

HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH CHURCH COVENANT & CONSTITUTION

Having individually received the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and desiring to unite in the worship, fellowship, and testimony with the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH, having read the doctrinal statement of the church and understanding it to be the essence of its belief and teaching, we, therefore, joyfully enter into this covenant with one another, as one body in Christ:

1. We purpose by the power of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this body of believers in knowledge and holiness; to promote its spirituality; to sustain its worship, God's ordinances, Scriptural discipline and doctrine; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of its ministry.
2. We will endeavor to engage in personal Bible study; to train our children in the nurture, respect and admonition of the Lord; to walk carefully before the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, exemplary in our behavior, and zealous in our efforts to advance the work of the gospel by seeking the salvation of the unsaved.
3. We will always seek to minister to one another in brotherly love and remember each other in prayer; we will seek to aid one another in times of sickness and distress; to admonish and rebuke one another for sin; to be slow to take offense and always ready for reconciliation.
4. We, as members of the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH, having experienced new life in Christ (II Cor 5:17) and believing that as members of the family of God we should be doers of the Word and not hearers only (James 1:22) agree not to seek legal action, to sue any of our membership or the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH in obedience to I Cor 6:1-8. We also agree to treat one another as brothers and sisters, and to fulfill our promises to one another in good faith, to the best of our ability.

ARTICLE I - Name of Church HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH

ARTICLE II - Government

Our local church body, under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, is organized as elders (overseers), deacons (servants), and body members. The needs of the church shall be fulfilled through:

1. The faithful teaching of the Word.
2. Diligent oversight by elders who shall represent the perspectives of both pastors and body members.
3. Organized commissions focused on the needs of the body, under the direction of elders and deacons.
4. All members making use of their spiritual gift(s) in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The ministry of the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH shall be under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ by means of a plurality of elders who function under the authority of the Scriptures and God's Spirit. The board of elders, appointed with the consent and support of the church body, is the decision making body. (Heb 13:17; I Pet 5:1-3; I Tim 5:17).

ARTICLE III - Board of Elders

Section 1 (Elders)

The spiritual affairs, government and discipline of the church shall be vested in the board of elders. All pastors, officers, boards, committees and staff shall be responsible to this board of elders. The board of elders shall be composed of a minimum of two elders (including the pastor-teacher). In addition to the minimum of two elders, there shall also be a minimum of one elder for every twenty active members of the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH, however, the minimum number of elders shall always be pre-conditioned upon the availability of qualified men.

Section 2 (Appointment and Term of Office)

Duly qualified men shall be nominated by the board of elders to the board of elders. These nominations shall be confirmed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the active members present who choose to vote at a duly called business meeting. Upon confirmation by the congregation, the board of elders, at their discretion, may appoint the nominee to the office of elder. Confirmed appointments shall be for a three year term of office, renewable upon request of the elder and upon consensus of the remaining elders and confirmed by the members in the manner stated above. With the exception of the Pastor-teacher and all Associate Pastors, who are perpetual members of the Board of Elders, no elder shall serve more than six consecutive years without at least one year intervening, unless the Board of Elders determine that there are no other qualified individuals in the church. In such a case, the elders maintain the liberty to keep the Board of Elders intact until such a time they deem there are other qualified men who will serve.

Removal of non-paid elders from office shall be effected by personal resignation, by disciplinary action in accordance with I Tim 5:19-20 and Gal 6:1, or by consensus of the remaining elders. The need for an additional elder, paid or non-paid may be recognized by elders or members of the church body. The board of elders, in consultation with or in response to members, shall determine if such a need exists; and if so, appoint a man to fulfill that need.

The duly appointed chairman of the elder board shall serve in that capacity for a period of one year.

Section 3 (Elder Qualification)

Each member of the board of elders must be an active member of this church and possess the qualifications described in I Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Prior to becoming an elder, a man must have been a member of the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH for a minimum of two years, having already served in other leadership positions in the church. (The pastor-teacher being an exception per Article VIII Section 2.) All elders prior to every annual church business meeting shall sign a statement of their agreement with the constitution and doctrinal statement of this church.

Section 4 (Elder Duties)

The board of elders is responsible for shepherding and having oversight of the flock. Specific duties of this board shall be as follows:

- A. To watch over the spiritual affairs of the church, to guide, guard and feed the flock of God, according to the principles of the Scriptures.
- B. To elect a chairman and secretary annually.
- C. To establish policies, create committees as needed, delegate certain business to the deacons, and determine practices for the church.
- D. To hear and consider all reports and recommendations submitted by pastors, councils, committees, staff and members.
- E. To assist the pastor-teacher in the administration of all ordinances (Lord's Supper & Baptism).
- F. To oversee and give direction to the hiring and removal of pastors and staff as may be deemed appropriate (see Article VIII for details).
- G. To exercise general oversight of financial matters of the church (Acts 11:29, 30). They may make expenditures of up to \$3000. Expenditures of over \$3000 shall have prior authorization of the congregation.
- H. To exercise general oversight of church property.
- I. To examine and approve applicants for church membership.
- J. To provide for the discipline of erring members when such is deemed necessary, while continually striving for reconciliation (See Article VII).
- K. To serve as nominating committee for elders, deacons, deaconess and all other officers, after welcoming input from the congregation.

Section 5 (Elder Meetings and Quorum)

The board of elders shall conduct regular meetings (at least once a month) and special meetings at such other times as called for by the pastor-teacher or chairman of the board. Two-thirds (2/3) of the board membership shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting church business. However, board decisions shall consist of a consensus of all elders (including the pastor-teacher).

Section 6 (Elder Decisions)

Decisions made by the board of elders shall be based on carefully assembled facts, Scriptural insight and the solicited input of body members as needed. Input from the church membership shall be

solicited by such means as the Sunday bulletin, newsletters, information cards, pulpit announcements, group or congregational meetings, or advisory ballots, etc. The board of elders must seek through the application of Biblical principles, the mind of Christ, and come to a consensus before deciding matters of church business.

Should any church member disagree with any action of the board of elders, that member is encouraged to discuss the area of disagreement with any elder. If any member desires to meet with the entire board of elders, that member will be scheduled to do so by the elder board chairman.

ARTICLE IV - Other Boards & Committees

Section 1 (Deacons)

The board of deacons shall consist of members possessing the qualifications described in I Tim 3:8-13. The board of elders shall act as the nominating committee for deacons and shall welcome input from the congregation. After prayerful review, one nomination per needed deacon position shall be submitted to the congregation for their approval. They shall be confirmed by two-thirds (2/3) majority of the active membership present, who choose to vote, at a duly called business meeting. Upon confirmation by the congregation, the board of elders, at their discretion, may appoint the nominee to the office of deacon.

All deacon nominees must have been an active member of the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH for at least one year. Deacon's term of office shall be for a three year period, with at least one year intervening before beginning another term. The number of deacons shall be determined by the board of elders.

It shall be the duty of deacons to undertake the tasks set before them, including care over the material needs of the church, serving the needs of the people, maintaining properties and equipment, and other services which are designated to them by the board of elders. The deacons shall serve under the authority and direction of the elders.

Section 2 (Committees)

To enable the efficient handling of board matters, the board of elders may appoint various committees. These committees shall perform tasks solely in accordance with the duties and with authority specifically delegated by the board of elders. The general functions of committees are:

- A. To bring considerations and recommendations to the board of elders concerning ministries.
- B. To provide a wider base of counsel to the elders having the oversight of specific ministries.

All committees shall exist for the period specified by the board of elders, or until the purpose or which they were established has been fulfilled.

ARTICLE V - Officers

The following officers will be nominated by the board of elders and approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the majority of the active membership present and choosing to vote at a duly called business meeting. They shall serve under the authority and direction of the elders serving one year terms and may be reappointed indefinitely.

Section 1 (Organizational Officers)

A. Sunday School Superintendent

The Sunday school superintendent shall have general charge of the affairs of the Sunday school and perform the duties as outlined on a position description developed and updated as needed by the board of elders. The position description for the Sunday school superintendent shall be kept on file in the church office with a copy also provided to the Sunday school superintendent. The Sunday school superintendent will have the authority to appoint (subject to board of elder approval) whatever officers he/she may need (e.g. Sunday school secretary, assistant Sunday school superintendent).

B. Clerk

The church clerk shall keep an exact record of all the business meetings of the church and read the same at the regular business meetings of the church for approval. He/she shall also keep a complete register of the members.

C. Moderator

The church moderator shall conduct all business meetings of the church. In his absence the board of elders will appoint a temporary moderator. (See also Article XI Section 2)

Section 2 (Financial Officers)

A. Financial Secretary

The duty of the financial secretary shall be to administer the appropriate care in receiving the offerings of the church, recording necessary records for such contributions and depositing these funds into the church's accounts.

B. Treasurer

The duty of the treasurer shall be to administer the appropriate care in maintaining the financial accounts of the church, maintaining pertinent records of these accounts and related transactions, disbursing authorized payments and reporting on a quarterly basis to the church a summary of the financial activity of the church.

C. Non-elected Positions

In order to provide for the desirable segregation of duties corresponding with the proper handling of

money, it is recognized that other elders, deacons or members may be involved in various positions related to the church's financial cycle. Those occupying these positions will be approved by the board of elders and perform sundry duties under the auspices of the financial secretary and treasurer.

ARTICLE VI - Members

Section 1 (Qualifications)

Any person who has accepted Jesus Christ as his/her own personal Savior, having been baptized, and is in agreement with the doctrinal statement and constitution of this church, is welcome to make application for membership with HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH.

While any person is welcome to attend the services of this church, only active members may hold office, teach, and vote at business meetings.

All requests for membership shall be made to a member of the board of elders. Upon making such requests, the person shall be given an application for membership, along with a copy of the doctrinal statement and constitution. Upon receipt of the application designated elders may meet with the applicant regarding his/her Christian experience, assurance of salvation and doctrinal belief. Upon consensus of the board of elders, each accepted applicant shall be enrolled as a member.

Section 2 (Membership Defined)

The church will maintain active, associate and inactive membership lists. It will be the duty of the board of elders to keep these lists current, updating these lists at least once per year.

The active membership list shall be composed of those who regularly attend the services of the church, regularly support the ministries of the church financially, and actively minister in and through the church. Those who do not attend the services of the church for a period of six consecutive weeks, may be called on by the elders, and at the discretion of the board of elders moved to the inactive list. Such a person may be restored to the active list at the discretion of the board of elders.

The associate membership list shall be composed of those who, when residing in the area, regularly attend the services of the church, regularly support the ministries of the church financially, and actively minister in and through the church. This list is intended for those who reside outside of the local area for extended periods of time but attend the church when in the local area. Examples would be missionaries, college students and part-year residents. Members on the associate list are permitted to vote in a congregational meeting and minister in any capacity when residing in the local area. During periods of absence from the local area these members will not be counted toward the required percentage of members needed to obtain a quorum at a congregational business meeting.

The inactive membership list shall be composed of three basic types of members:

- 1) Those who no longer reside in this area and are thus unable to be actively involved in the

fellowship of the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH, but wish to maintain their membership with the church.

2) Those put on the inactive list, by the board of elders, due to lack of attendance (Section 2 Paragraph A). Once a member is placed on the inactive list, due to lack of attendance, they may be removed from membership by the board of elders if they continue to be absent for a period of six months.

3) Those members who are under the first phase of church discipline: suspension, see Article VII Section 4.

Those members on the inactive list are not permitted to vote in a congregational meeting and will not be allowed to hold any office or minister in any official capacity in the church without the consent of the board of elders.

Members placed on the inactive list may be removed from membership by the board of elders for the following reasons:

- 1) By request of the member.
- 2) For continued absence for more than six months.
- 3) For unwillingness to submit to any stage of church discipline.

ARTICLE VII - Discipline

Section 1 (Board of Elder's Responsibility)

The board of elders shall seek to reclaim those members who blatantly disregard their church covenant obligations. When the board of elders is convinced that attempts to reclaim have failed, it will be the responsibility of the board of elders to withdraw the hand of fellowship from those members (see Section 4 C).

Section 2 (Purpose)

The purpose of church discipline shall always be to restore the sinner by the use of Biblical guidelines, purify the church and protect it from decay (I Cor 5:5,6; II Cor 2:6-8; Gal 6:1; Matt 18:15).

Section 3 (Causes)

- A. Immorality (I Cor 5:2,5)
- B. Doctrinal heresy (I Tim 1:20; II Tim 2:18)
- C. Repeated divisiveness (Titus 3:10)
- D. Any other open sin (I Cor 5:11)

Section 4 (Phases)

A. Confirming the facts: When the board of elders becomes aware of a situation which has the appearance of meeting the conditions necessary to exercise church discipline (see Section 3), the board of elders will make diligent effort to establish the facts and communicate with the member who is overtaken in a sin (Matt 18:16). The member will be confronted with the situation and clearly advised of the church's position on the matter.

Once the process of church discipline has begun, the church will continue to follow the biblical mandates regardless of the member's attendance or desire to withdraw their membership. No member may withdraw from membership if they are involved at any stage of the church discipline process. All members of the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH waive their right to withdraw their membership while being disciplined by the church.

If the facts are as believed, and the member overtaken in a sin does not turn from this sin, the board of elders may proceed to the subsequent phase of church discipline,--suspension.

If the member overtaken in a sin confesses this sin and repents, the board of elders will take appropriate steps in gently and fully restoring this individual as turning from sin becomes evident (Gal 6:1; Matt 18:35). These steps may include, but are not limited to, removal from some positions and/or responsibilities within the church, a period of supervision of the member's ministries within the church by the board of elders, and a period of counseling with an approved pastor or elder.

B. Suspension: After a member who is overtaken in a sin has been confronted by the board of elders and the member displays no intent to turn from this sin, the following actions may be taken:

1) Removal from the active membership list of the church and placement on the inactive membership role.

2) Removal from all offices, positions and/or responsibilities within the church.

The board of elders will continue efforts, as able, to reclaim the individual including confronting the sin anew, advising of the consequences of church discipline and the progression of removal from church membership.

C. Removal from membership: When the board of elders is convinced efforts to reclaim the member overtaken in a sin are exhibiting futile results, it shall be the responsibility of the board of elders to withdraw the hand of fellowship and remove this individual from church membership (Matt 18:17; I Cor 5:3-6). The sinning individual will be advised of this action including the consequence of no longer being welcome to fellowship and worship with our church. This action must be taken by a consensus of the board of elders (Matt 18:15-18).

The board of elders shall arrange for a special informational meeting of the membership to notify, inform and attest to the circumstances and actions taken by the board of elders. The purpose of this meeting shall be to clearly communicate the situation, answer questions, and prevent the spread of erroneous information.

It shall be the duty of each member of the church to fulfill the Biblical mandate concerning those who remain in sin, including discontinuing Christian fellowship with such a one (I Cor 5:11; Matt 18:17).

ARTICLE VIII - The Pastor-Teacher

Section 1 (Appointment)

The pastor-teacher of the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH shall be chosen by the members for an indefinite period of time upon the recommendation of the board of elders in the following manner:

A. A pulpit committee shall be appointed by the board of elders to interview prospective candidate(s) and make recommendations to the board of elders. The prospective candidate(s) shall be considered as to educational qualifications, spiritual condition (I Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9), previous experience and spiritual gifts, and must be in agreement with the doctrinal statement and constitution of the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH without reservation.

B. Upon being approved by a consensus vote of the board of elders the prospect shall be invited to candidate before the congregation. As soon thereafter as it is practical, the board of elders may (at their discretion) call a congregational meeting at which time the members shall vote on asking the candidate to be the pastor-teacher. A three-fourth (3/4) majority of active members present (and choosing to vote) shall be required to call a pastor-teacher.

A quorum shall consist of fifty percent (50%) of active membership. Upon confirmation by the congregation, the board of elders may appoint the candidate to the position of pastor-teacher.

C. The pastor-teacher and his wife (if applicable), and any other paid minister and his wife (if applicable), shall automatically become member(s) of the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH upon him taking up the duties of the pastor-teacher or other paid staff position.

Section 2 (Duties)

The pastor-teacher shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees and he shall be responsible to the board of elders. The pastor-teacher shall arrange for and/or conduct all public and regular services of the church and shall be responsible for general oversight of the spiritual welfare of the church. He shall be an elder on the board of elders immediately upon installation.

Section 3 (Tenure)

The pastor-teacher shall remain in office for an indefinite period of time subject to the following reservations:

The board of elders reserves the right to recommend to the congregation that he be dismissed. A majority of active members present who choose to vote at a duly called business meeting will be required to dismiss the pastor-teacher. Upon the vote to dismiss the pastor-teacher he will be given one (1) month written notice. The pastor-teacher must give one (1) month notice if he intends to resign. This time limit is subject to a lesser or greater time if both the pastor-teacher and the board of elders by mutual agreement decide otherwise.

ARTICLE IX - Other Staff Positions

The authority to hire an associate pastor, assistant pastor, evangelist, youth pastor or other paid staff rests with the board of elders.

A search committee shall be appointed by the board of elders to interview prospective candidate(s) and make recommendations to the board of elders. The prospective candidate(s) shall be considered as to educational qualifications, spiritual condition (I Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9), previous experience and spiritual gifts, and must be in agreement with the doctrinal statement and constitution of the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH without reservation.

Such individuals will be recommended by the consensus of the board of elders and approved by three-fourths (3/4) majority of active members present choosing to vote at a congregational meeting called for that purpose. Upon confirmation by the congregation the board of elders may appoint the candidate to the needed position.

All of those hired with the title of associate pastor will automatically and perpetually be a member of the board of elders and are not subject to the term limits of non-paid elders. Other paid staff members (e.g. assistant pastor, youth pastor, youth director, director of Christian education) would not automatically be a member of the board of elders.

All staff members shall remain in office for an indefinite period of time subject to the following reservations:

The board of elders reserves the right to recommend to the congregation that a staff member be dismissed. A majority of active members present who choose to vote at a duly called business meeting will be required to dismiss the staff member. Upon the vote to dismiss the staff member, he will be given one (1) month written notice. The staff member must give one (1) month notice if he intends to resign. This time limit is subject to a lesser or greater time if both the staff member and the board of elders by mutual agreement decide otherwise.

Salary adjustments of pastors and other staff serving the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH shall be reviewed by the non-paid elders at least annually and a recommendation made to the congregation at a business meeting.

ARTICLE X - Other Employees

The authority to hire and dismiss secretaries, custodians and other employees rests with the board of elders. Salary adjustments of these employees serving the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH shall be reviewed by the board of elders at least annually and a recommendation made to the congregation at a business meeting.

ARTICLE XI - Business Meetings

Section 1

The annual business meeting of the church shall be held during the month of March each year.

The following shall be the order of business at the annual meeting: (1) minutes (2) reports (3) unfinished business (4) election of officers (5) new business (6) adjournment.

Section 2

The moderator, or in his absence, any member appointed by the board of elders, shall conduct all business meetings of the church. It shall be the duty of the moderator to keep order, and in case the church is equally divided on a vote requiring a simple majority, he shall give the deciding vote.

All business meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer.

Only issues previously considered by the board of elders, and announced to the congregation prior to the business meeting, shall be discussed. All church members are encouraged to discuss any matters of concern with members of the board of elders.

A motion before the church must be disposed of before another motion may be entertained, unless the motion is to amend, adjourn, or call for the previous question.

A quorum shall consist of thirty percent (30%) of active members 18 years of age and older. A majority vote of members 18 years of age and older present shall be required to pass any items unless otherwise specified in this constitution.

Section 3

Special business meetings may be called by the pastor or by the chairman of the board of elders or by the majority of the members of the board of elders.

Notice of such meetings shall be given from the pulpit at least two Sundays prior to the meeting and shall also be published in the regular church bulletin on the Sunday immediately preceding the meeting. The notice shall specify the date, time, place, and the general nature of the business to be transacted.

ARTICLE XII - Finances

The church is organized according to the principle laid down in Philippians 4:19. The Lord's work should be supported by the Lord's people looking to the Lord to supply their needs.

Therefore, only free-will gifts and offerings shall be used to carry on this work. No entertainment, suppers, bazaars, or other such money raising projects shall be held by the church. All the needs of the church are to be laid before the Lord in earnest believing prayer by the members of the

congregation. As God has planted this work, we look to Him to maintain it. The board of elders should require an annual review of the financial records of the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH.

ARTICLE XIII - Licensing & Ordaining

Section 1

The HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH may license any brother, recommended by the board of elders, who is a member of this assembly, who has evident gifts for ministry, and who has been asked to perform pastoral duties in this or another church.

Section 2

If it is determined by the board of elders that a man of the fellowship possesses the qualifications for full ordination, a council of ministers and lay members shall be called to examine the candidate. Upon receiving a favorable report from the council, the board of elders may recommend to the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH the ordination of this brother.

Section 3

The license or ordination papers may be revoked at any time, by action of the board of elders, if false doctrine or conduct unbecoming a Christian is alleged and proven. The individual shall be given opportunity to defend his case before the board of elders.

ARTICLE XIV – Amendments

This constitution shall be only repealed, amended, or added to by consensus of the board of elders and three-fourths (3/4) agreement of the active membership present, and choosing to vote, at a duly called meeting.

ARTICLE XV - Enacting

Upon the adoption by the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH of the constitution as herein set forth, it shall be in lieu of all previously adopted constitutions and by-laws.

ARTICLE XVI - Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of this congregation the property and other physical assets belonging to the HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH will be contributed to one or more similar groups with like purpose and objectives. The institution(s) will be selected by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of active members present, and who choose to vote, at a special business meeting called for this purpose.