

# HARVEST

BAPTIST CHURCH

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## CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

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## **Preamble**

We, the members of Harvest Baptist Church of Rock Hill, South Carolina, in order to establish rules and procedures with which to administer this independent local New Testament church do ordain and establish the following Constitution and By-laws to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

## **ARTICLE I**

### **Name**

The name of this Church shall be "Harvest Baptist Church of Rock Hill, South Carolina, Incorporated."

## **ARTICLE II**

### **Corporate Purpose**

**A. This assembly is organized and maintained for the following purpose:**

The purpose of this corporation is religious. This includes owning and operating a Christian church whose object shall be to promote the worship of the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; to preach and teach the Bible, Christian doctrine and ethics; to earnestly contend for the faith; to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to our community and the entire world; to encourage believers in the dedication of their lives for definite Christian service; and to administer the ordinances of the church as set forth in the New Testament. This shall be a non-profit organization and shall have all powers and authorities conferred upon eleemosynary corporations by the State of South Carolina. This corporation shall have the authority to ordain, license and commission ministers of the gospel.

**B. Means of Promoting the Purposes:**

In order to fulfill these purposes, this church shall engage in activities and conduct ministries which may include, but are not limited to, worship services, evangelistic services, prayer meetings, youth activities, radio and

television programs, a day school, a Sunday school, a bus ministry, missionary activities, counseling center, nursing homes, a Bible institute, college, and/or seminary.

## ARTICLE III

### Covenant

Having been led by the Spirit of God to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, (*Isaiah 12:2; John 1:12; John 3:16; Acts 4:12; 16:31; Ephesians 2:8; II Thessalonians 2:13*), and on the profession of our faith having been baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (*Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:1; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-68; 10:48; 16:31-34*), we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter covenant with one another as one body in Christ (*Psalms 34:15; John 15:5; Romans 12:4-8; I Corinthians 12:14-27*).

We pledge, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love (*Amos 3:3; Romans 15:5-6; I Corinthians 1:10; II Corinthians 3:5; I John 2:10*); to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort (*I Samuel 12:23; Galatians 5:13; Hebrews 10:24; James 5:16; II Peter 3:18*); to promote its prosperity and spirituality (*Matthew 18:17; I Corinthians 16:2; Ephesians 4:11-14; I Thessalonians 5:14*); to sustain worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines (*Matthew 18:15-17; Acts 2:42; Romans 6:3-14; II Thessalonians 3:14-15; Hebrews 10:25; I Peter 2:9*); to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of this ministry, the expenses of this church and the spread of the gospel through all nations (*Malachi 3:10; Luke 10:7; II Corinthians 8:14; 9:7; Galatians 6:6-10; I Thessalonians 5:14; Hebrews 13:7*).

We also pledge to seek God's highest standard of sanctification in our personal lives by maintaining family and personal devotions (*Matthew 6:6; 7:7; Luke 18:1; II Corinthians 8:5; I Timothy 2:8*); training our children according to the Word of God (*Deuteronomy 6:7-12; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 5:8-11; II Timothy 3:15*); seeking the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances (*Ephesians 5:8-11; Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 9:3*); walking circumspectly in the world (*Eph. 4:1-3; I Thessalonians 5:15; I John 2:15; Colossians 3:17*); being just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment

*(Philippians 3:16-18; Hebrews 13:21; I Peter 2:12); avoiding all gossiping, backbiting, and sinful anger (Matthew 12:36; Proverbs 26:20; Romans 1:30; Ephesians 4:26, 29, 31); abstaining from the use or promotion of tobacco or intoxicating drink as a beverage and the non-medicinal use of drugs (Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-32; Ephesians 5:18; I Thessalonians 5:22; I Corinthians 6:19-20; 10:31), and being zealous in our efforts to advance the gospel of our Savior (John 15:16; I Corinthians 15:58; II Corinthians 5:20).*

We further pledge to watch over one another in brotherly love (*Romans 14:7; Galatians 6:2; Philippians 2:3-4; II Thessalonians 3:14-15*); to remember each other in prayer (*Ephesians 6:18; Hebrews 13:18*); to aid each other in sickness and distress (*Romans 12:13, 15; Philippians 4:16*); to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech (*Colossians 3:17; 4:6; James 3:9, 10, 13; I John 3:17-18*); to be slow to take offense; to be mindful of the commandments of the Savior; to be ready for reconciliation without delay (*Matthew 18:15, 21-22; Romans 14:19; I Corinthians 6:7*).

We moreover pledge, that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church of like faith and practice, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word (*Acts 9:19, 18:27; Romans 16:1-2; Galatians 1:9; Hebrews 10:25*).

## ARTICLE IV

### Declaration of Faith

#### A. The Holy Scriptures

We believe that every word of the original autographs of the Scriptures was breathed out by God Himself (*II Timothy 3:16-17*); that by virtue of the superintendence and empowering of the Holy Spirit, the human writers of the Scriptures wrote not their private interpretations but the very words of God (*I Peter 1:19-21*), preserved from error of any kind on any subject whatsoever (*John 10:35*).

We believe that the Scriptures are, therefore, the unique, absolute, authoritative standard of faith and practice, to be studied, proclaimed, obeyed, and defended (*Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Joshua 1:8; Psalm 19:7-11*;

*John 17:17; Jude 3-4*); that they are to be interpreted literally, historically, and grammatically (*Matthew 12:39-41; II Peter 1:16*) unless the context clearly indicates otherwise (*John 6:35, 51, 58; 10:7; 15:1*); and that every portion is, without exception, profitable for doctrine and Christian growth (*II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:3*).

We believe, therefore, that the denial of their inerrant authority contradicts the clear position of Christ and the apostles and thus undermines all facets of their doctrine as reliable for faith and practice; that the sixty-six books of the Bible constitute the complete and only authoritative revelation of God to man (*I Corinthians 14:37; II Peter 3:15-16*); and that anyone who adds to or takes away from this completed revelation is cursed of God (*Revelation 22:18-19*).

## **B. The Godhead**

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and these three constitute one God being co-equal, co-substantial, co-eternal, and have the same essence, attributes, nature, perfections, and are worthy of the same worship, confidence and obedience (*Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 29:19, 20; Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4; Acts 5:3, 4; II Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:35*). God is the Creator of the universe and its inhabitants (*Genesis 1:1-2:5*). He created the universe and its inhabitants by direct action, the word of His mouth, not by means espoused by the theories of theistic evolution or evolution. He is eternal, sovereign, holy, immutable, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, true, merciful, and loving.

## **C. The Father**

We believe that God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the Heavenly Father of all who have come to a saving knowledge of His only begotten Son (*John 1:14; 20:17; Romans 4:11; I Peter 1:3-5*).

## **D. The Lord Jesus Christ**

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, one Person consisting of two natures, human and Divine (*John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; Hebrews 11:17; I John 4:9*).

We believe that as God the Son, Jesus the Christ is completely God,

Possessor of Divine attributes and Agent of Divine works, to be worshipped and honored as Jehovah God Himself (*Genesis 3:15; Psalm 68:18; Psalm 102:25-27; Isaiah 6:1; 7:14; 9:6; 40-3; 42:5; 45:12; 45:21-23; Micah 5:2; Matthew 3:3; John 1:3; John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; John 12:41; Ephesians 4:7-8; Philippians 2:10-11; Hebrews 1:8; Hebrews 1:10-12; I John 5:20*).

We believe that by virtue of His incarnation and virgin birth, Jesus Christ is completely man, yet without sin, able to reconcile sinful man with perfect Deity. (*Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:14; Romans 8:34; Philippians 2:6-8; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; I John 2:1*).

We believe that according to the will of the Father, Jesus Christ took upon Himself human nature, laying aside the prerogatives of Deity; that He lived earthly life without sin, and voluntarily sacrificed Himself on the cross in bloody death once and for all on behalf of mankind, bearing the sins of the entire race in His own body; that in so doing He paid sin's penalty and appeased the wrath of God; that He rose again bodily from the grave and is exalted to the right hand of God to reign forever; that only in Him, by virtue of His exalted Person and vicarious work, can man find salvation from sin and death (*Isaiah 53; Matthew 28; Mark 10:45; Mark 16:1-14; Luke 24; John 10:11; John 14:6; John 20; Acts 4:12; Romans 5:8; I Corinthians 15:3-8; II Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 9:24-26; I Peter 3:18; I John 2:2*).

## **E. The Holy Spirit**

We believe in the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit, that it is by His working that sinners are brought under conviction of sin and are drawn to Christ for salvation, that through Him men are regenerated and sanctified, that by Him the saints are indwelt with the Divine Presence, and that by His empowerment God's people are enabled to serve the Lord acceptably. We believe that He is the Divine Witness, Seal, Earnest, Anointing, Guide, Teacher, Comforter and Administrator (*John 14:26; 16:7-13; Acts 1:5, 8; 2:4; Romans 8:14-27; 15:16; I Corinthians 12:1-14; 14:40; II Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; I John 2:20, 27*).

## **F. Man**

We believe that man was created in the image of God and is, therefore, unique among all God's creation; that in Adam man willfully sinned against God, thus forfeiting his original innocence and alienating the

entire race from God; that every man from Adam's fall onward is a sinner by birth and by choice, utterly incapable apart from God of escaping his sinful condition or its rightful eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire (*Genesis 1:27; 2:7; 3:1-19; 9:6; II Samuel 12:23; Matthew 18:10-14; Romans 3:22-23; 5:12; 6:23; 8:5-8; I Corinthians 15:45; Galatians 5:17; Revelation 20:14-15*).

## **G. Salvation**

We believe that the salvation of sinful men is through the literal, efficacious, shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe salvation is a free gift of God. It is given to those who believe Christ died, was buried and rose again, and who trust His finished work on the cross as the only way to Heaven. All who trust in Christ are justified, have forgiveness of sins and are made righteous in the sight of God (*John 1:12; 3:16; 3:18; 5:24; 6:40; 6:47; 11:25-2; 20:31; Acts 10:43; Romans 3:26; 3:28; 4:5; 5:1; I Cor.15:3,4; 6; Galatians 2:16; 3:26; Ephesians 1:13; 2:8-9; Philippians 3:9; I Timothy 1:16*).

## **H. The Security of the Believer**

We believe that all those born again by the Spirit of God are kept by God's power alone and are thus secure in Christ forever (*John 1:12; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 8:1; 8:38-39; I Corinthians 1:4-8; I Peter 1:5; I John 5:13*).

We believe it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word; which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to sin (*Romans 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15*).

## **I. The Sanctification of the Believer - The Christian Life**

We believe it is God's will that every believer should strive to be like Christ and to walk in obedience with Him. It should be the goal of every believer to be growing and changing daily to become more like Jesus Christ. We believe that no man will become perfect in this life, but that victory over sin can be achieved on a consistent basis by walking in the Spirit. When Christians sin, fellowship with the Father is broken. However, the Christian who confesses his sins receives forgiveness, cleansing and renewed fellowship through Jesus Christ (*Romans 7:14-25; 8:1-4, 28,29; II Corinthians 5:9; Galatians 5:16-26*;

*Ephesians 4:22-32; I John 1:8-9; 2:1; 2:15-17).*

## **J. The Church**

We believe that the Church, the body of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again believers of this present age; that it was constituted and empowered by the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost; that it was purchased with the blood of Christ; that it was founded upon Christ; that its mission is to bear to the ends of the earth a Spirit-filled testimony to the judgment of God against sin and the salvation of sinners who exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (*Matthew 16:17-18; 28:18-20; Acts 2; I Corinthians 3:11; 12:12-14; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 5:25-27; Colossians 1:18*).

We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures; that a local New Testament church is a body of believers which have followed the Lord through the waters of baptism, associated together under the direction and government of the Holy Spirit for worship, instruction, fellowship, service, and the spread of the gospel to the uttermost part of the earth; that it is absolutely sovereign, under the administration of the Holy Spirit, self supporting in the handling of its own affairs and in determining its own relationship; and while maintaining its autonomy, should fellowship and work together with churches of like faith and practice (*Matthew 16:17-18; 28:18-20; Acts 11:22; 14:27; 20:17, 28-37; I Corinthians 3:9-17; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 5:25, 27; Colossians 1:18; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11; III John 10*).

## **K. Separation**

We believe in the separation of believers unto Christ and from the world so as to maintain good works and to “have no fellowship with the evil works of darkness but rather reprove them”; that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon our Savior and Lord; and that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations is commanded by God. We therefore urge every member of Harvest Baptist Church to abstain from every questionable thing, keeping himself/herself from “every appearance of evil” in religion, dress, conversation, amusement, business, habit, etc., according to the teachings of God’s Holy Word (*Romans 12:1-2; 14:13; II Corinthians 6:14-18; Galatians 5:6; 17:23; Ephesians 2:8-10; 4:1-32; Philippians 2:12-16; II Thessalonians 3:11-12*;

*II Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 3:1-11; James 4:4; I Peter 4:12-19; I John 2:15-16; II John 9-11).*

## **L. The Ordinances**

We believe that there are two Christian ordinances and that they are symbolical, not sacramental: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; that it sets forth in picture the essential facts in redemption, the death and resurrection of Christ, the essential facts in the experience of the believer, that should he experience physical death, he will be raised from the dead to participate in the eternal glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (*Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:4*).

We believe that the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of the Lord's death to be observed till He comes; that the elements, the bread and the fruit of the vine are only symbols of His broken body and shed blood, and that our observance of it is a pictorial testimony of the believer's fellowship with the Crucified Savior and should be preceded by solemn heart searching and self-judgment (*Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Matthew 26:26-30; I Corinthians 10:16-21; 11:17-34*).

## **M. World Evangelism**

We believe that it is the heart's desire of Almighty God to save sinners, that He has committed Himself to the faithful witness of His redeemed children to reach them with the gospel, and that He has commissioned His people to be diligent and zealous in publishing the saving message of Jesus Christ throughout all the world so that sinners may be persuaded to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved (*Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8; I Timothy 2:3-6; II Peter 3:9*).

## **N. The Last Things**

We believe in the imminent return of Christ in the clouds, known as the rapture, wherein, Christ will catch up together the dead in Christ as well as those believers who are alive and remain to be forever with the Lord. The Judgment Seat of Christ will take place for believers following the rapture, where believers will either be rewarded for their works, or

suffer the loss of rewards.

The rapture will precede the Tribulation period which will consist of seven years, wherein God will deal in wrath with the sin of the world, preparing it and especially believing Israel for the Revelation of Christ, when the Lord Himself will return to the Mount of Olives to judge the nations and establish His literal 1,000 year reign on the earth, known as the Millennium. Following the Millennium is the judgment of all unbelievers at the Great White Throne Judgment, where all unbelievers will be resurrected, when with soul and body reunited, shall be judged according to their works and cast into eternal punishment (not annihilation) in the Lake of Fire, which was originally prepared for a personal Satan, the adversary and enemy of God, and his fallen angels (*Job 19:25-26; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2-3; Matthew 25:41-46; John 5:28-29; I Corinthians 15:12-58; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; II Thessalonians 1:10; Revelation 19-21*).

## O. Eternity

We believe that eternity will consist of Heaven and Hell: that Heaven is a place of eternal blessedness and that Hell is a place of eternal suffering; that all true believers in Jesus Christ will be fully redeemed from sin's penalty, power, and presence, will be glorified with the Lord when He comes, and will enjoy the blessing of unbroken fellowship with God in Heaven forever; that all unbelievers will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ according to their deeds, without respect of persons, by the glorious Gospel of God, and will be cast out from God's presence to suffer the torments of the Lake of Fire in Hell forever (*Matthew 25:46; Luke 16:19-31; Romans 2:1-16; II Corinthians 5:1-10; Philippians 3:20; Revelation 20:1-15; 21:22*).

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal fellowship with Christ, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (*Matthew 25:46; John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Revelation 20:5-6, 12, 13*).

We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord (*Luke 23:43; II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; I Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:4-6*).

We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne of Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment (*Matthew 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Revelation 20:11-15*).

## **P. Human Sexuality**

1. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God rejects any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance.
2. We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (*Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; Romans 7:2; I Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; I Corinthians 7:10; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:18; I Thessalonians 4:1-8; I Timothy 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12; Hebrews 13:4*).
3. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church to preach. Single female missionaries or single female staff workers may be licensed to the ministry.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Membership**

#### **A. Definition of Membership**

A member is a person who has been publicly received into the church

and whose name has been placed upon the roll of the church as prescribed in Article V, B, below. Membership is an expression of fellowship with a group of believers and is not to be confused in any respect with salvation.

## **B. Method of Reception**

Persons wishing to become a member of Harvest Baptist Church shall notify the pastor of his or her desire. Upon such notification he or she shall become a candidate. A candidate must be at least thirteen years of age and shall meet with the pastor and at least one deacon to verify that he or she meets the following conditions for membership:

1. Testimony of the applicant of his salvation and following the Lord in baptism by immersion except as may be otherwise provided in such cases as illness and physical disability.
2. Letters of transfer from other churches of like faith and practice.
3. Restoration of dismissed members upon their confession of error to the church, and evidence of repentance and correction.

In 1, 2, 3, above, a unanimous vote of the members present at any regular service of the church shall be required.

In the event of dissenting votes, the applicant and those objecting shall be interviewed by the pastor and a minimum of two deacons and their recommendation presented to the church at its next service. A majority vote of the voting members shall then determine the applicant's acceptance for membership.

4. The right hand of Christian fellowship shall be extended as soon as possible after an affirmative vote of the church.

## **C. Status of Members**

1. A voting member of this church is one who attends regularly the services of the church and is thereby granted full voting privileges at all Church Meetings. "Regular services" shall be interpreted to mean Sunday School, Sunday Morning, Sunday Evening Service and the Mid-Week Service.

2. Voting privileges shall be extended to all members in good standing except that voting on financial, personnel, and dismissal matters shall be restricted to those 18 years old and older.

#### **D. Responsibilities of Members**

1. Members are expected to be present at all regular services of the church.
2. Members are expected to wholeheartedly support all extra services such as revivals, Bible Conferences, seminars, etc.
3. Members shall so regard the giving of his means as God enables as a positive command of Scripture (II Corinthians 8 and 9). Members shall support the church on a regular basis, and shall do so gladly as the Lord directs.
4. The church expects its members to give loyal obedience to those moral precepts so clearly taught in the Word of God.
5. It is the duty of all members to cultivate and cherish brotherly love for all other members of the church and to promote their spiritual benefit.
6. It is the duty of all members to fulfill all promises and obligations made to those who are not members, and to seek opportunity to commend to them the Gospel of Christ.

#### **E. Dismissal of Members**

A member may be dismissed as a member only upon the occurrence of one or more of the following:

1. Death.
2. Transfer of membership by a church of like practice and faith. Letters shall be sent directly to the clerk or pastor of the church to which the member is requesting transfer. No open letters shall be granted.
3. No member of Harvest Baptist Church may hold membership in another church. If any member unites in membership with another

church, that person is automatically terminated without notice from membership in this church.

4. Members who are “habitually absent” or who become non-resident shall be removed from the church roll after a period of one year unless they meet the following exceptions: illness, those away in Christian service, education, military service, or those residing in a place where there is no church which adheres to the fundamentals of the Word of God.
5. Any member who requests a letter by joining another church and is not in full fellowship with this church shall have such letter granted according to the following:
  - a. Attempts are made first at reconciliation so that a letter of full fellowship may be granted.
  - b. If such attempts fail, a statement is made to the other church that such a person is not in full fellowship with this church.
6. Members may be dismissed by letter of resignation. The resignation shall not be accepted if the member is involved in the process of discipline (see Section F).

#### **F. Discipline and Restoration of Members**

1. The discipline committee shall be composed of the deacons with the pastor and have sole charge in determining covenant violations and discipline.
2. The following offenses shall make a member liable for discipline:
  - a. Any moral or spiritual offense for which any Christian would be subject to discipline.
  - b. Holding and/or teaching any doctrine contrary to the Statement of Faith (Article IV) of this church.
  - c. Refusing to comply with the terms of this Constitution and By-Laws.
3. In all cases of private offense, the offender shall be dealt with in accordance with the mode divinely prescribed in Matthew 18:15-18 and Galatians 6:1.

4. Any persons or person making charges or accusations will be required to come before the discipline committee and openly support such charges in the face of the accused.
5. In every case, the accused shall be given ample time to prepare a defense. No matter what the charge, a fair hearing shall never be denied.
6. If, after a full inquiry, prayer, and counsel the offender does not repent and make attempt at reconciliation, the church may dismiss such a person from the privileges of membership by a simple majority vote of members present. Restoration shall be upon a simple majority vote.

## **G. Declaration of Intent**

It should be understood that none of the regulations set forth in this Article are intended to be harsh or unduly restrictive. They are intended to emphasize the privilege and responsibility of membership in Harvest Baptist Church of Rock Hill, SC, to uphold a high standard of loyalty to Harvest Baptist Church, and to protect the rights and privileges of faithful members against those few who occasionally seek to exercise full voting authority while demonstrating by their careless conduct and/or infrequent attendance at the church services that they are unqualified to do so. The administration of any of these regulations shall be carried out in a spirit of love and forbearance. It shall always be the aim of the officers of the church to restore a careless or erring member, not embarrass or hurt him. In the case of a reasonable question whether any member has in any way disqualified himself as an active member of the church, he shall always be given the benefit of the doubt.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Church Officers**

This church acknowledges only the Lord Jesus Christ as its Head, the Holy Scriptures as the only infallible guide in matters of faith, discipline, and order, and the Holy Spirit as its Teacher and Administrator. The government of the church and its functions are as follows: the promotion of its spiritual welfare and growth, supervision of its work and administration, and the management and control of its property.

#### **A. The Pastor**

1. The pastor is recognized as the under shepherd of Christ's local church and its chief officer. He shall preach the Word of God, administer the ordinances of the New Testament, shepherd Harvest Baptist Church and lead it in the fulfillment of its sacred task. He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and counselor of all departments (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9).
2. The election of the pastor shall take place on a meeting called for the purpose by public announcement, which shall be given on at least one Sunday before the time of the meeting. Election shall require at least seventy-five percent of the votes cast.
3. The pastor must subscribe to the doctrinal statement and constitution of Harvest Baptist Church and promise to uphold and defend the same as responsible before God. His pastoral office shall be for an indefinite term. However, when the pastoral relationship is dissolved by request of the church, the dissolution of the pastoral relationship shall take place at the time of the vote. If dissolution is due to any reason other than Article VI, A, 4, the church shall continue the pastor's pay for 30 days. If dissolution is due to the Pastor's resignation, the church may request 90 days from the time request is formally made before the relationship shall cease.
4. In case the pastor is being dismissed for any practice, which brings reproach upon the name of the Savior or the office of the pastorate, he may be dismissed immediately upon simple majority vote and without notice being given, with no future financial obligation on the part of the church. (See Article VII, C).
5. The pastor has the right to call the man he feels led of the Lord to hold meetings and fill the pulpit in his absence. He has the privilege to call any committee together. He may call the church together for special Church Meetings.

## **B. Church Employees**

Church employees shall be nominated by the pastor and deacons and employed upon congregational approval. Dismissal of church employees shall be at the discretion of the pastor. If the church is without a pastor, the Chairman of the deacons may dismiss an employee.

## C. Deacons

### 1. Qualifications and Election

- a. The qualifications for deacons shall be those that are prescribed and set forth in the New Testament (Acts 6:3; I Timothy 3:8-13).
- b. He must be a man who is a member in good standing of Harvest Baptist Church for a minimum of one year.
- c. No man shall be considered for the position of deacon who is a member of a secret order (John 18:20; I Corinthians 1:21; II Corinthians 6:14, 15-18).
- d. The number of deacons can be no less than two and no more than six, other than one being added for each 25 members or faction thereof over 150.
- e. Their terms of office shall be for three years arranged to end in yearly succession, so that at least one deacon is elected for a three year term each year. After his three years of service he shall be eligible to serve again.

### 2. Duties

- a. At the first meeting following the annual election the deacons shall select a chairman from their number who shall serve a term of one year.
- b. It is the duty of the deacons to keep records of all the meetings they have.
- c. When the church is without a pastor the pulpit committee shall consist of five members selected by the congregation, at least three of whom shall be deacons. If there are no deacons, the church will select the members by simple majority vote.
- d. The deacons shall visit the sick and delinquent members of the church, be conscious of and willing to help within the ability of the church the fatherless, and the widows, and to help in matters relating to the overall welfare of the church.

### 3. Dismissal

If, by reason of conduct unbecoming his office, any deacon disqualifies himself, he shall be removed from his office in accordance with Article V, F, "Discipline of Members."

### 4. Replacements and Election

- a. If the office of deacon is vacated through death, dismissal, resignation, or removal from the community, the office shall be filled by a special election, provided the vacancy does not occur

within three months preceding an annual election. The newly elected deacon shall complete the term of office vacated.

- b. At the first mid-week service of October, ballots shall be distributed to the congregation for those to be nominated as deacon. The pastor and deacons shall determine from the ballots, after personal counseling with the nominees, those who are qualified in accordance with 1.a, b, c, d and 4.a above. No further nominations may be made from the floor.

5. Deacon Approval of Non-Budgeted Expenses:

- a. Any one deacon or pastor may make/approve a non-budgeted expenditure up to \$100 on his own.
- b. Any two deacons or one deacon and pastor may make/approve a non- budgeted expenditure of up to \$200.
- c. Any three deacons or two deacons and pastor may make/approve a non-budgeted expenditure of up to \$500.
- d. The building committee chairman may make/approve an expenditure of up to \$1,000 while actively involved in a church-approved building program.
- e. All deacons and pastor may make/approve a non-budgeted expenditure up to \$1,000.
- f. All such expenditures must be reported and recorded at the next deacon's meeting.

**D. Financial Secretary**

The financial secretary shall receive all monies of the church and record the same as directed by the church.

**E. Treasurer**

The treasurer shall keep a true and fair report of all receipts and disbursements and make a full report to the church at each quarterly meeting, provide a monthly financial statement and when otherwise directed by the church.

**F. Other Officers**

The pastor and deacons shall nominate other officers with their names submitted to the church at a regular meeting for approval.

## ARTICLE VII

### Church Meetings

- A. The annual church meeting shall be held on the second midweek service of November unless otherwise designated by the pastor and deacons. The selection of officers for the church year (January through December) shall take place at this meeting. They shall assume their duties the first Sunday of January.
- B. Quarterly meetings shall be conducted the second midweek service after the first Sunday of each quarter commencing with January of each year.
- C. Special meetings may be called at any time provided public announcement is made at both services on the preceding Sunday. The pastor, two or more deacons, or 10 percent of the voting members may request a special meeting so long as public announcement is made as stated above. The reception of members in the church may be cared for at any regular service of Harvest Baptist Church.
- D. Twenty-five percent of the voting membership of Harvest Baptist Church shall constitute a quorum for the conducting of church business. A simple majority vote shall be required to transact normal church business. (See Article VI, A, 2 for election of a pastor)
- E. The pastor shall preside as chairman of the church meetings except in matters personally involving himself or his family. At his discretion he may appoint the chairman of the deacons as presiding officer. In the absence of the chairman of the deacons another qualified deacon shall be appointed.
- F. All matters of business to be considered by Harvest Baptist Church, shall be presented to the pastor and deacons by the Sunday preceding the church meeting at the following midweek service.
- G. All regular or special meetings of committees and the congregation shall follow the discipline of Roberts Rules of Order unless suspended by a majority vote of the convened body.

## ARTICLE VIII

## **Amendments**

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at any regular or special church meeting, providing the pastor and deacons have discussed the matter at least two weeks before such meeting, and announcement has been made to the church on the Sunday preceding the meeting.





