

Constitution for Harvest Baptist Fellowship

PREAMBLE

Harvest Baptist Fellowship adopted this constitution not as a substitute for, but in subordination to, the Word of God. These standards have been received as being based upon the Scriptures; even the elements not drawn directly from the Word have been acknowledged as based upon the general rules and tenor of the application of the teaching of Scriptures to the faith, worship, government and discipline of the church. Although these standards have been acknowledged to be of lesser importance than the inspired words of Scriptures, yet they cannot be neglected without resulting in serious impairment of the life of the church.

We declare and establish this document to preserve and perpetuate the principles of our common Christian faith and to govern this body in an orderly and Biblical manner. This document will seek to preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body to accomplish its God-given purpose.

ARTICLE I -- NAME

This body will be known as the Harvest Baptist Fellowship of Merrillville, Indiana.

ARTICLE II -- PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be to carry out as fully as possible the purpose of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who made the church to be His earthly body, to witness for Him in our community and to the fullest possible extent throughout the whole world, to observe His ordinances and to seek to disciple His people in all spiritual grace.

ARTICLE III -- DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

This church believes that the Bible is the only source of authority for all matters of faith and practice. While accepting the Bible to be our only authority in faith and practice, we make the following declarations of belief which are taken from the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000:

I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

II. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

III. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

V. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

VIII. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

IX. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

X. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

XI. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

XII. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

XIII. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

XIV. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

XV. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

XVI. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

XVII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of

God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

XVIII. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

ARTICLE IV – RELATIONSHIPS

This body is voluntarily affiliated with the Northwest Indiana Baptist Association, the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, and the Southern Baptist Convention and its affiliated agencies.

ARTICLE V -- CHURCH COVENANT

We, the members of Harvest Baptist Fellowship, having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, do now in the presence of God and this assembly, enter into a covenant with each other, as one body in Christ.

We, therefore, agree, by the help of the Holy Spirit and with the Bible, the inspired and inerrant Word of God as our guide, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of His kingdom; to promote spirituality; to sustain its worship, and discipline and doctrine; to observe the church ordinances of believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper as authorized by the Holy Scriptures; to contribute cheerfully and regularly our offerings to the support of the ministry of our church and to the spread of the gospel of Christ to all nations.

We agree to encourage personal and family devotions; to educate our children according to our faith; to seek the salvation of the unbeliever; to be just in our dealings, reliable in our responsibilities, and an example to those around us; and to work untiringly for the advancement of the kingdom of our Savior by witnessing in words and actions.

We agree to walk in Christian harmony and watchfulness, giving and receiving assistance with meekness and affection; to pray for one another; to help each other in sickness and sorrow; to be slow to get angry; to always be eager for reconciliation, seeking it without delay. We further agree that, when we move from this area, 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 VI -- CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Members - The true church is composed of the body of believers who have been called out from the world, and who are under the dominion and authority of Jesus Christ. (Romans 12:5; II Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:27)

We know that the church visible may be weakened and cursed through unregenerate church membership. Therefore, we shall strive with the help of Almighty God to enroll no name that is not already written in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 20:12-15; Revelation 21:27)

Any sincere child of God (John 1:12) will be welcomed to membership, regardless of wealth or social position, (II Corinthians 10:17-18; James 2:9) if he meets the following requirements:

This church is comprised of persons who profess a personal faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, have been baptized as believers by immersion according to the New Testament, and actively follow the Lord Jesus Christ in discipleship.

Any person desiring to unite with this church shall have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior. He shall have confessed his faith by being baptized by immersion.

The candidate desiring to unite with this church shall have a lifestyle free from any activities or attitudes, which would be considered worthy of church discipline according to the Scriptures or this constitution.

The candidate shall, in one or more conferences with pastor(s) and / or deacon(s), be interviewed regarding his Christian experience and the basis of his salvation. (I Peter 3:15)

The candidate shall have been given a copy of the Constitution of this church so that he may ask questions concerning any part of our doctrine or government. It is our prayer and earnest desire that each person may be fully informed and in full agreement before joining our fellowship.

The candidate will be required to assent, without reservation, to the statement of doctrine contained in this constitution as well as agree to conduct himself/herself according to the dictates laid out in scripture and in this document.

Anyone regardless of age, who has met all the above requirements, may be accepted, as a member upon a simple majority vote of the congregation providing one of the following is true from section 2.

Section 2. Membership - A person shall be considered a member upon approval by the church. A person may be received for membership by any of the following ways:

1. By Profession of Faith - A person who accepts Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, gives testimony to that conversion experience, is subsequently baptized by immersion, and affirms the articles set forth in this document shall be considered a member of this church with full rights.
2. By Statement - A person who has been baptized as a believer in Jesus by immersion but who has no transferable church membership may upon giving satisfactory evidence of a personal Christian faith and upon affirming the articles set forth in this document be considered a member.
3. By Letter - Any person from another Southern Baptist Church may be received as a member upon receipt of letter of good standing and transfer from that church and upon their affirmation of articles set forth in this document.

Section 3. New Member Orientation - New church members will be expected to participate in the church's new member orientation as developed and implemented by the church leadership.

Section 4. Rights of Members - Every member of the church, age 13 and older, is entitled to one vote on all matters requiring a congregational vote, provided the member is present. Proxy voting is prohibited.

Section 5. Responsibilities of Members - All members are expected to uphold the church covenant, affirm the doctrinal beliefs laid forth in the constitution, submit to the regulations laid forth in the church constitution and remain committed to personal Christian growth, and to support the church through regular attendance, worship, service, and stewardship.

Every member of the church is expected to be faithful in discipleship and service. Recognizing that Christians are ministers of reconciliation this church expects its members to be active Christians in the work of the church and in the world.

Section 6. Discipline of Members - This church will make every effort to adhere to the principles of church discipline as set forth in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 6:1-18. The guiding motivation behind church discipline is love.

Any matter of discipline that has not been resolved according to Matthew 18:15-16, should be brought to the attention of the pastor(s) and the deacon(s), who shall be governed by Matthew 18:15-17, with the goal of repentance and return to the Lord. If such repentance and return do not take place, the pastor(s) and deacon(s) are to proceed according to the following stipulations:

1. Exclusion

- a. Should any member be absent from the church for a period of six months and fail to communicate with the pastor(s) or clerk during that time, his name may be excluded from the roll of church members. A two-thirds vote of members present at a regularly called business meeting is necessary for exclusion of a member.
- b. Should any member's conduct or doctrine, in the judgment of the pastor(s) and deacon(s), be so opposed to the Word of God as to threaten the life and faith of the church, that member's name may be excluded from the roll of the church by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a regularly called business meeting.

2. Restoration of Excluded Members

The right to exclude members or the withdrawal of fellowship is in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament (Matthew 18:15-17; I Corinthians 5:5; II Thessalonians 3:6). The apostolic church had, also, the right to restore excluded members who gave satisfactory evidence of being repentant (II Corinthians 2:6-8). The object of exclusion having been accomplished, the pastor(s) and deacon(s) shall recommend to the church to restore the repentant member. A two-thirds vote of the members present at a regularly called business meeting is necessary for the restoration of the member's name.

Section 7. Termination of Membership - Membership shall be terminated in the following ways: (1) death, (2) transfer by letter to another Southern Baptist Church, (3) acknowledgment when a member has joined a church of another faith and order and requests such action, (4) resignation, (5) exclusion by action of this church.

ARTICLE VII -- CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1. Sunday Services - The church shall meet regularly each Sunday for worship, for preaching, for teaching, for evangelism, and for fellowship; and additionally may meet on any other day(s) the church so determines. These services will be open to everyone and shall be conducted under the direction of the church leadership. The church shall determine the number and times of services.

Section 2. Special Events - All church meetings that are essential to the accomplishment of the purposes of this church shall be publicized in advance to the church.

Section 3. Business Meetings - Business meetings shall be held monthly at a time the church decides. Moderator shall be appointed from among the pastor(s) and deacon(s) by majority vote of the pastor(s) and deacon(s) prior to the meeting. In the absence of a pastor the church clerk will call the church to order and a temporary Moderator will be elected from the quorum.

Section 4. Special Business Meetings - A special business meeting may be called to consider any matter requiring immediate action. Notice of the subject, date, time and location of the meeting must be announced to the church at least one week in advance of the meeting unless an emergency (as affirmed by the pastor(s) and deacon(s) by simple majority vote) necessitates sooner action. Those authorized to call a special business meeting are as follows: (1) the Senior Pastor, (2) the Deacon Body.

Section 5. Quorum - A quorum consists of those who attend the business meeting provided it is a regular meeting or one that has been properly called.

Section 6. Polity and Parliamentary Rules - The government of this church resides in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other body. This church will seek to conduct its business under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and according to the spirit of the New Testament. Should questions arise as to parliamentary procedure this church will refer to the rules stated in *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest revised edition.

Section 7. Ordination

A. Ordination of a Pastor - Since it is our hope that Spirit-filled men will be called out from among us to proclaim the Gospel of the grace of God, such men may be given a commission to preach and perform all duties of the ministry, provided that the candidate meets the qualifications for a pastor laid out in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, and Ephesians 4:11-16. When a man is presented as a candidate for ordination, the church shall call an ordination council of ordained men to examine the qualifications of the candidate. Ordination of the candidate shall be affirmed by three-fourths vote of the ordination council followed by two-thirds vote of the church body.

B. Ordination of a Deacon - The Screening Team will present candidates to be considered for deaconship ordination who meet the qualifications laid out in I Timothy 3: 8-13 and Acts 6:3-4. When a man is presented for ordination, the church shall call an ordination council of ordained men to examine the qualifications of the candidate. Ordination of the candidate shall be affirmed by three-fourths vote of the ordination council followed by two-thirds vote of the church body. Such men may then be given authority to serve as deacons.

Section 8. Commissioning of Missionaries - In the matter of commissioning missionaries to represent our church in the harvest fields of the world, we believe that the local church is the sending agency for the missionary (Acts 13:1-3), working in cooperation with mission boards approved by the pastor(s) and church leadership.

ARTICLE VIII -- ORGANIZATION FOR MINISTRY

Section 1 Personnel

All persons elected to ministry positions must become members of the church.

A. Senior Pastor

1. - The qualifications and responsibilities for the position of Senior Pastor of this church shall be according to the teachings of 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9 and Ephesians 4:11-16.

2. - Election shall be by an affirmative vote of at least three-fourths of those members present at a regular or special business meeting of the church. Voting shall be by secret ballot. Only one pastoral candidate is to be presented to the church for consideration at a time.

3. - The church may dismiss a pastor by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a special business meeting called for that purpose. Voting shall be by secret ballot. At least one month's severance pay will be granted, more if a simple majority vote so indicates. The following are

Terms for dismissal of the Senior Pastor:

- Failing to adhere strictly to the articles of faith
- Committing acts which would bring disgrace to the church
- Failing to abide by the authority of the church.

Any complaint against the senior pastor must be brought before the pastor(s) and deacon(s) in private conference and affirmed by two-thirds vote to bring before the church at an appropriately called business meeting.

In the event significant allegations have been made against the senior pastor, the deacon(s) have the authority to suspend any and/or all ministerial duties of the senior pastor by two-thirds vote of the active deacon body. This places the senior pastor on involuntary paid leave until the issue(s) have been examined and dismissed or brought before the church body.

4. – The Senior Pastor's salary and benefits will be determined by the Personnel Administration Team and approved by the church and agreed upon by the prospective candidate prior to his call. An annual review of Salary and performance, given by the Personnel Administration Team, shall occur with the intent to allow the pastor to improve in his ministry and to maximize his personal growth both as a Christian and as a Gospel Minister.

5. - When a vacancy in the pastorate occurs, a Pastoral Search Team shall be appointed by the church to seek a new pastor. The Team shall be comprised of 5 - 7 individuals (the number 5-7 does not include the following individuals who will automatically serve on the Pastoral Search Team: all pastoral staff, the Chairman of the Deacons, one additional deacon selected by the deacon body by two-thirds vote) who are nominated by the church in a business meeting and approved by the remaining pastor(s) and deacons. The team's recommendation shall constitute a nomination and will then be subject to the voting procedures laid out in item 4.

6. - Unless otherwise so stated in these bylaws the Senior Pastor shall serve as President of the Corporation for legal purposes.

B. Additional Pastoral Staff

The ministerial staff will be those directly responsible for education, training, guidance and spiritual development of church members.

The Pastor(s), other church staff members, the deacon(s), the Personnel Administration Team, or other church members may propose new ministerial staff positions. Proposed positions shall be subject to the review and recommendation of the Personnel Administration Team and the Financial Administration Team and final approval by the Deacons and the church.

Candidates for a ministerial staff position shall be interviewed by the Pastor(s), the Personnel Administration Team, and any other team or group with a special interest or information which will aid in the selection process. After the Pastor(s), the Personnel Administration Team, and the Deacons approve a candidate, the candidate's name shall be submitted to the church for its approval by written ballot and must be approved by three-fourths of the church members present.

Salaries and fringe benefits of new ministerial staff shall be established by the Personnel Administration Team and approved by two thirds vote, but must also be approved by two-thirds vote of the Financial Administration Team, and two-thirds vote of the Pastor(s), and Deacon(s).

Ministerial staff is asked to provide 30 days notice upon offering a written resignation to the church. All pastors (except the Senior Pastor whose dismissal procedure has been previously outlined) may be terminated upon the recommendation of three-fourths vote of the Personnel Administration Team and the Senior Pastor and approval by a three-fourths vote of the Deacons. Upon termination, ministerial staff shall receive one-month severance pay, more if church agrees, as determined by the Personnel Administration Team and approval by the Financial Administration Team and the Deacons.

C. Additional Support Staff

The Senior Pastor, other church staff, the Personnel Administration Team, or other church members may propose new Support staff positions. Proposed positions shall be subject to the review and recommendation of the Personnel Administration Team and the Financial Administration Team and final approval by the Deacons.

The Pastor(s), the Personnel Administration Team, and any other team or group with a special interest or information that will aid in the selection process shall interview candidates for a support staff position. A candidate may only be hired after approval by the Senior Pastor, three-fourths vote of the Personnel Administration Team, and three-fourths vote of the Deacons.

The Personnel Administration Team with the approval of three-fourths vote of the Financial Administration Team and three-fourths vote of the Deacons shall also set salaries and fringe benefits of new Support staff members.

Support staff shall give fifteen days notice upon offering a written resignation to the church. Support staff may be terminated only with the approval of the Personnel Administration Team and the Deacons, and upon such dismissal may receive appropriate severance pay as determined by the Personnel Administration Team upon approval by the Financial Administration Team and the Deacons.

D. Clerk

The church clerk, elected annually by two-thirds vote at a properly called business meeting, shall keep accurate records of all church business, preserve all church documents, and maintain a correct register of the church membership. The church clerk shall be designated as a corporate officer - (church secretary) for state legal purposes.

E. Treasurer

The treasurer, elected annually by two-thirds vote at a properly called business meeting, shall maintain a record of all receipts and expenses, make necessary disbursements promptly, and submit a monthly report of all financial transactions. Non-budgeted items exceeding \$500 must be authorized by a vote of the church. Financial Administration Team must approve non-budgeted items under \$500 each. The treasurer is also a corporate officer for legal purposes.

F. Deacons

Deacons are to be elected by the church as the church has need according to Acts 6:1-7. Deacons are ordained men and must meet the qualification of Acts 6:3 and 1 Tim 3:8-13. They serve to assist the pastoral staff in devoting their time to prayer and the ministry of the Word by offering wise counsel, and actively ministering to the body at large especially in the area of member care and visitation. They shall elect their own chairman. The Deacon Chairman will be designated as Vice-President of the corporation for legal purposes.

1. Deacons are appointed for lifetime deaconship, unless they fail to meet the standards laid out in Acts 6:3, 1 Tim. 3:8-13 or of a church member in general, in which case their deaconship must be revoked.
2. Deacons are only ACTIVELY serving for a three-year term.
3. Deacons then must take a sabbatical of at least one-year inactive deaconship.
4. Prospective deacons are nominated by the Screening Team and affirmed by three-fourths vote by the congregation during a regular or special business meeting.
5. In an effort to maintain continuity in leadership at the inception of Harvest Baptist Fellowship, one-third of the active deacons will serve 1 year, one-third shall serve two years, and one-third shall serve three years allowing for a rotation process to be initiated.

Terms for Dismissal of a Deacon

- Failing to adhere strictly to the articles of faith
- Committing acts which would bring disgrace to the church
- Failing to abide by the authority of the church.

Any complaint against a deacon must be brought before the pastor(s) and deacon(s) in private conference and affirmed by two-thirds vote to bring before the church at an appropriately called business meeting. A two-thirds vote by the church is required to dismiss a deacon.

In the event significant allegations have been made against a deacon, the deacon(s) have the authority to suspend any and/or all ministerial duties of said deacon by two-thirds vote of the active deacon body. This places said deacon on involuntary leave until the issue(s) have been examined and dismissed or brought before the church body.

Section 2 Committees & Leadership Teams

Standing and Special committees / teams will be elected and named by the church for the purpose of sharing responsibilities of the ministry of the church. The Personnel Administration Team will

be responsible for making nominations for all positions. The Senior Pastor and all other Pastors may serve as ex officio member of any committee/ team.

1. Standing Committees / Teams - The following teams shall be elected by the church and each member shall be elected for a one year term which can be extended for so long as both the individual and the body so desire.

(a) - **Financial Administration Team** - This team will consist of the church treasurer, a representative from the deacon body, and two members of the congregation at large. Its task is to prepare an annual budget, monitor financial integrity, promote stewardship, and deal with any special financial matters that arise.

(b) - **Personnel Administration Team** - This team is responsible for overseeing and filling all positions in the church with the exception of Senior Pastor and other ordained members of the church staff. Spiritual gifts of the members will be the prime consideration in the nomination process in order to match gifts with ministry tasks. This team will consist of two deacons selected by two-thirds vote by the deacons themselves and three church members selected by the body by two-thirds majority vote. The Senior Pastor in conjunction with this team will have administrative and supervisory responsibility over all church employees.

(c) - **Screening Team** – This team shall consist of five individuals, three of which come from the active or inactive deacon body, selected by two-thirds vote of the active deacon body, and two persons nominated and affirmed by two-thirds vote of the church body. The Screening Team is elected to a three-year term. The responsibility of this team is to search out qualified men according to I Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:3-4 to serve in the office of deacon.

(d) - **Building and Grounds Team** - This team shall be responsible for the maintenance of church buildings, grounds and property. It shall consist of a chairman and an appropriate number of other members of the congregation as needed.

(e) - **Missions Team** - This team is responsible for Missions Education and Mission Action. It shall consist of 3-7 members of the congregation.

(f) - **Worship Team** - This team will be responsible for facilitating the worship of Harvest Baptist Fellowship. It is comprised of at least one representative from each of the worship groups that rotate in leading Harvest in magnifying the King of Glory through music.

(g) - **Children's Ministries Team** – This team will be comprised of 3-7 members who will seek to ensure that Harvest's commitment for children from birth to youth group age are lovingly ministered to in a well supervised, Christ centered, Bible teaching environment.

(h) - **AWANA Team** – This team will be comprised of 3-7 members who will ensure that Harvest develops and maintains an effective, loving, Christ centered, Bible teaching AWANA (or AWANA like) ministry.

(i) - **Outreach / Visitation Team** – This team will be comprised of at least 3 members who will work alongside the pastor(s) and deacon(s) in helping to facilitate Harvest Baptist Fellowship in developing and maintaining both local outreach and visitation ministries within the church.

(j) - **Youth Ministry Team** – This team will be comprised of at least 3 members who will work alongside the pastors in ensuring that Harvest Baptist Fellowship has a dynamic, Biblical, life-changing, ministry to both our church’s and our community’s young people.

(k) - **Prayer Team** – This team will be comprised of at least 3 members who will work alongside the pastors and deacons in systematically and intentionally ensuring that Harvest Baptist Fellowship meets the Lord’s injunction for it to be a “House of Prayer.”

(l) – **Fellowship Team** – This team will be comprised of at least 3 members who will work alongside the pastors and deacons in systematically and intentionally ensuring that Harvest Baptist Fellowship has regular spirit-led *Koinonia*/fellowship.

All teams, unless otherwise stated, shall be nominated by the Personnel Administration Team and affirmed by two-thirds vote of the church body at an appropriately called business meeting.

Section 3. Special Committees / Teams - Special teams shall be organized by the church as needed and will serve until such time as the particular need is met.

Section 4. Messengers - Messengers to meetings of the Southern Baptist Convention, the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, the Northwest Indiana Baptist Association and any other voluntary affiliations Harvest wishes to maintain.

With as much advance notice as possible, the congregation shall be notified of the dates and locations of annual meetings in an effort to identify members volunteering to attend. If there are fewer volunteers than the number allotted to the church as voting messengers, the Pastor(s) and deacon officers may serve as a committee to identify members who may be willing to attend. If there are more volunteers than the number of allotted votes, selection of the slate of nominees (one for each slot) shall be affirmed by two thirds majority vote by the congregation, with the exception of the Pastor(s) and Chairman of Deacons who shall automatically be selected if they wish to attend.

Section 5. Vacancies

Should the office of any officer, aside from a pastor, become vacant before the expiration of their term of office, the pastor(s) and the active deacon body, by two-thirds vote, shall appoint their successor. The term of such appointment shall be only until the next meeting of election, at which time his successor shall be elected for the remainder of the term, if any, in manner prescribed for their office.

ARTICLE IX -- AMENDMENTS

Changes in these bylaws shall be made at any regular business meeting of the church, provided each amendment has been presented in writing at the previous business meeting, that a written copy of the amendment has been published and made available prior to being voted on and that written copies of the proposed amendment have been made available to the resident members of the congregation. Amendments to these bylaws shall be ratified by two-thirds vote of members present and voting.

ARTICLE X -- ADOPTION

These bylaws shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when two-thirds of the members present and voting at the business meeting at which the vote is taken shall vote in favor of it.

Article XI - POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Section 1. Policies - This church shall write policy documents that deal with personnel matters, financial matters, property matters, ministry matters, and the like as the need arises for these policies. When policies are written and approved by the church they immediately become a part of the operating policy of the church. The bylaws of the church should be changed to reflect any new policy impact on any given area in the bylaws. A simple reference system may be used and the policies must be kept on file and accessible to all church members on proper notice. The church's policy manual shall be evaluated annually by the deacon body and pastor(s) to ensure that new policies are in place as Harvest Baptist Fellowship's ministries and needs evolve.

Section 2. Procedures - Procedures for this church may be written documents or generally understood operating procedures. Should they be written they should be kept on file and accessible to all church members on proper notice. However, since they may be construed to be generally understood operating procedures, should a question or dispute arise concerning a policy that cannot be resolved, the church's pastoral staff and active deacon body will be responsible for clarifying the procedure and preparing a written copy which will be read to the church in business meeting and unless the church objects it will be filed as a written procedures document.

Article XII. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of this church shall correspond to the calendar year.

Article XII. Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order, as last revised, shall be the parliamentary manual for this church.

Article XIII. Dissolution

This body can be dissolved by two-thirds majority vote in a specially called business meeting. In the event of the dissolution of this corporation, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members, but shall be irrevocably dedicated according to two thirds majority vote to such non-profit religious corporations as are in agreement with the letter and spirit of this constitutional statement of faith, and in conformity with the requirements of title 26 of the U.S. code Section 501 (c3) or any subsequent amendment thereto.