOTICE OF ARBITRATION**

In the event of any dispute, claim, question, or disagreement arising out of or relating to these bylaws or any other church matter, the parties shall use their best efforts to settle such disputes, claims, questions, or disagreement as befits Christians. To this effect, they shall consult and negotiate with each other in good faith and, recognizing their mutual interests not to disgrace the name of Christ, seek to reach a just and equitable solution. If they do not reach such solution within a period of sixty (60) days, then upon notice by either party to the other, disputes, claims, questions, or differences shall be finally settled by arbitration as described in Section 11.01, above, and such Procedures for Arbitration as are adopted pursuant to Section 11.04, below.

### **SECTION 11.03—LIMITATIONS ON ARBITRATION DECISIONS**

- (A) Should any dispute involve matters of church discipline, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures for church discipline set forth in Section 3.04 were followed.
- (B) Should any dispute involve the removal from office of the pastor or any church officer, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures set forth in Section 4.04 were followed.

- (C) Should any dispute involve a matter voted on by the church, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures set forth in this document were followed.

**SECTION 11.04—ARBITRATION PROCEDURES**

The Procedures for Arbitration shall be as adopted by the pastor and the board of deacons.

**ARTICLE 12 – AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be revised or amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular church business meeting, provided that said revision or amendment has been submitted in writing and announced from the pulpit fourteen (14) days before the vote is taken.

**ADOPTION**

These bylaws were adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly-called meeting of the church in which a quorum was present.

These bylaws supersede any other bylaws of Harvest Hills Baptist Church.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Church Clerk