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# Constitution

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## **ARTICLE 1 – IDENTITY**

### **SECTION 1 – NAME**

The name of this church shall be Heritage Baptist Church.

### **SECTION 2 – PURPOSE**

This congregation is organized as a Baptist church exclusively to glorify God through worship, education, fellowship, service, evangelism, and stewardship.

## **ARTICLE 2 – STATEMENT OF FAITH**

### **SECTION 1 – SCRIPTURE**

We believe that all the words of the sixty-six books of the Bible, as originally written, are the inspired Word of God entirely without error (Psalm 12:6; Matthew 5:18; John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16–17; 2 Peter 1:19–21). The Bible is the final authority for judging what we believe and how we should live (Matthew 4:4; John 10:34–36; Acts 1:16; 2 Timothy 4:1–5; James 1:19–25). We believe the Bible supports using a grammatical, historical method of interpretation in light of the progress of revelation (Deuteronomy 29:29; Daniel 9:2; Ephesians 3:1–5; 2 Peter 3:15–16).

### **SECTION 2 – GOD**

We believe in the one true Triune God—one spirit being existing as three co-eternal and co-equal persons (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 61:1; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4–6). The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God (Matthew 6:26, 30; John 1:1; Acts 5:3–4). God is the creator of all things and is sovereign over all things (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1–3; Colossians 1:16; Isaiah 46:8–11; Ephesians 1:11). God is holy, all powerful, all knowing (including all that will happen in the future), everywhere present, loving, and perfectly just in all He does (Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 115:3; Acts 2:23; 4:27–28; Psalm 139:7–12; 1 John 4:9–12; Deuteronomy 32:4).

### **SECTION 3 – JESUS CHRIST**

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. (John 1:1; Hebrews 1:1–3.) He was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit, without earthly father, and born of Mary, a virgin (Genesis 3:15; Matthew 1:20–25; Luke 1:34–35). Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human (John 1:1, 14;

Philippians 2:5–11; Hebrews 2:14). God the Father sent God the Son to the earth to live a sinless life and die on the cross as the perfect substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of the world (Isaiah 53:1–12; John 3:16; Romans 3:24–25; 5:8–10; Hebrews 4:15; 1 John 4:14; Revelation 1:5).

We believe in the bodily resurrection and ascension of Jesus into heaven, where He is presently seated at the right hand of the Father, interceding for us as our faithful High Priest (Luke 24:36–43; Acts 1:9–11; Ephesians 1:20; Hebrews 1:3; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25). We believe in the bodily return of Jesus to establish His earthly kingdom (Revelation 1:7; 19:11–16; 20:4–6). Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation and the sole mediator between God and human beings (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5).

#### **SECTION 4 – THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe in the personhood and deity of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; Acts 5:3–4). Through His present ministry every genuine believer is regenerated, baptized into Christ and His body the church, indwelt, sealed, gifted at conversion, and empowered for ministry for the building up of the body of Christ (John 3:3, 8; Titus 3:5–6; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27; John 14:16–17; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 1:13–14; 4:30; Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12:4–7, 11–14; Ephesians 4:7–16). The Holy Spirit assists the believer in right living insofar as the believer submits to the sanctifying ministry of the Spirit in agreement with the Word of God (Ephesians 5:18–21; Colossians 3:15–17).

We believe that the sign gifts of the Spirit (gifts of miracles, healing, tongues, prophecy) were given only during the apostolic era to provide divine revelation and to authenticate the ministry of the New Testament apostles and prophets (Acts 14:3; Romans 15:18–19; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 2:20; 3:5; Hebrews 2:3–4).

#### **SECTION 5 – ANGELS, SATAN, AND DEMONS**

We believe in the existence and activity of angels—personal spirit beings who were created by God (Job 1:6; Psalm 148:1–6; Daniel 10:7–14; Luke 1:19). God’s holy angels worship and serve Him continually. Angels are also ministering spirits on

behalf of God's people (Isaiah 6:1–4; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 4:6–8; 5:11–12; Hebrews 1:14). Satan and the other evil angels (demons) rebelled against God and oppose Him and His purposes in the world (Matthew 4:1–3; John 8:44; 1 Timothy 4:1). While Satan and his evil angels can bring great harm to people and oppose the spiritual growth of believers, their activity is under the sovereign hand of God, and they are destined for God's eternal judgment in the lake of fire (2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 6:10–12, 16; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8; Job 1:12; 2:6; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

## **SECTION 6 – CREATION, HUMANITY, AND SIN**

We believe that God created the universe and everything in it by His powerful word in six literal, consecutive, twenty-four-hour days apart from the process of evolution (Genesis 1–2; Exodus 20:9–11; Psalm 33:6–9; Matthew 19:4; Hebrews 11:3). God created both the man and the woman in His image. This image was retained even after Adam and Eve fell into sin. Therefore, we affirm the dignity and intrinsic value of each human life from the moment of conception (Genesis 1:26–27; 9:6; Psalm 139:13–15; James 3:9; Matthew 16:26). We believe that God created biblical marriage to be only between one man and one woman united in a covenant relationship before God. Scripture reserves sexual activity for the marriage relationship (Genesis 2:24–25; Hebrews 13:4; Leviticus 18:22; Malachi 2:14; Matthew 19:3–12; Romans 1:24–27; 1 Corinthians 6:9–20; 7:1–5; 1 Timothy 1:9–10).

We believe that God created Adam and Eve in a sinless state in fellowship with God. Their sin against God brought death into the world and a curse upon creation (Genesis 1–3; Romans 5:12–17; 8:19–22). As a result, all people are born into the world corrupted by sin in the totality of their being. Every person is a sinner by nature and by personal act, and is therefore under the just condemnation of God (Romans 3:9–18; Titus 1:15–16; Romans 3:23; Ephesians 2:1–3). All people are dead in their sins and are unable to respond to the gospel apart from a gracious work of God through the power of the Holy Spirit, who enables sinners to place their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation (John 6:37, 44, 65; Ephesians 2:8–9; 2 Corinthians 4:6).

## **SECTION 7 – SALVATION**

We believe that God in His mercy and grace saves sinners who place their personal faith in Jesus Christ alone, who paid the price for their sins through His death on the cross and secured their salvation through His resurrection from the dead (John 1:12; 3:16; Acts 16:31; Romans 4:25; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:3–8). At salvation believers are instantaneously born again and enjoy eternal life in fellowship with God (John 3:3–8; 5:24; 2 Corinthians 5:17). We believe that at salvation God justifies sinners (declares them to be righteous) through faith alone. God forgives all of their sins—past, present, and future (Colossians 1:13–14; 2:13–14). Justification is based on Christ’s righteousness, resulting in an immediate and permanent right standing before God based solely on Christ’s imputed righteousness (Romans 3:24–28; 4:1–16, 22–25; 5:1, 6–9; 8:1–2, 31–34). We believe that all who are born again are kept eternally secure in their salvation by God (John 5:24; 10:27–30; Romans 8:28–39; Ephesians 1:3–14; 1 Peter 1:3–5; Jude 1).

We believe that Christians should live holy lives (Romans 12:1–2; 1 Peter 1:13–16; 2 Peter 1:4–11; Galatians 5:16–26). By God’s grace and the Spirit’s power, believers should strive for godly living by putting off the deeds of the flesh and putting on the deeds of the Spirit (Romans 8:9–17; Ephesians 4:17–32; Colossians 3:1–17). Their Christian conduct will be evaluated and their good service rewarded at the future judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10–12; 1 Corinthians 3:10–15; 2 Corinthians 5:10–11). We believe in the priesthood of all believers and their right to have direct dealings with God (Hebrews 4:16; 10:19–22; 1 Peter 2:9–10; Revelation 1:6). Believers are not to judge each other on matters of opinion, but are to respect their individual soul liberty. Nevertheless, believers must be careful not to use their freedom in Christ as a license to sin (Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8:9; Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 2:16).

## **SECTION 8 – THE CHURCH**

We believe that the universal church is the body of Christ made up of all genuine believers from Pentecost until the rapture. Jesus Christ is the sole head of His church (Matthew 16:18; Acts 1:4–5; 2:1–4; Romans 11:25–26; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22–23; Colossians 1:18; 2:19). We believe



that the local church is an organized assembly of immersed believers in one locality where the Word of God is preached and practiced and the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are observed (Acts 2:41–47; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:1–5). The local church is led by pastors (or elders or overseers) and served by deacons (Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13; 1 Timothy 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9; Hebrews 13:17). The local church is autonomous and governed by its members (Matthew 18:15–20; Acts 15:3, 4, 22; 1 Corinthians 5; 16:3; 2 Corinthians 8:19; 1 Timothy 5:17–25).

## **SECTION 9 – BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER**

We believe that the ordinance of water baptism is by immersion for believers only as a testimony of their personal faith in Christ. Water baptism is an outward picture signifying the inward reality of the believer's identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection for salvation (Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:12; 10:47; 16:14–15, 31–34; Romans 6:3–7; Colossians 2:12). Water baptism is a prerequisite for local church membership (Acts 2:41).

We believe that the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is solely a commemorative memorial of Christ's death until He comes, and that the body and blood of Christ are not present in the bread and cup (Luke 22:14–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26). Believers are to observe the Lord's Supper after a solemn self-examination of their relationship to the Lord and to one another (1 Corinthians 11:27–32).

## **SECTION 10 – CIVIL GOVERNMENT**

We believe that civil government is created by God to maintain human order by punishing evildoers and rewarding those who do good (Romans 13:1–7). While we are commanded to obey and pray for all government leaders, we are not to obey the government when it demands we act contrary to the Word of God. God requires our first allegiance and obedience (1 Timothy 2:1–2; 1 Peter 2:13–17; Daniel 3:17–18; 6:6–10; Acts 4:19–20; 5:27–29). We acknowledge the separation of church and state with believers having responsibilities to both (Matthew 22:21).

## **SECTION 11 – FUTURE EVENTS**

We believe that Christians are not destined for God’s future earthly wrath known as the tribulation or seventieth week of Daniel (Daniel 9:26–27; 12:1–2; Matthew 24:15–28; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:1–11; 2 Thessalonians 2:3–17; Revelation 3:10). We affirm the pre-tribulational rapture of the church at Christ’s imminent appearing (John 14:1–3; 1 Corinthians 15:51–52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; Titus 2:13), followed by the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10), Christ’s premillennial return and reign on the earth in fulfillment of the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7:4–17; Psalm 89:19–37; Isaiah 9:6–7; 11:1–11; 32:1; 55:3; Matthew 24:29–31; 25:31–46; Luke 1:32–33; Revelation 1:7; 12:5; 19:11–20:6), and the eternal state in the new heavens and earth (Isaiah 66:22–24; 2 Peter 3:11–13; Revelation 21–22).

We believe that at death believers immediately enter into the presence of the Lord, while unbelievers immediately are banished away from the presence of the Lord into a place of conscious torment (Luke 23:42–43; Acts 7:55–59; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:19–24; Luke 16:19–32). Both await a future bodily resurrection at which time the righteous will receive glorified bodies and dwell with God forever, and the unrighteous will be consigned to irrevocable, conscious punishment in an eternal lake of fire (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:31–46; John 5:25, 28–29; 1 Corinthians 15:51–57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; 2 Thessalonians 1:5–10; Revelation 20:1–6, 11–15).

## **ARTICLE 3 – MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION 1 – DEFINITION OF MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of this church will consist only of those who have professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and who have been scripturally baptized by immersion following salvation.

### **SECTION 2 – ADMISSION OF MEMBERS**

**CLAUSE A:** Any person who professes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and who personally expresses a desire for church membership may become a candidate for membership in Heritage Baptist Church.

**CLAUSE B:** Any person who desires membership should contact the church leadership to indicate a desire to become a member. At that time the candidate will (1) participate in a membership class; (2) give personal testimony of faith in Jesus Christ; (3) indicate in writing a willingness to accept and abide by the church constitution; and (4) give testimony of having been scripturally baptized or arrange with the church leadership to be baptized.

**CLAUSE C:** Any person who is approved by the membership committee can be voted upon by the church membership during any church business meeting.

### **SECTION 3 – CLASSIFICATION OF MEMBERS**

**CLAUSE A:** A member is someone who joins this church in accordance with the requirements as outlined in this constitution.

**CLAUSE B:** An associate member is a person who is residing in the area temporarily (e.g., student or ministry professional) who fulfills the requirements of church membership but retains regular membership at another like-minded church. This is a non-voting member. Associate membership will also apply to the church's missionaries.

### **SECTION 4 – RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS**

**CLAUSE A:** It is the responsibility of each member to grow spiritually, to attend regularly the services and functions of this church unless providentially hindered, to contribute faithfully to its financial support, and to utilize gifts and abilities in serving the Lord.

**CLAUSE B:** It is the responsibility of each member to practice personal spiritual disciplines (e.g., Bible study, prayer, and personal evangelism) as an indication of spiritual development.

**CLAUSE C:** It is the responsibility of each member to demonstrate loving concern and care for one another, to maintain the unity of the church, and to practice a consistent Christian lifestyle in the community.

**CLAUSE D:** It is the responsibility of each member to honor those in authority in this church, to pray regularly for them, and to submit to their leadership.

**CLAUSE E:** It is the responsibility of each member who leaves this church to unite with another church as soon as possible and to notify this church of such action.

**CLAUSE F:** It is recognized that some members (e.g., missionaries, members of the military, and shut-ins) are not able to fulfill all of these responsibilities.

## **SECTION 5 – PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS**

**CLAUSE A:** Only members age sixteen and older will be permitted to vote on church business.

**CLAUSE B:** Only members will be eligible to hold elected offices or standing committee appointments in this church.

**CLAUSE C:** Only members and associate members will be able to serve in on-going ministry positions in this church.

## **SECTION 6 – DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS**

**CLAUSE A:** Any member who is walking in a sinful or disorderly manner such as taking part in conduct expressly forbidden by Scripture, acting in a way that is detrimental to the unity and well-being of the church, or advocating doctrine opposed to the Statement of Faith is subject to the disciplinary process of this church.

**CLAUSE B:** Every step in the disciplinary process should be preceded by self-examination and carried out in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration. Members are to demonstrate love and concern for one another (see Matthew 7:3-5; Galatians 6:1-2).

**CLAUSE C:** The disciplinary process of this church is based upon the instruction of Matthew 18:15-20 and will adhere to the following steps:

1. If a member sins against a fellow member, the one offended must go privately to the offending party in a spirit of humility and love and seek restoration.

2. If restoration is not achieved, one or two other members will accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter.
3. If the matter remains unresolved, the members seeking restoration will bring it to the church leadership. The church leadership will investigate whether the charges are valid.
4. After proper investigation by the church leadership, the matter will be brought to the church. The purpose of this step is to inform the church, call the church to prayer, and give opportunity for the church to seek the restoration of the erring member.
5. If there continues to be no repentance and restoration, the final step of discipline will be the expulsion of the accused from membership. Any further contact with the expelled member should be for the sake of restoration.
6. An expelled member will be notified in writing of the action taken by the church.

**CLAUSE D:** Discipline in any form and at any stage will always have as its purpose the restoration of the erring member to the church, with expulsion being only a last resort. An expelled member does not have any of the privileges of church membership and should not participate in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. An expelled member, upon satisfactory evidence to the church of genuine repentance and by affirmative vote of the church, will be restored to membership.

## **SECTION 7 – TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

**CLAUSE A:** Membership may be terminated in any one of the following ways:

1. Death of the member—no church action is required.
2. Written request of the member—church action is required.
3. Written request from another church—church action is required.
4. Regular inactivity—any member who has essentially severed a relationship with this church due to six months of regular inactivity (i.e., failure to fulfill the responsibilities of church membership) will be removed from membership upon recommendation of the church leadership after proper investigation and personal contact—church action is required.

5. Expulsion—this is the final step of the church disciplinary process.

**CLAUSE B:** Associate members who cease attending this church for any reason (with the exception of our missionaries) will be removed from membership after six months. Church action is required.

## **ARTICLE 4 – CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

### **SECTION 1 – ORGANIZATION OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

#### **CLAUSE A: DEFINITION**

The church leadership will consist of the pastors and the deacons.

#### **CLAUSE B: MEETINGS**

The church leadership will meet regularly, and the secretary of the deacons will keep minutes of all meetings.

### **SECTION 2 – PASTORS**

#### **CLAUSE A: QUALIFICATIONS**

1. Pastors must be men who meet the biblical qualifications for overseers as listed in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:7–9 and must not be divorced.
2. Pastors will be required to indicate in writing at the beginning of each calendar year a willingness to endorse and support the church constitution.
3. Pastors who are called from another church will become members of this church upon installation.
4. Pastors will be subject to reference and background checks prior to being presented as candidates to the church.
5. Pastors should be ordained by a local church. It is assumed that any pastor who has not previously been ordained will submit to the ordination process of Heritage Baptist Church. The church leadership will initiate this process in a timely manner.

#### **CLAUSE B: RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Pastors are to equip the saints, oversee the ministry, and shepherd the flock.
2. Pastors are to preach the Word, pray, defend the doctrine of the church, and do the work of an evangelist.

3. Pastors are expected to be committed to historic Baptist distinctives.
4. Pastors are responsible to provide overall leadership and direction to the church and give vision to its various ministries, and they are empowered to make the necessary decisions to oversee the day-to-day functions of the church.
5. At least one pastor will be a member of each standing committee.
6. Pastors, along with the deacons, will select the members of the standing committees of the church.

### **CLAUSE C: CALLING**

1. When the church leadership determines the need for a pastor, the church leadership will prepare a basic job description to be presented to the church.
2. A pastoral search team will be appointed by the church leadership and approved by the congregation. All nominees will be contacted prior to approval to determine a willingness to participate. The pastoral search team will communicate regularly with the church leadership and congregation regarding their progress.
3. The pastoral search team will consist of the following: pastors, three to five deacons, and at least three members at-large with a goal of congregational representation. The church leadership will appoint the team leader.
4. The pastoral search team will identify and investigate prospective candidates (starting with men from within this church) to assess whether they meet the qualifications for a pastor in Clause A of this section and the stated job description. When the focus has been narrowed to one man, the pastoral search team will arrange for him to meet with the church leadership.
5. Upon unanimous approval by the church leadership, the candidate will be presented to the church for evaluation and consideration.
6. The church leadership will meet after the church evaluation to determine whether or not to recommend the candidate to the church for calling as a pastor.

7. If recommended by the church leadership, the church will vote whether or not to call the candidate as a pastor. (See Article 6, Section 3, Clause B.)

#### **CLAUSE D: ROLES**

1. Lead Pastor

The lead pastor should be characterized by spiritual leadership and the ability to attract and empower a creative and godly team of leaders who cast the vision and accomplish the mission of Heritage Baptist Church. His primary responsibilities are to preach and teach the Word of God and give himself to prayer. He is to watch over the spiritual life and interests of the church.

As an experienced leader, he will provide overall leadership and direction to the pastors, deacons and church staff and serve as a mentor specifically to the pastors and generally to the church staff. As a first among equals, he will ensure mutual accountability and evaluation for the fulfillment of the responsibilities given to each pastor and member of the church staff.

2. Other Pastors

As part of their recognized gifts, abilities, and experience, pastors must have shown themselves to be effective leaders in the area of ministry in which they serve. They will work closely with the lead pastor in the areas of setting spiritual direction for the church, church membership, selecting ministry leaders throughout the church, and managing the financial resources of the church within the boundaries of the budget.

#### **CLAUSE E: REMOVAL OF A PASTOR**

1. If a pastor is unable or unwilling to fulfill the duties of his office, he will submit a written resignation to the church leadership at least thirty days prior to the end of his ministry. At that time, the church leadership will begin the process of calling a pastor. The church leadership, in conjunction with the



- pastor, will determine the effective date of the resignation.
2. The church leadership may request the resignation of a pastor with a seventy-five percent vote by the rest of the church leadership. The church leadership will give him written reasons for the request. If a resignation is not received in a timely manner, the church leadership will call a special business meeting for the purpose of terminating the pastor's position. Following an affirmative vote of seventy-five percent of a forty percent quorum of the members, the pastor's position will be terminated. The church will give the pastor a minimum of thirty days' salary and health benefits if he is asked to resign.
  3. If church members desire to ask for a pastor's resignation, they must submit their request and reasons in writing to the church leadership. Upon investigation, the church leadership may request the resignation of the pastor (see previous statement). For an accusation against a pastor to be considered, there must be two or more witnesses.
  4. Any resignation of a pastor will be communicated to the church family by the church leadership.

#### **CLAUSE F: ABSENCE OF LEAD PASTOR**

1. In the extended, temporary absence of the lead pastor, the church leadership will appoint one of the other pastors to fulfill the lead pastor responsibilities.
2. If the absence of the lead pastor is permanent, the church leadership will appoint an interim lead pastor giving priority to the current pastors, then members of our church. The pastoral search team will then begin the process of filling the lead pastor position.

### **SECTION 3 – DEACONS**

#### **CLAUSE A: QUALIFICATIONS**

1. Deacons must be men who meet the biblical qualifications as listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
2. Deacons are to be servants of the church as indicated by the definition of the term "deacon."
3. Deacons must be at least twenty-one years of age and must have been a member of this church for at least one year.

4. Deacons will be required to indicate in writing at the beginning of each calendar year a willingness to endorse and support the church constitution.
5. Deacons will be subject to background checks prior to being presented as nominees to the church.

#### **CLAUSE B: RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Deacons are to serve the church by assisting the pastors in promoting the spiritual and material welfare of the church.
2. At least one deacon will serve as a member of each standing committee.

#### **CLAUSE C: SELECTING**

1. The deacons will consist of at least nine men, if possible, who will be selected at the annual church meeting for a term of three years. They will be eligible for re-nomination at the discretion of the nominating committee. The terms of service will be staggered to allow for continuity of leadership.
2. The nominating committee will be appointed by the church leadership at least three months prior to the annual election or as needed.
3. The nominating committee will consist of at least one pastor, two deacons whose terms are not about to expire, and two at-large members of the congregation.
4. The nominating committee will solicit recommendations from the church membership for potential nominees, identify specific nominees and investigate their qualifications and willingness to serve, and present to the church leadership a list of the nominees at least two weeks prior to the church vote. The nominating committee will recommend at least one nominee for each position that is needed.
5. If a deacon is unable to fulfill the duties of his office, the church leadership will determine how and when the vacancy will be filled.

#### **CLAUSE D: REMOVAL OF A DEACON**

1. If a deacon is unable or unwilling to fulfill the duties of his office, he must give notice to the church leadership in writing of his intention to resign.

2. The church leadership may request the resignation of a deacon by giving him the reason for the request. If a resignation is not received in a timely manner, then the church leadership may recommend his removal to the church by a seventy-five percent vote by the rest of the church leadership. The church will vote whether or not to remove him as a deacon.

## **ARTICLE 5 – CHURCH ORGANIZATION**

### **SECTION 1 – CONGREGATION**

The decision making responsibility resides in the membership of the local church as given by Jesus Christ, the head of the church, through the Scriptures. As such, the members of Heritage Baptist Church have the following specific responsibilities in governing the decisions of the church:

1. Choosing pastors and deacons;
2. Caring for membership matters;
3. Approving the annual church budget;
4. Authorizing real estate transactions;
5. Commissioning and sending vocational Christian workers;
6. Approving the constitution and any future amendments or revisions;
7. Making other decisions as considered necessary by the church leadership.

### **SECTION 2 – CHURCH OFFICERS**

**CLAUSE A:** Given that the church is a corporation with legal responsibilities, the lead pastor will serve as the corporation president, the secretary of the deacons as the corporation secretary, and the deacon representative on the finance committee as the corporation treasurer. The church leadership will be the board of directors and trustees for the corporation.

**CLAUSE B:** The church leadership will exercise the following specific powers upon authorization by the church: (1) to purchase, lease, or otherwise acquire real estate or personal property, or to take real estate or personal property by will, gift, or bequest; (2) to sell, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of personal property of the church;

or (3) to acquire indebtedness on behalf of the church. The church leadership will incur no personal liability for any of these actions.

**CLAUSE C:** At the beginning of each calendar year, the church leadership will appoint a church treasurer, church clerk, and church financial secretary.

## **SECTION 3 – COMMITTEES**

### **CLAUSE A: STANDING COMMITTEES**

1. The standing committees of the church are: Membership, Finance, Building and Grounds, Missions, and Personnel. The membership of standing committees will be appointed by the church leadership and will consist of at least one pastor and one deacon in addition to other committee members from the church. The church leadership will select committee members who possess experience, expertise, and interest in the specific matters pertaining to committee responsibilities.
2. The standing committees will be established and organized for the following purposes:
  - a. The Membership Committee is responsible for the church membership process, including upkeep and maintenance of the membership rolls.
  - b. The Finance Committee is responsible to provide oversight and accountability for the church finances and budgeting process. The corporation treasurer, church treasurer, and church financial secretary are automatically members of this committee.
  - c. The Building and Grounds Committee is responsible to care for the general upkeep, maintenance, and use of the church building and property, including the general oversight of the facilities budget.
  - d. The Missions Committee is responsible for the supervision of the missionary initiatives of the church, including the general oversight of the missions budget.
  - e. The Personnel Committee is responsible to develop and institute basic employment guidelines and procedures, will serve as the human resources department, and will care for matters relating to

- the remuneration and benefits package for church employees.
3. The standing committees will meet regularly to fulfill their responsibilities and will submit regular reports to the church leadership.
  4. The church Policies and Procedures Manual will define each committee's guidelines and duties as developed by the church leadership, with lines of authority and accountability specified.

#### **CLAUSE B: SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

Special committees may be created by the church leadership as needed. Each committee will be given guidelines and duties by the church leadership which will be reviewed and evaluated regularly. Special committees will automatically be dissolved when they complete their purpose or after a specified period of time. These committees will meet regularly to fulfill their responsibilities and will submit regular reports to the church leadership.

### **ARTICLE 6 – CHURCH FUNCTIONS**

#### **SECTION 1 – PRIORITIES**

In order to accomplish the purpose of Heritage Baptist Church, we will emphasize the following priorities throughout our meetings and ministries.

#### **CLAUSE A: WORSHIP**

The glory of God and the proclamation of His Word are essential to the purpose and ministries of the church.

#### **CLAUSE B: EDUCATION**

The spiritual growth and maturity of believers must guide our teaching and learning of God's Word.

#### **CLAUSE C: FELLOWSHIP**

Relationships among believers are necessary for church body life. These relationships allow believers to pray for, care for, and provide accountability for one another.

#### **CLAUSE D: SERVICE**

Believers are expected to discover, develop, and use their

God-given gifts and abilities for the mutual benefit of others in the body.

**CLAUSE E: EVANGELISM**

Believers must show the love of Christ and share the gospel with those in our community and around the world.

**CLAUSE F: STEWARDSHIP**

Wise management of the resources God has given to us will demonstrate our obedience to His Word.

**SECTION 2 – MEETINGS**

**CLAUSE A:** The church will gather on Sundays for the preaching of God’s Word and the edifying of the church body. It will regularly observe the two ordinances: baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

**CLAUSE B:** The church will have an annual business meeting which includes the approval of the annual church budget and the selection of deacons at least two weeks prior to the start of the new fiscal and leadership year.

1. The church leadership will make available the proposed church budget and list of nominees to the church at least one week prior to the annual business meeting.
2. The church fiscal and leadership year will run from January 1 to December 31.

**CLAUSE C:** Special business meetings may be called by the church leadership or by a petition of twenty percent of the voting members of the church. All special business meetings must be announced publicly at least one week prior to the meeting. A notification of two weeks is required for any business meeting for the call or dismissal of a pastor, the purchase or sale of real estate, or a constitutional revision.

**SECTION 3 – CHURCH BUSINESS**

**CLAUSE A: CHURCH ACTION**

Church action for all business will be determined by a majority vote of the members present and voting except as

otherwise specified in this constitution. The church clerk is responsible to keep minutes of all church action.

#### **CLAUSE B: QUORUMS**

Twenty percent of the voting members of the church will constitute a quorum for all regular church business. Forty percent of the voting members will be required as a quorum in the call or dismissal of a pastor, in the purchase or sale of real estate, or in a constitutional revision. These items requiring a forty percent quorum will also necessitate a seventy-five percent affirmative vote.

#### **CLAUSE C: METHODS OF VOTING**

The calling of pastors, the selection of deacons, the purchase or sale of real estate, and constitutional revisions will be by written ballot. All other voting may be done by the method specified by the person moderating the meeting.

#### **CLAUSE D: MODERATOR OF CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS**

A pastor will moderate all business meetings of the church, except in such cases where the church is without any pastors. If there is a need for a different moderator, the church leadership will appoint one of its members to moderate.

#### **CLAUSE E: FINANCIAL REPORTS**

The church finance committee, in collaboration with the church treasurer, will make financial reports available each quarter of the church fiscal year. The annual church budget will be presented to the church leadership at least one month prior to the annual church business meeting.

#### **CLAUSE F: FINANCIAL REVIEWS**

1. The church finance committee will arrange for an annual review of the church financial records. The members of the review committee must not be members of the standing finance committee. The results will be made available to the church.
2. An external review of the church financial records will be made every three years by qualified Certified Public Accountants. These auditors are not to be members of Heritage Baptist Church. The audit results will be made available to the church.

## **ARTICLE 7 – OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS**

### **SECTION 1 – ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION**

Heritage Baptist Church is incorporated in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The church clerk is responsible to keep a copy of the church's Articles of Incorporation.

### **SECTION 2 – LEGAL DOCUMENTS**

The minutes from the church leadership meetings and the minutes of all church action are the official property of the church and must be kept in the church office. All other legal documents (e.g. mortgage documents, deeds, and titles) must also be kept in a secure location. These documents will be kept as a permanent record of the church.

### **SECTION 3 – OTHER STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS**

**CLAUSE A:** The church membership committee will provide an application for church membership that includes an overview of constitutional requirements for membership.

**CLAUSE B:** The church personnel committee will be responsible to work with the church leadership and the other standing committees to maintain the church's Policies and Procedures Manual. This document will include general operational guidelines for church ministries, staff members, and standing committees. The Policies and Procedures Manual will be available for review by the church.

## **ARTICLE 8 – INDEMNIFICATION**

### **SECTION 1 – ACTIONS SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION**

The church may indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals (other than an action by or in the right of the church) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with the action, suit, or



proceeding; and if that person acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or on a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful. This determination of good-faith intent shall be made (1) by a majority vote of the pastor and deacons who were not and are not parties to or threatened with the action, suit, or proceeding; (2) if the described quorum is not obtainable or if a majority vote of a quorum of disinterested deacons so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or (3) by a majority vote of the members of the church.

## **SECTION 2 – TIMING OF INDEMNIFICATION**

Expenses of each person seeking indemnification under this constitution may be paid by the church as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding, as authorized by the board of deacons in the specific case, so long as the pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent agrees to repay the amount if it is ultimately determined that he or she is not qualified to be indemnified by the church.

## **SECTION 3 – EXTENT OF INDEMNIFICATION**

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

## **SECTION 4 – INSURANCE**

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

## **ARTICLE 9 – ARBITRATION**

### **SECTION 1 – SUBMISSION TO ARBITRATION**

Believing that lawsuits between believers are discouraged by Scripture (1 Corinthians 6), members of this church agree to submit to arbitration any matters between a member and the church which cannot otherwise be resolved and agree not to bring any civil disagreement before a court of law until arbitration has occurred.

### **SECTION 2 – NOTICE OF ARBITRATION**

In the event of any dispute, claim, question, or disagreement arising out of or relating to this Constitution or any other church matter, the parties shall use their best efforts to settle such disputes, claims, questions, or disagreement as befits Christians and in accord with Matthew 5:15–17. To this effect, they shall consult and negotiate with each other in good faith and, recognizing their mutual interests not to disgrace the name of Christ, seek to reach a just and equitable solution. If they do not reach such solution within a period of sixty days, then upon notice by either party to the other, disputes, claims, questions, or differences shall be finally settled by arbitration as described in Article 9, Section 1, above.

### **SECTION 3 – LIMITATIONS ON ARBITRATION DECISIONS**

**CLAUSE A:** Should any dispute involve matters of church discipline, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures for church discipline, as outlined under Article 3, Section 6, were followed.

**CLAUSE B:** Should any dispute involve the removal from office of the pastor or any church officer, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures set forth in Article 4, Section 2 were followed.

#### **SECTION 4 – ARBITRATION PROCEDURES**

The procedures for arbitration shall be as adopted by the church leadership and will be printed in the church's Policies and Procedures Manual. The arbitrator(s) will be mutually agreed upon by both parties.

#### **ARTICLE 10 – DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS**

The church may establish, in the exercise of its mission, various funds to accomplish specific goals. All contributions to these funds shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature and shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the church leadership. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article 1, Section 2 of this constitution.

#### **ARTICLE 11 – CONSTITUTION REVIEW AND REVISION**

**SECTION 1** – This constitution is subject to periodic review, revision, and amendment. The church leadership will be expected to initiate a thorough review of the existing constitution not later than five years following the previous review.

**SECTION 2** – Any revision may be initiated at the discretion of the church leadership or upon written request from at least twenty percent of the voting members to the church leadership.

**SECTION 3** – The proposed constitutional revision or amendment will be distributed to the members at least two weeks prior to the vote.

**SECTION 4** – Revisions or amendments will become effective immediately after being approved. The revised or

amended version of this constitution will be available to all church members from the church clerk.

## **ARTICLE 12 – CHURCH DISSOLUTION**

Upon the dissolution of the church, the board of directors will, after paying or making provision for payment of all of the liabilities of this church, dispose of all of the assets of this church to like-minded organizations that are in agreement with the Statement of Faith and are operated exclusively for charitable, educational, or religious purposes as the board of directors will determine. No assets will be given to any individual member of this church or any person associated with them.



