

Harvestland Community Church

Constitution and Bylaws

Harvestland Community Church

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Harvestland Community Church Constitution

Article I – Name

The name of this church shall be Harvestland Community Church of Hodgenville, Ky. (also referred to as HCC) It shall be affiliated with the Southern Baptist in their nation, state and local expressions. As a Southern Baptist church it is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control. However it chooses to voluntarily cooperate with the Kentucky Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Article II – The Purpose of the Church

The purpose of this church is to glorify God by obeying the principles and precepts of the Scriptures, obeying the Great Commandment (*Matthew 22:36-40*), and the Great Commission (*Matthew 28:18-20*). This involves at least the following categories:

1. Worship – (Celebrating) “To love God with all your heart..” (*Matt. 22:36-40*)
2. Ministry – (Caring) “Love your neighbor as yourself...” (*Matt. 22:36-40*)
3. Evangelism – (Cultivating) “Go...and make disciples..” (*Matt. 28:18-20*)
4. Discipleship – (Communicating) “Teach them to observe..” (*Matt. 28:18-20*)

Article III – Statement of Faith (Baptist Faith and Message 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; 1Corinthians 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 – Church Government

The government of this church shall be under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the leadership of the Holy Spirit as exercised through the Pastor/Elders. They shall be assisted in this capacity by the Ministry Team and Deacons. The congregation has authority in matters pertaining to selection of Pastors/Elders, Deacons and the approval of the annual budget and incurring indebtedness and other specific matters as outlined within the bylaws.

Article V – Membership

Harvestland Community Church is dedicated to covenant relationship through formal membership. Membership shall be the means whereby the individual, having confessed his/her faith in Jesus Christ, commits to this body of believers by accepting the responsibilities and privileges which the Scriptures teach, thereby entrusting his/herself to its spiritual care and counsel. Procedures for membership are outlined in the bylaws.

Article VI – Covenant of Membership

Section A – Introduction

The revelation of our God as demonstrated by His love for us requires a response on our part. A part of this response in the Scriptures was often exemplified in the making of covenant with fellow believers. For this reason we have included a covenant commitment to this local body of believers who are to serve as our brothers and sisters and bear the responsibility for our growth in grace and in the knowledge of our God as Savior. Through the commitment we acknowledge our desire to grow in obedience to God. We are to be concerned for both the physical and spiritual wellbeing of each other (*Genesis 4:9*) and are to encourage one another daily so that we do not turn away from the Savior (*Hebrews 3:15*). Since we bear a responsibility for each other before the Lord, we are to stimulate one another to love and good works (*Hebrews 10:24*) and are to acknowledge our need for one another.

Section B – The Membership Covenant

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and having been baptized, and being in agreement with the doctrine, vision, and structure of Harvestland Community Church I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with this body of believers as a member. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to my fellow members to do the following:

1. I will protect the unity of my church.

....By acting in love toward other members

....By refusing to gossip

....By following the leaders of this church

So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. (Romans 14:19 ESV)

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, (1 Peter 1:22 ESV)

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. (Ephesians 4:29 ESV)

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17 ESV)

2. I will share the responsibility of my church.

....By praying for its growth

....By inviting the unchurched to attend

....By warmly welcoming those who visit

We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 ESV)

And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. (Luke 14:23 ESV)

3. I will serve the ministry of my church

....By discovering my gifts and talents

....By being equipped to serve by the pastor/elders

....By developing a servant's heart

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: (1 Peter 4:10 ESV)

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, (Ephesians 4:11-12 ESV)

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3-4 ESV)

4. I will support the testimony of my church

....By attending faithfully

....By living a godly life

....By giving regularly

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:24-25 ESV)

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, (Philippians 1:27 ESV)

"Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD. (Leviticus 27:30 ESV)

Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. (1 Corinthians 16:1-2 ESV)

Article VII – Amendments

All changes to this Constitution shall be guided by a desire to reflect Biblical interpretation, attitudes and principles.

Amendments to the Church Constitution require either a specially called meeting of the church or must be done at the church's Annual Meeting.

Amendments to the Constitutions shall follow these guidelines

1. The desire to amend this constitution requires a majority endorsement by the Pastor/Elders.
2. Notice of the proposed amendments shall be made available to all active members, at least two (2) weeks prior to this meeting.
3. Notice of the proposed meeting must be printed in the church bulletin and announced verbally and or electronically at least two (2) weeks prior to the special meeting. (At least one of these must be during a Sunday morning service)
4. The vote for an amendment change must be done by ballots provided for all members in good standing present.
5. The affirmative vote for an amendment shall not be less than (2/3) majority of the votes cast by qualified members present.

Harvestland Community Church Bylaws

Article 1 – Membership

Section 101 – General

We acknowledge that the church of Jesus Christ is made up of many members including the redeemed of all ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people and nations. We further acknowledge that at the moment of salvation one is baptized into the body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:4-6; Col. 3:15) We also recognize that the church is spoken of as a local assembly, *ecclesia*, of believers who gather together for worship, prayer, Bible study and mutual edification.

Harvestland Community Church is a local assembly of believers and reserves the right as a local autonomous body to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Section 102 – Application for Membership

Those who offer themselves as a candidate for membership in this church shall be interviewed by one or more of the Pastor/Elders and shall be required to attend the church membership class.

Prior to the candidate being presented to the church for affirmation of membership they must offer proof of, and/or affirm the following.

1. That they have given credible testimony of salvation, and/or evidence of their conversion and agreement that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that they have placed their faith in Him as the atonement for their sins, and that they believe God raised Him from the dead according to the scriptures.
2. That they have **received believer's baptism** as an act of obedience to the command of scripture and a public testimony of their faith.
3. That, they have attended the church membership class and having read and acknowledged their agreement with the doctrines, vision, and leadership structure of Harvestland Community Church as outlined in the church constitution and bylaws.

If the candidate for membership is coming from another church, membership requirements for membership with HCC may also require the following:

1. By credible testimony of salvation and acknowledgement of having previously been baptized in another church of like faith and practice, or having given testimony of salvation and having been **baptized** by one of the Pastor/Elders or designated members of HCC.
2. By promise of a letter of recommendation from another church of like Christian faith and belief. (The elders retain the right to contact a candidate's previous church in order to more fully ascertain their qualification for membership.)
3. By giving a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a church of like Christian faith and belief when no letter is obtainable.

Having done the above, all those wishing to unite with HCC may be affirmed by the church at a regular meeting, special meeting, revival services or a special church event recognized by both the church leadership and the membership at large. Affirmation from the church may be given through a vote, visual or verbal, in a form approved of and led by one of the Pastor/Elders.

Should there be any dissent from the membership as to the qualification of a candidate, such dissent shall be brought to the attention of the Pastor/Elders within (30) days of church affirmation for investigation. If the candidate is found to be unable to meet the qualifications for membership the candidate shall be notified as to the reason(s). If after adequate time the candidate is still unable to meet the qualifications for membership the congregation shall be made aware of this at a regular meeting of the church and the candidate's membership shall be annulled.

If however, such dissent is found to be ungrounded or conditions for membership are/can be met within the time period allotted the candidates membership shall stand contingent upon the meeting of said requirements.

Section 103 – Rights of Members

1. Every member of the church eighteen years of age and older is entitled to (1) vote at all elections and on any matter placed before the church where congregational vote is required, provided the member is present. No member may appoint another member to vote in their place, or cast a vote by proxy.
2. Those members of appropriate age may be eligible for consideration to serve on committees; however, members must be at least 18 years of age to qualify for nomination for elected offices within the church.

Section 104 – Membership/Children

The scriptures teach that everyone who comes to Christ is drawn by the Father (*John 6:44*) and we find no scriptural evidence that saving faith is based upon an age at which one learns to reason. Our chief concern is that each member, whether young, or old has a personal relationship with God through his Son Jesus.

Therefore, we encourage parents to work with appropriate members of the church leadership in sharing the gospel with and talking with their own children, as well as those children placed under our care, in order to help them understand the gospel clearly. It is important that this be done carefully and cautiously so as to not place undue pressure upon a child who does not yet fully understand the gospel.

Therefore, HCC does not withhold baptism or church membership from children who have shown a credible testimony of salvation. All children who attend HCC, who profess faith in Christ and who wish to be baptized or request membership must do so under the guidance of one of the Pastor/Elders or Ministry Team designate in cooperation with the parents or guardians of the child.

“If the elders are convinced that a child has given credible testimony of salvation, the child shall be baptized and accepted into the fellowship of the church. The child, under the authority of his or her parents, will be without voting responsibilities until the age of eighteen.”

At or just prior to the age of eighteen, the child will be given opportunity to attend the membership class and complete the requirements for membership outlined above. Continued membership and voting responsibilities given to adult members will only be exercised after the completion of this process as outlined in Section 102.

Section 105 – Inactive Members

Members who are out of the area temporarily or who for legitimate reasons may not be able to attend the church’s services for a period of three months or more due to being providentially hindered, may be retained as inactive members. Examples of inactive members include sickness, shut-ins, active military service members, missionaries, etc. Should an individual find themselves in a situation which prohibits their active fellowship with and participation with this church they may request that they be placed on the inactive roll. If after consultation with the Pastor/Elders the reason is found to be legitimate, they will request that the clerk change their membership status and the church shall be made aware of this at the next appropriate meeting.

If it is found that an individual is no longer hindered in fellowship and participation with this body, but they have chosen not to do so, it shall be assumed that that individual no longer wishes to retain their membership and shall be removed from the church membership roll.

Section 106 – Termination of Membership

Members who request in writing that their membership be terminated, or indicate they have transferred to another church, or are deceased, or who have experienced church discipline as a result of a continual unrepentant lifestyle as a believer, shall be removed from the membership roll. Members who have been inactive (no longer attend services) for at least one (1) year, and are not on the inactive roll, shall be assumed to have terminated their membership with Harvestland Community Church. (The church shall attempt to contact the individual, if possible, to discover the reason for their non-attendance.)

If a former member request that a letter of prior membership be sent from HCC, this letter shall be granted, if proper information is still on file. This letter shall contain the dates of membership, and the reason for removal from the membership roll (i.e. relocation, absence, discipline, etc.).

Section 107 – Discipline

“If your brother sins against you go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.” (Matthew 18:15-17 ESV)

Church members who exhibit a continuing, unrepentant lifestyle of sin in regard to doctrine or conduct shall be dealt with according to the biblical process of church discipline. This is always to be done for the ultimate goals of glorifying God, purifying the church, and the restoration of the individual.

The first step in this process shall be fervent, continual prayer on the behalf of the sinning member by the one who has knowledge of the sin. (James 5:16-20) It shall also be the responsibility of any member of the body who has knowledge of a sinning member’s heresy or misconduct to reprove and seek correction and to restore the sinning member in private. (Matthew 18:15-18 and Galatians 6:1) If said member does not heed this reproof, then the reproving member shall again go to the sinning member accompanied by one or two witnesses to reprove, correct, and restore. One of these should be one of the Pastor/Elders of the Church.

If after reproof from the Pastor/Elders of the Church, the sinning member still fails to repent, they shall tell it to the Church. (Matthew 18:17) If the sinning member still refuses to repent, the Pastor/Elders shall announce the sinning member’s public removal from Church membership and fellowship and he or she is to be treated as an unbeliever. (Matthew 18:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, and 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15) There shall be no appeal to any court from that decision. However, if after removal of fellowship the sinning individual repents, he or she shall be joyfully restored back into fellowship. (Luke 17:3-4 and 2 Corinthians 2:6-9)

Due to the scriptural caution in *1 Corinthians 11*, every believer needs to “*examine himself/herself*”. Those under church discipline who are unwilling to repent are asked to refrain from partaking in the Lord’s Supper.

If during the process of Christian discipline the member withdraws membership voluntarily but continues in the identified sin, the Church shall still be responsible to seek the sinning individual’s restoration through the process outlined in Scripture above.

The actions described in this section must at all times be carried out with a gentle, loving and humble attitude with a sensitivity to God’s timing, and with the ultimate goal of glorifying God, purifying the church, and restoring the individual.

Upon the disciplined removal of a member, the membership relationship is terminated and there are no letters of membership to forward to a church requesting the same. In rare circumstances of serious problems that may endanger other individuals or churches, the Church has a spiritual responsibility to inform another church where the former member may be attending in regard to the risks related to that former member’s participation at the church. The Church has no obligation to transfer or forward a letter of membership or a positive affirmation of the disciplined former member. Because of spiritual duties to other Christian Churches, all members understand that the Church has qualified privileges to communicate any facts of

beliefs behind the Church's decision that it cannot recommend that a former member be accepted into another Church. All members waive any right to assert any claim of wrongdoing or tortious misconduct against the Church based on such communications. Both as a matter of biblical responsibility and by way of the members' consent to these bylaws, all members waive and release **the Church** from any claims or liability for any alleged or actual liability to the member for such disclosures as authorized herein and protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Article II – Officers and Government

The officers of this church shall be:

1. The Pastor/Elders
2. The Deacons
3. The Ministry Team
4. The Financial Team and Treasurer
5. The Church Clerk
6. The Trustees
7. Such other officers as the church would appoint

Section 201 – Pastor/Elders

Section 201a – Selection

Pastor – Upon vacancy of the office of Pastor, the church shall select a pastor search committee. The pastor search committee shall consist of current elders and members selected by the congregation to allow the committee to number at least seven (7) members. Elders desiring to be considered for the office of pastor shall be excluded from serving on the search committee.

The pastor search committee shall then take applications and interview potential candidates. After much prayer and consideration should the pastor search committee deem a candidate fit to be considered, they shall present this candidate to the congregation. After adequate opportunity to hear the candidate, a congregational vote may be called for. This election may only be held following a Sunday morning worship service. Election shall be by three-fourths (3/4) vote of the members present. (A quorum shall consist of the members present at the time of voting, and only active members shall be allowed to vote.)

The pastor's initial compensation shall be specified by the pastor search committee. This compensation shall be specified in writing and agreed upon by (church members, financial team, search committee and the candidate) prior to submission of the candidate to the church for a vote.

Elders – The elders shall consist of the pastor and those elders currently active within the church. The selection of elders shall be in accordance with the procedures outlined in the document. *HCC's Leadership Philosophy and Process* which states:

“These elders are not elected. Elders are called by God, selected and approved by the current Elder(s), and affirmed by the church body. (*Acts 14:23, I Timothy 3:1, Titus 1:5, Hebrews 13:17*) Potential Elders may be found by recommendations from the church body, existing elders, staff or other ministry leaders. These are only recommendations; actual nomination selection will be made by the current Elder(s).”

As the Pastor is considered the “lead Elder” no selection of Elders other than that of a new pastor may be made while a vacancy of the office of pastor exist. A resigning or retiring Pastor may not select an elder candidate if his retirement or resignation has been announced. Any Elder candidate not yet affirmed by the congregation according to established guidelines at the time of a Pastor’s retirement or resignation must wait until the Pastor’s successor has been in office at least ninety (90) days.

Section 201b – Their Qualification

The basic qualifications for the office of Pastor/Elder shall be the same as those found in *I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9*. These are further outlined in the document, *HCC Leadership Philosophy and Process*.

Section 201c – Their Responsibilities

Pastor/Elders As the Pastor is seen as the “lead Elder” of this church, the Elders share many of the basic responsibilities of the Pastor of the church. As further outlined in the document *HCC Leadership Philosophy and Process* they shall under the leadership of the Pastor:

....have overall responsibility for oversight and direction of the church. We see the Elders as the shepherds and pastors of our church family.

They are to seek the mind of Christ (who is the Head of the Church) in all matters of the church body through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

They are to feed the church spiritually through the teaching of sound doctrine and the truth of God’s work, by modeling lifestyles that are intimately related to the Lord, and by trusting Him in all areas of life.

They are to protect the church by refuting those who contradict the truth and by disciplining those who rebel against God or cause problems in the church family. They shall strive for reconciliation of the erring member.

They are to lead the church by defining the emphasis, as well as the approach that Harvestland Community Church will take in ministry. They will lead by example and commitment to the priorities that have been set.

An Elder is not primarily a consultant, advisor, committee man, executive or director of a board. His leadership should never take on a dictatorial style “lording over the church”. He should show himself to be a loving shepherd, pastor and father figure for the church family.

Because the work of an Elder is hard, often demanding long hours of sacrificial labor it is expected that the congregation would honor these men, showing them respect, committing to pray for them, and submitting to their leadership.

Acts 6:1-6, 20:28-3, I Corinthians 5, Galatians 6:1, I Thessalonians 5:12, II Thessalonians 3:14-15. I Timothy 3:2, 4:13, 5:17, 6:11. II Timothy 2:15, 24-26, 4:2, Titus 1:9, Hebrews 13:7. I Peter 5:2-3

201d – Authority

On the basis of the Scriptures and this church's Constitution the administration of this church is given by the Holy Spirit to the Pastor/Elders who are to administer God's authority and be responsible for His will being put into practice. The Pastor/Elders therefore shall have the authority to interpret this Constitution and Bylaws and implement action consistent with it.

Procedures for the conduct of Elder business shall be determined by the Pastor/Elders. The Chairman shall be the Pastor. In the event that the Pastor cannot be present, or a vacancy of the office exist, the chairman shall be selected by the Elders until the Pastor returns or a new Pastor is elected.

The Pastor/Elders shall meet as necessary. Meetings shall be called by the Chairman who will contact the other Elders, and when possible, announce such meeting on the Sunday morning prior to the meeting. A quorum for the transaction of business shall be a majority of the Elder membership.

201e – Leave of Absence or Resignation

Should a Pastor require a leave of absence, such a request must be brought before the Elders for consideration. The reasons for such a request may be things such as, family needs or emergencies, spiritual renewal, work related issues, etc.

If after consideration it is found that the Pastor requires a leave of absence the matter shall be presented to the Staff and The Personnel Team for discussion. Upon approval the Pastor may be allowed up to thirty (30) days leave of absence. Financial consideration must be approved in advance of the leave.

If at the end of this leave period it is found that the Pastor is still unable to fulfill his responsibilities to this church, further consideration may be made based upon the circumstances at hand. Such action could be an extension of his leave or a request that he resign as Pastor. These decisions would be made prayerfully, and in the best interest of the Pastor, his family, and the Harvestland Community Church family.

Should a Pastor resign, it is expected that he would give the church at least three weeks' notice.

The church would be asked to receive this request in a spirit of Christian love, and affirmation celebrating his commitment and service to the church.

Should an Elder require a leave of absence or need to resign, this shall be carried out in accordance with *HCC's Leadership Philosophy and Process* which states:

Should an Elder feel that he can no longer actively carry out his duties and responsibilities, the Elder may ask to be removed from service. If at all possible the church shall receive at least thirty (30) days' notice. In the event that this should occur, the church shall receive his resignation in a spirit of Christian love, and affirmation, celebrating his service to the church.

An Elder may also request that he be removed from active service but remain on as one of the Elders of Harvestland Community Church. The reasons for such a request may be things such as, family needs or emergencies, spiritual renewal, work related issues, etc. These request will be reviewed by the other Elder(s) and if it is found such a leave is needed then the Elder may ask to become inactive for a period of up to three months. The church would be notified of the need and the Elder's responsibilities would be delegated to other Elder(s).

If at the end of his leave period it is found that he is still unable to fulfill his responsibilities to Harvestland Community Church further considerations may be made based upon the circumstances at hand. Such action could be an extension of his leave or a request that he step down as an Elder. These decisions would be made prayerfully, and in the best interest of the Elder, his family, and Harvestland Community Church. Once again, the church would be asked to receive this request in a spirit of Christian love and affirmation, celebrating his commitment and service to the church.

201f – Potential Dismissal of a Pastor/Elder

Accusation brought against a Pastor/Elder must be brought to the attention of the Elders. Such accusations will be handled according to *HCC Leadership Philosophy and Process* which states:

Accusations of an Elder will be received according to I Timothy 5:19-22.

Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality. (1 Timothy 5:19-21 ESV)

If an Elder is guilty of an offense, he shall be counseled by the other Elder(s) with a view to restoration. (Galatians 6: 1-2) If the continues in his sin, he is to be removed from office with the hope that he may be restored according to Matthew 18: 12-18.

If it is found that there are grounds for consideration of dismissal, the Pastor/Elder in question shall be notified and a special meeting shall be called between the Elder in question, his fellow Elders. Should they concur that a resignation or dismissal should be pursued; it shall be brought before the voting membership at a duly called meeting. A three-quarter (3/4) majority of negative votes of the active members present will dismiss the Pastor/Elder. Should the Pastor/Elder offer to resign a congregational vote need not be pursued.

Section 202 – Deacons

Section 202a – Selection

Deacons shall be appointed by the incumbent Elders and Deacons as vacancies occur or as the need arises. Potential Deacons may be found by surveying the church family and/or by recommendations from existing Elders, Deacons, or other ministry leaders.

Selection and conformation shall occur through this process;

1. After prayerful consideration and careful observation of the qualifications listed in scripture, the members of our church will be asked to recommend to the Elders possible candidates/candidate from among our membership.
2. These nominations shall be prayerfully considered by the Elders. They will approach/interview possible candidates for the purpose of insuring that they are willing to serve and that candidates meet the qualification of deacons as set forth in Scripture.
3. Selected candidates will be made know to the membership at large.
4. The nominated Deacon must complete a time of observation and study concerning the character, qualifications, and responsibilities of the Deacon.
5. If a concern over a substantial issue is voiced by a church member during this time, then that concern will be investigated and if the candidate is found unqualified to serve, that candidate will be asked to step down.
6. After a period of study, observation and examination, the Pastor/Elders will appoint those who are ready to serve. Those found qualified shall be presented to the church and publically commissioned by the Elders with the laying on of hands.

Section 202b – Qualifications

The basic qualifications for Deacons shall be those outlined in *I Timothy 3: 8-13*. They shall be willing to be servants of the church in accordance with the meaning of the work outlined in *Acts 6: 1-6*. A Deacon shall be commissioned by this church with the laying on of hands by the Pastor/Elders.

Section 202c – Responsibilities

The Deacons participate with the Pastor/Elders in order to serve our church family. Service is the key word associated with the responsibilities of the Deacon, and by serving in their specific areas of responsibility, they free our Pastor/Elders for their shepherding responsibilities of spiritual direction, oversight, prayer, and ministry of the Word.

The Deacons will serve Harvestland Community Church by helping to care for and assist in meeting the practical needs of our church family and, as opportunity and resources allow, assist those within our community who would contact our church for help. They will also work to help the widowed, orphaned and weak, pray for and visit the sick, and help to minister to those dealing with grief, loss or crisis in their lives. They may also be called upon to assist the Pastor/Elders with particular needs which align more closely align with their (the Deacons) areas of ministry.

The responsibility of a Deacon is hard work and requires a sacrificial lifestyle. A Deacon is not primarily a consultant, adviser, committee man, executive or director of a board. Their ministry of the deacon is a “hands on” type of ministry with servant leadership as their main objective.

Section 202d – Tenure of Service

Deacons will be asked to serve for a period of three (3) years, after which they shall be inactive for a period of one (1) year. During the initial phase of our deacon tenure these rotations will take effect at different times so as to insure that not all become inactive at once.

Each year, the Deacons will review their qualifications and ministry responsibilities and shall sign an annual commitment statement. Should any Deacon feel that he cannot serve due to issues of qualification or circumstances beyond their control they shall be released from service.

Section 203 – The Ministry Team

The church's Ministry Team shall consist of those individuals, or their designated representatives who lead the following ministries within the church:

- Pastor/Elders
- Church Clerk
- Church Treasurer
- Deacons
- Financial Team
- Sunday School
- Youth
- Children's Ministry
- Praise Team
- Missions
- Buildings and Grounds
- Kitchen
- Other ministry leaders who may be serving in an ad hoc capacity

Section 203a - Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of the Ministry Team to plan and coordinate the ongoing ministries of the church. Their decisions shall allow for leadership of individual ministries while also reflecting the desires of the membership.

Section 203b – Meetings

The Ministry Team shall meet at a regularly scheduled monthly meeting. These meetings are open to any member of the congregation. Members of the congregation who have questions or requests about ministry opportunities are encouraged to bring these to the attention of the Ministry Team in advance of the monthly meeting.

The Pastor shall act as the chairman of the Ministry Team meeting. Should the Pastor be unable to act as chairman, or should the church be without a Pastor one of his fellow Elders may be selected to act as chairman.

Section 203c – Restrictions

The Ministry Team shall not make any decision final which shall incur debt upon the congregation.

The Ministry Team shall abide by The Church Constitution and Bylaws when making decisions.

Section 204 – Clerk

The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all the proceedings of all official actions of the church such as; minutes of the annual meeting, records of the corporation, membership, both active and inactive members, and shall make annual reports to the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church.

Copies of all such records shall be kept on file at the church office. All church records are church property and shall be kept in the church office when an office is maintained. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary (administrative assistant) who will assist the elected clerk.

Section 205 – Financial Team and Treasurer

The Financial Team shall consist of an even number of members, plus a presiding elder who shall act as chairman. They shall be responsible for the overall stewardship of the monies of the church.

- They shall oversee the development of the annual budget.
- They shall keep track of the church's bank accounts and the payment of all debts incurred by the church.
- They shall encourage the church family to prayerfully support the church through tithes and offerings.
- They shall be responsible for insuring that all bills received by the church are paid on time.
- They shall be responsible for the counting and depositing of all offerings given to the church.
- They shall oversee the salaries of all paid church staff.

Section 205a - Tenure

Members of the church financial team shall be approved at the annual vision meeting. They shall serve for a period of no more than three consecutive years. However every effort must be made to insure that no more than three members are retired at one time. Exceptions would be in the case of dismissal due to disciplinary action or in the case of an emergency.

Section 205b – Church Treasurer

The Church Treasurer shall be nominated by the Pastor/Elders and approved by two-thirds vote of the church present at the annual meeting or other meeting so approved.

The treasurer shall be responsible to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each quarterly, and/or annual meeting, an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding quarter/year. A report shall be made available to the Pastor/Elders and the financial team on a monthly basis.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year and after its acceptance and approval by the congregation, the records shall be delivered by the treasurer to the church clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the church.

206 – The Trustees

The church shall elect three (3) or more trustees to serve as legal officers for the church. They shall hold in trust the church property. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property. When the signatures of trustees are required they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to church-approved matters.

Trustees shall serve on a rotation basis with one new trustee being elected every three years.

Article III – Meetings

Section 301 – Regular Meetings

Section 301a – Sunday Services

The Church shall meet each Sunday for worship, edification, discipleship, and as a witness to the community. Teaching and preaching of the Scriptures, fellowship of believers, and ministry to spiritual needs are also important aspects of these meetings. (Eph. 4:11-13) The conduct of these meetings shall be the responsibility of the Pastor/Elders and those individuals or ministries to whom they may delegate responsibility.

Section 301b – Sunday School

The church will maintain a Sunday school program designed for all ages. The composition, size and division of Sunday school classes will be based upon the spiritual needs of the congregation as determined by the Pastor/Elders.

The direct supervision of the Sunday school program will be the responsibility of the pastor/elder in charge of education. This person shall have the responsibility of encouraging our

members to participate in our Sunday school program, track attendance, assist in the formation of new classes, and selection of teachers.

Section 301c – Life Groups

These groups take many forms and usually meet either in homes or at the church building.

1. Structure of Life Groups –All members of the congregation are encouraged to participate in a Life Group. The number of Life Groups, their structure, leadership and materials used shall be determined after consultation with, and with the consent of, the Pastor/Elders.
2. Purpose of Life Groups – The purpose of Life Groups is to put into practice certain principles found in both the Old and New Testaments which provide opportunities for:
 - a) Knowing God relationally and seeing His work in each member of His body in a more personal and meaningful way.
 - b) Study of the Bible for the purpose of practically relating it to daily living. (Colossians 3:16; 2 Timothy 3:16)
 - c) Interacting with one another by sharing, confession and speaking the truth in love with one another. (James 5:16; Ephesians 4:15, 25)
 - d) Bearing one another's burdens through prayer, comfort, encouragement, and the sharing of material goods. (Galatians 6:2; James 5:16; 1 Thessalonians 4:18; Hebrews 3:13; Acts 4:32; 1 Peter 4:10,11)
 - e) Witnessing and ministering to those outside the church. (Matthew 28:18-20; John 17:21)

In addition to the above, Life Groups may choose to become individually involved in special areas of study, ministry or community outreach efforts. Life Groups may focus on different aspects of Christian living dependent upon the needs and interest of the Group, so long as they do not divert the participants from the vision, structure and beliefs held by Harvestland Community Church.

Section 302 – Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Pastor/Elders, the Congregation, Ministry Team, Financial Team, Personnel Committee, or Deacons may be called at the request of the Pastor/Elders or the leaders of said ministry teams.

Notice of a special meeting of the congregation shall be given verbally, through notice in the church bulletin or electronically. Except for emergencies, every attempt will be made for notification to occur two (2) weeks in advance.

Section 302a – Annual Vision Meeting

The church shall hold an annual meeting, for the purpose of bringing before the congregation a report on the state of the church. The church shall at this time hear reports from the leaders of church ministries and their vision for the upcoming year, vote on approval of the annual budget, carry out the general business of the church body, elect persons to head ministries or committees, select messengers for the upcoming year and pray for our church, its leaders and seek God's will for our upcoming year. Only active members in good standing may bring motions to and vote at this meeting.

The date and time for this meeting shall be decided by the church leadership (Pastor/Elders, Ministry Team and the Finance Team). This meeting shall be announced at least two (2) weeks in advance and shall be posted in the bulletin the week prior to the meeting.

Out of consideration for our congregational members, a draft of the annual budget as well as motions for our business meeting are to be made available, in written form, to our congregation for review at least one (1) week prior to this meeting.

Section 302b – Quarterly Meetings

The church shall hold quarterly special meetings for the purpose of bringing before the congregation a report of the state of the church, a review of the financial report and the discussion of ministry needs and updates from our Ministry Teams.

The date and time for these meetings shall be posted at least two (2) weeks in advance and shall be posted in the bulletin the week prior to the meeting.

Should there be an issue come up for vote during a quarterly meeting, requirements for voting shall be as previously outlined in these bylaws.

Section 302c – Moderator

The Senior Pastor shall be considered an *ex-officio* member without vote for all committees as well as the moderator for the Annual Vision Meeting and the Quarterly Meetings. The moderator shall act as an impartial leader of these meetings, working with the leadership, ministries, church clerk, and other officers of the church in order to guide the flow of the meeting.

Article IV – Missions

The Pastor/Elders shall oversee and encourage the church to be involved in missions outreach locally (community and state), nationally, and world-wide. The church will be encouraged to be consistent in committing a portion of its annual budget to funding these mission efforts. The church shall work to fund missions through:

- Annual special offerings (Eliza Broadus, Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, Lottie Moon Christmas offering, etc.)
- Regular contributions to the Cooperative Program
- Funding to independent missionaries or agencies
- One time funding to other mission agencies or gifts by approval of the congregation

Article V – Finances

Section – 501 General

Harvestland Community Church operates through the generous, sacrificial giving of its members. The Church will make every effort to spend this money wisely and will keep the congregation up to date on income/expenses through monthly, quarterly and annual reports.

Section – 502 Offerings

Section – 502a Regular Offerings

Regular offerings shall be received during Sunday Worship Services and at other special meetings as needed. All undesignated funds received shall be applied to the general fund.

Section 502b – Special Offerings

Special offerings may be received for unfunded ministries if their purposes are made known to the congregation prior to being received. Exceptions to this apply to offerings received for benevolence purposes or "love offerings" which shall be presented as a gift to the individual(s). If money is received for benevolence, the recipient's name may be withheld from the congregation at the discretion of the elders or deacons. Records of collections and disbursements are kept by the deacons, financial team and treasurer as appropriate for accountability.

Section 502c – Fundraisers

All fundraisers must be approved by the Financial Team in advance. In order to gain approval a form (available at the church office) must be filled out and presented to the financial team for approval. Once signed and approved, a copy will be returned to the ministry leader and fundraising may begin.

Section 502d – Accounting of Offerings

All regular offerings shall be counted by three (3) or more members of the Financial Team, or an equal number of members approved by them, during or immediately following the Sunday morning worship service. A member assigned to record this shall enter the information into the computer and a printout will be placed on file. The offering shall then be given to a designated member of the Financial Team to be deposited.

Special offerings shall be treated the same as regular offerings. They will be counted, recorded and made available for deposit on the date they are received. If these offerings are received over a period of days or weeks, counting shall be completed on the deadline date and deposited or given to designated individual promptly.

Section 502e – Oversight

The Treasurer shall make record of all finances available to the Pastor/Elders and the Financial Team for consistent review. They shall make the congregation aware of adjustments or needs so that the church is able to meet the financial goals set by the annual budget, or special needs.

Section 502f – Indebtedness

The church shall incur no long-term indebtedness without express approval through congregational vote. Such approval may be gained through a vote by a quorum of the membership at either the Annual Meeting or through a Special Meeting called for such a purpose. The congregation shall be made aware of such a meeting at least three (3) weeks in advance.

Actions leading up to and following the borrowing of any money shall be carried out by the appropriate leadership (Pastor/Elders, Treasurer, Financial Team, Trustees) as outlined in the Church Constitution.

Article VI – Church Ordinances

Section 601 – Baptism and the Lord’s Supper

See Section VII of The Baptist Faith and Message.

Section 601a – Baptism of Believers

This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

- Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- The Pastor/Elders shall be authorized to administer baptism. They have the authority to allow other members to administer as well.
- Unless special circumstances prohibit it, baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church
- A person who has professed faith in Christ, but has not been baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the Pastor/Elders or designated members. If negative interest is ascertained on the part of the candidate, he or she shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism.

Section 601b – The Lord’s Supper

The church shall observe the Lord’s Supper on a regular basis, as part of the worship service of the church. The Pastor/Elders shall be responsible for the scheduling of the observance of the

Lord's Supper and seeing that the ordinance is reverently carried out according to the command of scripture.

The deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparation of the Lord's Supper and shall assist the Pastor/Elders in administering it to the congregation.

In considering who may participate in the Lord's Supper at Harvestland Community Church the following criteria is a good guide.

1. It is for believers
Only those individuals who have repented of their sins and have put their faith in Christ alone are eligible for participation.
2. Self examination is required
Those who come to the Lord's Table are warned, "*Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.*" (1 Corinthians 11:27-29 ESV)
3. It is a point of fellowship
Those who participate in fellowship with Harvestland Community Church and guests who agree with its doctrines and beliefs are welcome to participate. However, we ask that those who hold to interpretations which allow for lifestyles that are in opposition to the teaching of Scripture as defined by the 2010 Baptist Faith and Message or which would place members of our own fellowship under church discipline to be respectful to our church body and not participate.
4. Those under church discipline
Those who have chosen not to submit themselves to the authority of Christ through the local church are therefore at risk of partaking in an unworthy manner.

Article VII – Licensing and Ordination

Section 701 - Licensing

Should a member of this church feel that he is called into the gospel ministry, he shall first present himself to the Pastor/Elders. They may at their discretion recommend him to the Church. The individual will be asked to show evidence of his call through teaching or preaching. If the church feels he gives evidence of his call they may formally license him and encourage him to make preparation for the ministry. It is understood that the performance of civil duties by this person shall be governed by state law. Harvestland Community Church reserves the right to recall such a license if the individual ceases to participate in the gospel ministry, or if the individual's conduct proves itself unworthy of a minister of the gospel, or if their teaching/preaching is found to be inconsistent with the doctrines and beliefs of this church.

Section 702 - Ordination

Having taken the proper steps toward, and having been found ready for ordination the following procedures shall be followed.

1. Upon recommendation by the Pastor/Elders the Church shall express its approval of the candidate by voting to consider his ordination. *
2. The elders shall form a council of ordained members from within this body to examine the candidates, Biblical knowledge, doctrinal beliefs, lifestyle, and ministry readiness and report to the church.*
3. Upon receiving a favorable report from the ordination council, the church shall proceed with the ordination ceremony.*

If at any time a person ordained by the Church should voluntarily, and without Biblical reasons, cease to be actively involved in the ministry to which he was ordained, this Church reserves the right to request an interview in order to find the reason/s for their no longer being involved in ministry.

Harvestland Community Church reserves the right to recall an individual's ordination if the individual ceases to participate in the gospel ministry without sufficient cause, or if the individual's conduct proves itself unworthy of a minister of the gospel, or if their teaching/preaching is found to be inconsistent with the doctrines and beliefs of this church.

* Ordination procedures shall be consistent with and follow many of the same guidelines already outlined under the ordination of Elders.

Article VIII – Christian Marriage and Wedding Ceremonies

Our statement of faith, the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, expresses our fundamental Biblical conviction that Christian marriage is defined as “the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime” (Section 18 of Baptist Faith and Message 2000).

We believe that Scripture teaches that sexual intimacy should only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other and that a man and woman should not engage in intimate sexual activity outside of marriage. We believe that Scripture also teaches that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, incest, or pornography is sinful and offensive to God.

However, we believe that Scripture requires that every person should be shown compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

As a local church, we believe that wedding ceremonies on church property are spiritual acts of worship of the God who created this divine institution. As such, weddings on church property shall be officiated by one or more ordained ministers of the Gospel. The church may decline to make its facilities or ministers available for any wedding if it is determined that one or both of the parties are not biblically and/or legally qualified to marry. Such determinations may be made by the Pastor/Elders subject to the direction of the church.

No minister or employee of the Church shall officiate at any marriage ceremony unless such marriage is consistent with this policy.

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 IX – Amendments

All changes to these Bylaws shall be guided by a desire to reflect Biblical interpretation, attitudes and principles.

Amendments to the Church Bylaws require either a specially called meeting of the church or must be done at the church's Annual Meeting.

Amendments to the Bylaws shall follow these guidelines

6. The desire to amend this constitution requires a majority endorsement by the Pastor/Elders.
7. Notice of the proposed amendments shall be made available to all active members, at least two (2) weeks prior to this meeting.
8. Notice of the proposed meeting must be printed in the church bulletin and announced verbally and or electronically at least two (2) weeks prior to the special meeting. (At least one of these must be during a Sunday service)
9. The vote for an amendment change must be done by ballots provided for all members in good standing present.
10. The affirmative vote for an amendment shall not be less than (2/3) majority of the votes cast by qualified members present.

Appendix

We, the constitution and bylaws committee of Harvestland Community Church do joyfully present this document for the greater glory of our Lord Jesus Christ and His church. Throughout this process, we have attempted to look to the timeless principles of God's perfect word to chart the course for Harvestland Community Church. It is our earnest desire and prayer that Harvestland Community Church may truly live up to its name, becoming a "harvestland" where many come to know Christ's salvation, are nurtured and trained, and reach out in ministry and witness.

May we labor together through God's Strength and power, "till the earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord."

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Jolly, Pastor

Randy Orban, Elder

David Ragland, Elder

Steve Hall

Sam Pepper

Josh Ragland