

CONSTITUTION

Harvest Free Will Baptist Church
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PREAMBLE

So that things may be done decently and in order in accordance with the accepted tenets of other churches of like precious faith, and that we may more readily help each other in our Christian service, we declare and establish this constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.
Constitution of Harvest Free Will Baptist Church

ARTICLE 1. NAME AND PURPOSE

Section 1—Name

This congregation of believers shall be known as Harvest Free Will Baptist Church. (*Changed by constitutional amendment 1, July 21, 1999.*)

Section 2—Purpose

- (A) 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 building, maintaining and operating of churches, parsonages, schools, chapels, radio stations, television stations, rescue missions, print shops, day-care centers, camps, and nursing homes.
- (B) The purpose of Harvest Free Will Baptist Church shall be:
- **Membership** - To **join** together as a local church; to promote love, friendship, fellowship, and harmony within the family of God.
 - **Maturity** - To **grow** as Christians, to be fruitful disciples and strong leaders for Jesus.
 - **Ministry** - To **serve** the people of our city by endeavoring to meet their spiritual needs.
 - **Missions** - To **preach** Christ Jesus the Lord; boldly preaching and teaching to all people the Gospel and the doctrine of Christ. To use every available means to **impact** Bakersfield and the regions beyond with the Gospel of Christ.
 - **Magnification** - To **worship** the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind; in spirit and in truth.

ARTICLE 2. STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT

Section 1—Statement of Faith

- (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, 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. The King James Version of the Bible shall be the official and only translation used by Harvest Free Will Baptist Church. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
- (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).
- (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; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2; 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. 3:24-25; 1 Pet. 2:24; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 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 Divine 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)

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2. We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who assists believers to understand and appropriate 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. We believe that speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit 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 prayers of believers for physical healing (1 Cor. 1:21-22; 13:8; 14:21-22).
- (E) **The 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; and, that man is depraved, 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; 4:17-19).
- (F) **Salvation.** We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal trusting faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins (John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; Heb. 11:6; I Pet. 1:18-19).
- (G) **Perseverance of the Saints**
1. We believe that there are strong grounds to hope that the truly regenerate will persevere unto the end, and be saved, through the power of divine grace which is pledged for their support...; Romans 8:38, 39; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 12:9; Job 17:9; Matt. 16:18; John 10:27, 28; Phil. 1:6.
 2. ...but their future obedience and final salvation are neither determined nor certain, since through infirmity and manifold temptations they are in danger of falling 2 Chronicles 15:2; 2 Pet 1:10; Ezek. 33:18; John 15:6; 1 Cor. 10:12; Heb. 6:4-6; 12:15; 1 Chron. 28:9; Rev. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:19; 2 Pet. 2:20, 21; 1 Cor. 9:27; Matt. 24:13; Acts 1:25; Rev. 22:19.
 3. We believe that should the wayward, disobedient child of God respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and should he repent and return, he will be restored to favor and fellowship with God. Should he resist and continue in disobedience and rebellion against God's Word, and the Holy Spirit, he may forfeit his privilege of eternal life forever (Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-29; Ex. 32:32-33; Rev. 3:5)

4. 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 Church.

1. We believe that the local church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is solely made up 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 1:5-11).
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, the Lord's Supper, and the washing of the saints' feet as the Scriptural ordinances of obedience for the church in this age (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 18:18; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; John 13:1-17; 1 Tim. 5:10).

(I) Separation. We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and, that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations is commanded of God (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).

(J) The Second Coming of Christ. We believe that the Lord Jesus, who ascended on high and sits at the right hand of God, will come again to close the Gospel dispensation, glorify His saints, and judge the world. Acts 1:11; Matt. 25:31; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2 Pet. 3:3-13; Matt. 24:42-44.

(K) The Eternal State. 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).

(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; Is. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

(M) Creation. We believe that God created the universe in six literal, 24-hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin (Genesis 1-2; Ex. 20:11).

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- (N) **Civil Government.** We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home; 2) the church; and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God (Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:13-14).
- (O) **Human Sexuality.**
1. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. Any employee of the church, whether paid or volunteer, who engages in any of these perversions, or becomes pregnant or causes pregnancy as a result of consensual intercourse, outside of the marriage relationship, shall be terminated from employment. (Gen. 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; 1 Cor. 4:1; 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).
 3. We believe that men and women are spiritual 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).
- (P) **Divorce and Remarriage.** We believe that God hates divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery except on the grounds of fornication. 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. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Cor. 7:10-15; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6).
- (Q) **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 mental well-being of the mother are acceptable (Job 3:16; Psalms 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).

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- (R) **Missions.** We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ we must use all available means to go to the foreign nations and not wait for them to come to us (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20).
- (S) **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 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).
- (T) **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—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, and therefore, is binding upon all members. All literature used in the church shall be in complete agreement with the statement of faith.

Section 3—Church Covenant

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

We promise by His grace to love and obey Him in all things, to avoid all appearance of evil, to abstain from all sinful amusements and unholy conformity to the world, from all sanction of the use and sale of intoxicating beverages, and to provide things honest in the sight of all men.

We agree faithfully to discharge our obligations in reference to study of the Scriptures, secret prayer, family devotions, and social worship, and by self-denial, faith and good works endeavor to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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

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

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

To this end we agree to labor for the promotion of educational and denominational enterprises, the support of missions, the success of Sunday Schools, and evangelistic efforts for the salvation of the world.

And may the God of peace sanctify us wholly, and preserve us blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE 3. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1—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 and whose lives evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior; who renounce sin; who endeavor to live a consecrated life wholly unto the Lord; who fully subscribe to the statement of faith contained herein; and who enter into the church covenant contained herein; and upon compliance 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 General Board/Board of Deacons if the office of pastor is vacant).

Section 2—Duties of a Member

On becoming a member of this church, in addition to the covenant contained in Article 2, Section 3, each one further covenants to love, honor, and esteem the pastor; to pray for him; and 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, offerings and with other financial support as the Lord enables; and in accordance with Biblical commands to support through a life-style walk affirmation of the beliefs and practices of the church.

Section 3—Privileges of Membership

- (A) This congregation functions, not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the pastor as the undershepherd with the counsel of the General Board/Board of Deacons. Membership in this church does not afford those individuals with any property, contract, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Determination 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 General Board/Board of Deacons shall give counsel and assistance to the pastor as requested by him. The membership of the church has certain limited areas of exercising a vote. Members may not vote to initiate any church

action, but rather the vote of a member is to confirm and ratify the direction of the church as determined by the pastor and General Board/Board of Deacons.

- (B) Each member of the church shall be entitled to vote on all matters except those pertaining to the disciplining of members, the purchase or sale of real property, and the dismissal or calling of a pastor, in which matters, only members at least eighteen years of age shall be entitled to vote.

Section 4—Discipline of a Member

- (A) There shall be a discipline committee consisting of the pastor and the General Board/Board of Deacons. These men shall have sole authority in determining heretical deviations from the statement of faith and violations of the church covenant. If the pastor or a deacon is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he shall not sit as a member of the discipline committee. He 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/General Board member 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 must be for the sake of restoration only (except family members).

Section 5—Transfer of Membership

Members, not under the disciplining process of Section 4, may request that letters of transfer be sent to another church.

Section 6—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) 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.

ARTICLE 4. OFFICERS

Section 1—Church Officers

The church officers are pastor (see Article 5, Section 1), deacon (see Article 5, Section 2), clerk (see Article 5, Section 3), and treasurer (see Article 5, Section 4). 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 2—Designation of Corporate Officers

As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the church the pastor shall serve as president of the corporation; the clerk shall serve as secretary of the corporation; the treasurer shall serve as treasurer of the corporation; and the vice-chairman of the General Board/chairman of the Board of Deacons shall serve as vice president of the corporation.

Section 3—Eligibility for Continuance in Office

- (A) All church officers shall affirm their agreement with the statement of faith (as set forth in Article 2) annually in the presence of each other.
- (B) All church officers must be approved initially and thereafter annually by the pastor in order for them to commence or continue in their offices.
- (C) Only church members are eligible for election or appointment to any church office or position.

Section 4—Terms of Office

The length of terms of office shall be as follows:

- (A) The relationship between the pastor and the church shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a month's notice, or less by mutual consent. The severance of the relationship between the pastor and the church may be considered at any regular church administration meeting, provided notice to that effect shall have been given from the pulpit to the church two Sundays prior to said regular church administration meeting. A three-fourths majority of the members present and voting shall be required to decide the matter. Disciplinary removal of the pastor from office automatically terminates his membership. A restoration to membership after disciplinary removal will be subject to the requirements of Article 3, Section 1(D).

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- (B) The term of service for all offices and positions in the church, except the pastor shall be one year, at the expiration of which they may be re-elected or re-appointed.
 - (C) A vacancy occurring in any office or board, except in the case of the pastor, may be filled at any regular church administration meeting.
 - (D) All elected and appointed officers shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly elected or appointed, unless the officer is dismissed for disciplinary purposes, or if the office or position is left open at the discretion of the pastor. In such cases the office may remain vacant until the pastor appoints an officer to the position, and said officer is confirmed by the church.
 - (E) Members of the General Board/Board of Deacons may be removed from office for unbiblical conduct, as determined by the other board members, upon a majority vote of the remaining members of the General Board/Board of Deacons.

Section 5—Election of Officers

- (A) **Pastor.** In the event that the office of pastor becomes vacant, the General Board/Board of Deacons or a committee appointed from within the General Board/Board of Deacons shall serve as Pulpit Committee, and shall be authorized to search for a pastoral candidate, including soliciting, receiving, and examining résumés and conducting interviews. Upon the Pulpit Committee's recommendation of a candidate to become pastor, the church shall then devote itself to prayer for not less than 14 days, after which a vote to confirm or decline the recommendation shall be taken (see Article 6, Section 3(A)). A three-fourths majority of the members present and voting at a meeting called to consider a candidate for pastor shall be required to adopt the recommendation of the Pulpit Committee. The Pulpit Committee shall recommend only one candidate for pastor at a time.
- (B) **Church Clerk, Treasurer, and Other Officers** shall be elected by majority vote of the church membership at the annual church administration meeting and election of officers in December.

Section 6—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 hire, appoint, or dismiss the same.

ARTICLE 5. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1—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 at the annual church administration meeting. He shall serve as 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 of 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.
- (C) All appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements thereof including time and place and the use of the property belonging to the church for purposes other than the stated appointments shall be under the control of the pastor.

Section 2—The General Board/Board of Deacons

- (A) The General Board/Board of 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. They shall make provision for the observance of the ordinances of the church. They shall, if requested by the pastor, consider applications for church membership. They shall, in cooperation with the pastor, disburse the benevolence fund. They shall assist the pastor in visitation and all other evangelistic efforts of the church. They shall provide the pulpit supply and act as leaders for church meetings if the office of pastor is vacant. The General Board/Board of Deacons shall assist the pastor in caring for the administrative needs of the church's various ministries as requested by the pastor.
- (B) Immediately following the annual church administration meeting, the General Board/Board of Deacons shall assemble and elect, from their own number, a chairman who shall be vice president of the corporation, a vice chairman, and a secretary.
- (C) The General Board/Board of Deacons shall constitute the board of trustees of the corporation. The board of trustees shall exercise only the following specific powers:
 - 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.
3. To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church corporation, if such action is mandated by a vote of the church membership.

Section 3—Church Clerk

The church clerk shall:

- (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 General Board/Board of Deacons, with the time and place of holding, the notice of meeting given, the names of these 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 General Board/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 on terms provided by law the bylaws and minutes of proceedings of the General Board/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 secretary of the corporation.

Section 4—Treasurer

The treasurer shall:

- (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, trust companies, or other depositories as shall be selected by the Pastor or the General Board/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 may be directed by the pastor, the General Board/Board of Deacons, or the budget adopted by the members of the church at the annual church administration meeting, taking proper vouchers for the disbursements.
- (D) Keep and maintain adequate and correct accounts of the Church's properties and business transactions including account of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, and capital.
- (E) Make all expenditures of the church (except miscellaneous petty cash disbursements) by check.
- (F) When and as requested, render to the pastor and the General Board/Board of Deacons accounts of all his/her transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the Church.
- (G) Present a written report of itemized disbursements at the regular quarterly church administration meetings and make a general report for the year at the annual church administration meeting.
- (H) Keep all church financial records at the office of the Church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office.
- (I) Serve as treasurer of the corporation.

Section 5—Associate and Assistant Pastors

Under the direction and guidance of the pastor, the associate and assistant pastors of the church shall assist the pastor in carrying out the ministries of the church.

Section 6—Duties of all Officers

- (A) All officers shall prepare a written report of their work for the annual church administration meeting and shall surrender any records in their possession to the church clerk at the close of their term in 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 unexpired term.

Section 7—Installation of Officers

A public installation service in which all newly-elected officers of the church are to be dedicated to their respective offices and the ordination of newly-elected deacons shall be held at a public church service following their election at the annual church administration meeting.

ARTICLE 6. MEETINGS

Section 1—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 ordinances of the Lord's Supper and feet-washing shall be observed at the discretion of the pastor.

Section 2—Meetings for Church Administration

- (A) A quarterly church administration meeting shall be held on the first Wednesday evening of each quarter, at which time the regular church administration shall be considered. A quorum shall consist of the members present. The date for the annual church administration meeting and the annual election of church officers shall be the first Wednesday night in December each year.
- (B) All church administration meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer for divine guidance and blessing.
- (C) The following order shall be observed at the regular church administration meetings:
 - 1. Devotions and prayer
 - 2. Reading of minutes
 - 3. Reception of members
 - 4. Dismissal of members
 - 5. Report of officers
 - 6. Reports of standing committees
 - 7. Reports of special committees
 - 8. Unfinished matters
 - 9. Election of officers
 - 10. New matters
 - 11. Adjournment
 - 12. Benediction

Section 3—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 by giving notice of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called to the church from the pulpit at least one Sunday and not less than one week prior to said meeting. A meeting for election of a pastor may be called by the pulpit committee at any regular church meeting at least two weeks in advance.
- (B) Bible conferences, missionary conferences, and revivals may be held as the pastor deems beneficial.

Section 4—Fiscal Year

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

ARTICLE 7. MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Section 1—Purpose

The church believes that it is to provide the members' children with an education which 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. To this end, the church shall engage in ministries in education in keeping with this Constitution and bylaws.

Section 2—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 in church educational programs or courses of instruction if he deems it in the best interest of the church.

Section 3—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 other special meetings on a temporary basis.

Section 4—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.

Section 5—Unity

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

Section 6—Teaching

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted consistent with the teaching of the inerrant Word of God. Any assertion or belief which conflicts with or questions a Bible truth is a pagan deception and distortion of the truth which will be disclaimed as false. It is the responsibility of every instructor or teacher to present the inerrant Word of God as the sole infallible source of knowledge and wisdom.

Section 7—Christian Walk

All administrators, instructors, and teachers shall continue or adopt a lifestyle consistent with the precepts which they teach, whether in or out of the classroom.

Article 8—Unauthorized Expenditures

Any expenditures in excess of \$500 and not authorized in the regular annual budget must be authorized by the pastor (or the General Board/Board of Deacons if the office of pastor is vacant).

ARTICLE 9. ORDINATION

Section 1—Ordination Qualifications

- (A) **Ordination of Deacons.** Any member of this church or its mission churches, who the church shall set aside for the office of deacon, who has satisfactorily fulfilled one trial year, and who possesses the qualifications found in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13, may be ordained as a deacon of the church.
- (B) **Ordination of Ministers of the Gospel.** Any member of this church or its mission churches, who gives evidence of a genuine call of God into the work of the ministry, who has satisfactorily fulfilled one or more years of licensure to preach the Gospel, and possesses the qualifications stated in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, may be ordained as a minister of the Gospel.

Section 2—Ordination Procedure

- (A) **Ordination of Deacons.** Upon nomination for the office of deacon by the General Board/Board of Deacons, having completed a conference with the pastor and having been approved by the pastor, and having satisfactorily completed a trial year as a deacon, the pastor shall call a council to examine and pass on the qualification of the candidate. The ordination council shall consist of ordained ministers of like faith invited to participate in the examination of the candidate. If the candidate is found worthy of the ordination by the council, the ordination council may ordain the candidate on behalf of the church.
- (B) **Ordination of Ministers of the Gospel.** Upon completion of one or more years of licensure as a minister of the Gospel, and after the pastor, upon conference with the candidate, has approved the candidate for ordination, the pastor shall call a council to examine and pass on the qualification of the candidate. The ordination council shall consist of ordained ministers of like faith invited to participate in the examination of the candidate. If the candidate is found worthy of the ordination by the council, the ordination council may ordain the candidate on behalf of the church.
- (C) **Term of Ordination.** Ordination of ministers and deacons is for life, unless revoked by reason of doctrinal heresy or immoral conduct.
- (D) **Limitation of Ordination.** Only males may be considered as candidates for ordination as a deacon or minister of the Gospel.
- (E) **Ordination Service.** The pastor and the chairman of the General Board/Board of Deacons shall arrange for the ordination service.

ARTICLE 10. INDEMNIFICATION

Section 1—Actions Subject to Indemnification

The church may indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals (other than an action by or in the right of the Church) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the Church, against expenses, including attorney's fees, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding; and if that person acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had not reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or on a plea of *nolo contendere* or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was lawful.

Section 2—Expenses Subject to Indemnification

To the extent that a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit, or proceeding referred to in this Article, or in defense of any claim, issue, or matter in that action, suit, or proceeding, he or she may be indemnified against expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding.

Section 3—Limitations of Indemnification

Any indemnification made under this Article, may be made by the Church only as authorized in the specific case on a determination that indemnification of the pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent is proper in the circumstances because he has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in Section 1 of this Article. The determination shall be made (a) by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of the pastor and deacons who were not and are not parties to, or threatened with, the action, suit, or proceeding; (b) if the described quorum is not obtainable, or if a majority vote of a quorum of disinterested deacons so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or (c) by a majority vote of the members of the church.

Section 4—Timing of Indemnification

Expenses of each person seeking indemnification under this Article, may be paid by the Church as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding, as authorized by the General Board/Board of Deacons in the specific case, on receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent to repay the amount if it is ultimately determined that he or she is not qualified to be indemnified by the church.

Section 5—Extent of Indemnification

The indemnification provided by this Article shall be deemed to be discretionary unless otherwise required as a matter of law or under any agreement or provided by insurance purchased by the Church, both as to action of each person seeking indemnification under this Article in his official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding that office, and may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent and may inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of that person.

Section 6—Insurance

The Church may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the Church against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in that capacity, or arising out of his status in that capacity, whether or not the Church would have the power to indemnify him against liability under the provisions of this Article.

ARTICLE 11. TAX-EXEMPT PROVISIONS

Section 1—Private Inurement

No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation of the services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article 1, Section 2 hereof.

Section 2—Political Involvement

No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Section 3—Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the church, the trustees shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all of the assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the trustees shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to organizations which agree with the church's statement of faith.

Section 4—Racial Nondiscrimination

The church shall have a racially nondiscriminatory policy and therefore shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin.

Section 5—Limitation of Activities

Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, the church shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes stated in Article 1, Section 2.

Article 12—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 remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the pastor and the General Board/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 Article 1, Section 2.

ARTICLE 13. BINDING ARBITRATION

Section 1—Submission to Arbitration

Believing that lawsuits between believers are prohibited by Scripture, all members of this church agree to submit to binding arbitration any matters 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, except that judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.

Section 2—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 1, above, and such Procedures for Arbitration as are adopted pursuant to the following two sections.

Section 3—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 as outlined under Article 3, Section 4, were followed.
- (B) Should any dispute involve the removal from office of the pastor or any other church officer, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures set forth in Article 3 were followed.

Section 4—Arbitration Procedures

The procedures for arbitration shall be as adopted by the Pastor and the General Board/Board of Deacons.

ARTICLE 14. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and Bylaws may be revised or amended by a majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular church administration 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

This Constitution and Bylaws was 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.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Eric J. Thompson, Committee Chairman
Bro. Cesar Arvizu, Committee Secretary
Bro. Jeff Hollinsworth
Bro. Dave Payne
Bro. Jesse Rodriguez
Bro. Martin Rodriguez
Bro. Chad Westfall

Amended December 26, 2004

This Constitution and Bylaws was amended 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.