

2009

**[CONSTITUTION AND
BY-LAWS]**

Constitution and By-Laws
Harvard Avenue Baptist Church
Birthed 1951
Revised – March 8, 2009
Amended –

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I – Name

The name of this church shall be HARVARD AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH, Siloam Springs, Arkansas. Harvard Avenue Baptist Church will be referred to as “the Church” throughout this constitution. The Church is a non-profit religious corporation, proceeding under the laws of the state of Arkansas.

ARTICLE II – Foundation, Object and Priorities of Ministry

1. The foundation of the Church is the Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 3:11), and its code of guidance in all its affairs, the Word of God, and the Church does here affirm its faith that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of Almighty God (Mark 13:31).
2. The object of the Church shall be to worship God according to the teaching of His Word, to practice the precepts and examples of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament, to sustain its ordinances and doctrines, and to preach and propagate among all peoples the Gospel of Salvation which is by personal faith on Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. (Acts 2:41-47; Acts 1:8)
3. The priorities of ministry of the Church flow from the vision of God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ. We exist to savor this vision in worship (John 4:23), strengthen the vision in nurture and education (I Corinthians 14:26; II Peter 3:18), and spread the vision in evangelism, missions, and loving deeds (I Peter 2:9; 3:15; Matthew 28:18-20; 5:16).

ARTICLE III – Statement of Faith

THE BAPTIST FAITH & MESSAGE (2000)

I. The Scriptures

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

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

II. God

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

A. God the Father

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

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

B. God the Son

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

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

C. God the Holy Spirit

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

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

III. Man

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

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

IV. Salvation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

V. God's Purpose of Grace

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

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

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

VI. The Church

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

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

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

*The Greek word *poimen* is translated pastor or shepherd in the New Testament. It is used synonymously with *episkopos* (bishop) and *presbuteros* (elder) to describe the same office (Acts 20:17-28; 1 Peter 5:1-3). This constitution and By-Laws refers to the office of pastor with the term elder(s). This footnote has been added to the BF&M 2000 by Harvard Avenue Baptist Church.

VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

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

resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

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

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

VIII. The Lord's Day

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

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

IX. The Kingdom

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

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

X. Last Things

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

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

XI. Evangelism and Missions

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

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

XII. Education

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

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

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

XIII. Stewardship

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

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

XIV. Cooperation

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

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

XV. The Christian and the Social Order

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

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

XVI. Peace and War

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

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

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

XVII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

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

XVIII. The Family

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

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

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

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

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

ARTICLE IV – HARVARD AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH MEMBER COVENANT

1. Introduction
 - a. "...Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."
(Romans 12:1-2)
 - b. As Christian we are members of God's household (Eph. 2:19) called to function, participate, and minister in a particular place within the body of Christ. A healthy body requires that each member do its part well. A healthy church requires the same: members who are sacrificially committed and well equipped to do the works of service that God has prepared in advance for us to do (Eph. 2:10; 4:12). Harvard Avenue Baptist Church holds its members in high regard; we expect them to lead as missionaries of the gospel to the culture. God, in his sovereignty, placed us in this city, among these people, in this century, for a reason (Acts 17:26-27).
 - c. "For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them..." (Romans 12:3-8)
 - d. Being a member of Harvard Avenue Baptist Church is really about being a part of a family. All members are disciples of Jesus, unified by their identity in Christ. This unity is expressed in the way they collaborate in loving God, loving fellow Christians, and loving non-Christians. Members who enter into covenant with their local church are called to a higher degree of responsibility and service. At the same time, the elders and deacons are covenanted to assist members, first and foremost, to love and lead, provide counsel and aid, and pray for, teach, and guide them.
 - e. "Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace..." (1 Peter 4:8-10)
2. What is a covenant?
 - a. A covenant is a promise by which we obligate ourselves to one another in such a way that the obligation of one party is not dependent on the faithfulness of the other (Ezek. 20:44; 36:22; Ps. 76:11; Hos. 2:19-20; 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:13). The Harvard Avenue Baptist Church covenant includes the obligations of HABC to its members, and the obligations of members to HABC. Though the covenant does define the relationship between members and the church, it is first and foremost a promise made to God as a commitment to his glory and his bride, the church (Eph. 5:25).
3. Obligation of Harvard Avenue Baptist Church to its members
 - a. We covenant that your elders and deacons will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:1-13; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
 - b. We covenant to seek God's will for our church body to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5)
 - c. We covenant to care for you and seek your growth as a disciple of Christ, in part by equipping you for service (Eph. 4:11-13) and praying for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (James 5:14).
 - d. We covenant to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18).
 - e. We covenant to be on guard against false teachers (Acts 20:28-31).
 - f. We covenant to exercise church discipline when necessary (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1).
 - g. We covenant to set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of church members (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12).
4. My obligation to Harvard Avenue Baptist Church as a member
 - a. I have read and understood the HABC statement of faith and will not be divisive to its teaching. I also understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace (Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:7,17).
 - b. I covenant to submit to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues (Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
 - c. I will maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines. My relationship will be evident through my participation in weekly worship services, communion, HABC community life, service, and a life that glorifies Jesus (Ps. 105:1-2; Ps. 119:97; Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25; 2 Peter 1:3).
 - d. I will steward the resources God has given me, including my time, talents and treasure (Prov. 3:9-10; Rom. 12:1-2; Gal. 5:22-26; Eph. 4:1-16; 5:15-18). This includes regular financial giving, service and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary (Rom. 12:1-8; 2 Cor. 8-9; 12:7-21; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
 - e. I will not function in leadership or as a member in another church family (Heb. 13-17).
 - f. I covenant to submit to discipline by God through His Holy Spirit, to follow biblical procedures for church discipline in my relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ, to submit to righteous discipline when approached biblically by brothers and sisters in Christ, and to submit to discipline by church leadership if the need should ever arise (Ps. 141:5; Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:5-8; Gal. 6:1-5, 8; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 2:25; Titus 1:9; 3:10-11; Heb. 12:5-11; Rev. 2:5-7, 14-25).
 - g. I agree, by God's grace, to walk in holiness as an act of worship to Jesus Christ, who has saved me from my sin that I could live a new life (2 Cor. 5:17); I will practice complete chastity before marriage

and complete fidelity in heterosexual marriage by abstaining from practices such as cohabitation, pornography and fornication (Job 31:1; Prov. 5; Rom. 13:12-14; 1 Cor. 6:9-7:16; Heb. 13:4); I will refrain from illicit or illegal drug use, drunkenness, and other sinful behavior as the Bible, my elders, and my conscious dictate, in accordance with the convicting work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 8:7; Gal. 5:19-21). Should I sin in such a manner, I agree to confess my sins to Christian brothers or sisters and seek help to put my sin to death (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5; 1 John 1:6-10).

5. My commitment to the mission of Harvard Avenue Baptist Church
 - a. Harvard Avenue Baptist Church Mission Statement: Harvard Avenue Baptist Church exists to connect all people to Christ, His community, and His calling.
 - b. I have read the mission statement of Harvard Avenue Baptist Church and commit to live out this mission as a diligent, faithful disciple of Jesus, that my identity would be in Him, my worship would be for Him, my fellowship would be through Him, and my interaction with the culture would be for His glory.
 - c. I understand that this covenant obligates me to the members of Harvard Avenue Baptist Church and is an acknowledgement of my submission to the Elders of the church, under the lordship of Jesus Christ. I accept the responsibility to notify Harvard Avenue Baptist Church leadership if at any time I can no longer commit to this covenant, or if I have any questions, comments or concerns regarding Harvard Avenue Baptist Church.

ARTICLE V – Membership

The membership of the Church shall consist of persons who confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who give evidence of regeneration by a life consistent with their profession and with the views of faith, doctrine and practice of the Church, who have been baptized by immersion, and who have been received into its membership according to the By-Laws of the Church.

ARTICLE VI – Leadership and Organization

1. Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the congregation of the Church is the final authority within this local church. This authority is normally exercised through the election of officers to govern the Church; however, the vote of the membership of the Church at a properly called meeting, as provided in the By-Laws, shall be required to effect the following actions:
 - a. Accept members into the Church, give letters of transfer or recommendation to members, or drop members from the church roll;
 - b. Elect officers of the Church;
 - c. Discipline members by dismissing them and discipline officers by removing them from office;
 - d. Approve annual budgets of the Church, authorize any expenditure of the funds of the Church when such expenditure is not covered by an approved budget, and approve any transactions regarding real property;
 - e. Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the Church by the Elders, or raised by motion at a business meeting;
 - f. Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution or By-Laws of the Church;
 - g. Approve the call of the Lead Pastor.
2. The officers of the Church shall be elders and deacons. The purpose of the officers of the Church is to lovingly govern, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry.
 - a. The leadership of the Church shall be vested in the Elders who are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this Church. The Elders shall be equal in authority, but may be specialized in function.
 - b. Deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the church, and the care for the members of the congregation.

ARTICLE VII – The Church Property

1. In the event of a division of the Church, from which may God in His mercy save us, the property of the Church shall belong to that group of such division which represents the largest portion of the church membership before recognizing a division, therein provided such group is loyal to this constitution; otherwise, it shall belong to the group remaining loyal to this constitution, though it may not be the largest group in such division. Should any controversy arise as to whether such loyalty exists, the question shall be submitted to the Director of Missions for the Northwest Arkansas Baptist Association and/or the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and their decision shall be final.
2. Should a condition arise at any time in the future when for any reason, the church work cannot continue, the church property shall be transferred to the Southern Baptist Convention or its successor. If indebtedness, the net proceeds shall be transferred to the Southern Baptist Convention or its successor, upon sale of assets and financial obligations fulfilled,
3. Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of the same denomination be advisable as determined by vote of the Church, the Elders shall be authorized by the Church to negotiate the terms of such consolidation in so far as the property of the Church is concerned.

ARTICLE VIII– Revisions, Additions and Amendments

1. Revisions, additions or amendments of this constitution may be made only in the following manner:
 - a. at any regular or special called business meeting; and
 - b. by a two-thirds majority of those members present and voting at such meeting, provided at least ten percent (10%) of the resident membership of the Church is present at such meeting; and
 - c. after presentation by written motion at any regular or special business meeting held at least thirty days before the proposed change is to be voted upon; and
 - d. if notice of the proposed change or addition has been given, in writing to all members and from the pulpit, on at least two Sundays in the interim period between said meetings.
2. Article II (1) and VIII (2) of this constitution shall not be repealed, amended nor revised.

By-Laws

ARTICLE I – Membership

Section 1 – GENERAL PROCEDURE

All actions regarding membership, either of admission or dismissal, shall be by vote of the Church upon recommendation of the Elders. At any of the regular meetings for worship, the Church may, without special notice, act upon the reception of members or upon transfer of members to other churches.

Section 2 – ADMISSION BY BAPTISM

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of change of heart, and having accepted the faith, aims and ideals of the Church as expressed in the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant, may be received into membership by baptism upon recommendation of the Elders.

Section 3 - ADMISSION BY LETTER

Members from other Baptist churches, holding like faith, may be received as members with us upon presentation of letters of transfer from such churches and upon acceptance of the faith, aims and ideals of the Church as expressed in the Baptist Faith and Message and the Church Covenant. If such evidence of membership be of older date than six months prior to their presentation, the applicant may be required to furnish additional information.

Section 4 - ADMISSION BY STATEMENT OF FAITH OR RESTORATION

All applicants for membership other than by baptism or by letter of transfer, that is, by Christian experience if previously baptized, or by restoration, shall be received into the Church in the same way as those by baptism, except the ordinance shall not be administered. Candidates who have been dismissed for cause may be restored to membership upon request by the individual, recommendation by the elders, and approval by the Church.

Section 5 – REQUESTING WATCHCARE MEMBERSHIP

Watchcare is an affiliate membership program designed for college students who desire fellowship with our body while away from their home church. Students desiring Watchcare Membership must be members in good standing of a local church of like faith and order. They are able to serve in the various ministries of the church, but do not have voting privileges.

Section 6 – MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING

Any member who consistently attends worship services, who contributes financially to the Church, who adheres to the Church Covenant, and who is not currently under church discipline, shall be considered a member in good standing. Members in good standing have all the rights and privileges of members, including voting and serving privileges. Any member who fails in their responsibilities for a period of six months, or refuses to adhere to the Church Covenant, without reasonable cause, may be subject to the discipline of the Church. A member not in good standing does not have voting or serving privileges.

Section 7 - INSTRUCTION TO NEW MEMBERS

All persons uniting with this Church in any of the ways set forth in Section 2 through 5 above shall previously (and/or thereafter finally), by the Elders, be made acquainted with the Church Covenant, the Baptist Faith and Message, and the Southern Baptist Convention by completing the membership class. New members shall pledge themselves to fulfill their stewardship obligations as to worship, service and cheerful giving when they make public profession of faith and join the church.

Section 8 - DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS

1. Members in good standing who have fulfilled their obligations to the Church, or satisfactorily arranged the same with the Elders, shall upon request, be granted a letter of transfer to unite with such Baptist Church as they may designate. Such letter of transfer shall be sent to the Pastor or the Clerk of the Church the member intends to join and shall be valid only for six months, but may be renewed after that time by vote of the Church, upon recommendation of the Elders, if satisfactory reasons be given for the non-use. These limitations of time shall be included in the letter of transfer. Members who shall unite with another church without such letter shall be dropped from the Church roll. Members in good standing who have fulfilled their obligations to the Church, or satisfactorily arranged the same with the Elders, and who desire to unite with a church of another denomination, shall receive a statement of membership and be dismissed.
2. Members who move from this area shall supply the Church with their new address and apply for a letter of dismissal within one year, provided there be a church of the same faith and order in the place to which they move. If necessary, it shall be the duty of the Elders to remind such members of their duties in this respect. In case there is no such church in the place, or there are circumstances which render it inadvisable to change membership, the members shall report to the Church as often as once a year at least, in person or by letter, and by contribution. All non-resident members who do not so report shall be subject to dismissal by the Church after appropriate efforts have been made to contact the members and remind them of their duties.
3. Termination of membership shall be recognized by the church following the death or voluntary resignation of any church member. Membership may be terminated as an act of church discipline (See Article VII-Discipline) at the recommendation of the Elders and with the vote of two-thirds of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members.

4. Resident members may be subject to dismissal who does not meet the qualifications stated in Section 6 of this article.

ARTICLE II – Church Government

Section 1 – Officers, Staff, Appointees, and Committees

1. Officers. The officers of the Church shall be elders and deacons, who are members of the Church in good standing and who are currently serving a term of office, hereafter called “the Elders” or “the Deacons”.
2. Staff. Staff members are those who receive compensation from the Church for the exercise of their ministry gifts. This may include elders, ministers, office assistants, maintenance workers, etc. Staff members are appointed by the Elders, except the Lead Pastor, who will be called by the congregation.
 - a. Staff ministers or pastors, who have responded to God’s call to serve the Church of Christ as their primary vocations, will have duties determined by the Elders. These duties shall be explained to them in writing at the time of their hire.
3. Committees and Appointees. The Elders have the authority to create committees and positions to which they may delegate responsibilities for ministry. The Elders have the authority to dissolve any committee or position which they have created. The Elders also have the authority to appoint Elders, Deacons or other members of the Church to serve as members of such committees and to act as their agents in such positions. The Deacons may nominate candidates for any committee or position, with appointment by the Elders. Every committee shall have a chairperson, responsible for the overall operation of a committee, who shall be appointed by the Elders. The Elders may delegate the responsibility for selecting the chairperson to the committee. (Such committees and positions might include, for example, a Missions Committee, a Finance Committee, a Treasurer, or a Church Clerk.)
4. Ministry Volunteers. Only members of the Church in good standing may serve in the teaching and leadership ministries of the Church. The Elders may provide guidelines allowing other regular attendees to serve in ministries not related to teaching or leadership. Ministries of teaching and leadership shall be defined by the Elders.
5. All staff, committee members, ministry volunteers, and appointees must be reaffirmed by the Elders before the annual meeting, and a list of them shall be prepared and presented to the Church at the annual meeting.

Section 2 – ELDERS

1. Composition, Responsibilities, Term, Calling and Removal.
 - a. The Elders shall be men. The Elders shall consist of a minimum of three elders at any time determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men in the Church.
 - i. The Elders shall be called to a term of office by vote of the membership of the Church as follows:
 - 1) The Elders shall recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for elder. Qualifications for the office of elder are included in the Biblical texts I Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, and I Peter 5:1-4. The Elders shall provide for individual members of the Church either to nominate candidates or to present themselves to the Elders as candidates for office and for the Elders’ further investigation. In no instances shall any individual be considered a nominee for the office without the nominee’s consent. In those cases where the Elders conclude that a nominee is not qualified for office, they shall so inform the nominee, stating the reasons for this conclusion.
 - 2) The Elders shall present a ballot of candidates for calling or reaffirmation as elders to the congregation at any annual meeting, quarterly meeting, or meeting specifically called for this purpose. The written ballot of nominees must be available for review in the church office at least ten days in advance of the election meeting and be announced publicly to the Church by mail to its members or in the Sunday morning worship service at least ten days in advance of the meeting.
 - 3) The Elders shall call the Church to prayer and fasting at the beginning of any such selection process.
 - ii. Elders shall be called by the Church for a normal term of three years. They shall stand for reaffirmation not later than the third annual meeting of the Church following their call or previous reaffirmation. Calling or reaffirmation of an elder shall be by two-thirds vote of those members present and voting at the meeting. Elders shall serve no more than two consecutive terms, with the exception of the Lead Pastor. He shall always be eligible for reaffirmation. Following two consecutive terms, the elder will not serve actively in office for a period of one year. Following this period, they are again eligible for nomination for another term. For purposes of this provision, a term during which an elder serves not more than one year, shall not be considered a term in office.

- iii. Elders must subscribe to the Baptist Faith and Message in writing at their call and at each subsequent reaffirmation. This document can only be amended in the same manner as these by-laws.
 - iv. Staff may be elected to the office of elder when called to such by the congregation, but the number of staff elders must always be less than the number of non-staff elders. A call to be a staff member is not a call to the eldership except for the call of the Lead Pastor.
 - v. There shall be a Lead Pastor who will permanently serve as a Staff Elder. The calling of the Lead Pastor is by the same process as the calling of any elder above, except that the Elders shall act as, or elect from among themselves, a committee to find, and present to the church, candidates for Lead Pastor. The Lead Pastor must also be reaffirmed after each three year term.
- b. Responsibilities. The fundamental responsibility of the Elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word. The Elders are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word, and tending the flock of God. Other responsibilities of the Elders may include, but are not limited to: examining prospective members and acquainting them with the Baptist Faith and Message and Church Covenant, overseeing the process of Church discipline, examining prospective candidates for office, scheduling and providing a moderator for business meetings, providing for reporting and recording of official Church business, overseeing the work of the Deacons and appointed Church agents and committees, conducting worship services, administering the ordinances of the Gospel, equipping the membership of the Church for the work of the ministry, teaching the whole counsel of God, both formally and informally, correcting error, overseeing, coordinating and promoting the ministries of the Church and its business and community affairs, and mobilizing the Church for world mission.
- c. The Lead Pastor has the primary responsibility to teach and preach the Word of God. He will also be the staff member in charge of the day to day activities and ministries of the Staff of the Church.
- d. Organization. The Elders shall organize itself however it determines to be best to achieve the mission of the Church. The Elders shall be equal in authority, but may be specialized in function. The Elders must meet at least once per month. Meetings of the Elders may be held at any location and may be conducted by means of electronic communication through which the Elders may simultaneously hear each other. Meetings of the Elders may be held immediately upon notice. A quorum for meetings of the Elders is defined as at least one-half of the staff elders plus at least one-half of the non-staff elders. The Elders shall annually select its Chairman and Vice Chairman from among its non-staff members.
- e. Removal.
- i. Resignation. An Elder may resign his office at any time if he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties of the office or if he can no longer subscribe to the Baptist Faith and Message or fulfill the obligations of the Church Covenant.
 - ii. Grievance. Where a grievance exists against an elder, either due to the adherence to and propagation of beliefs contrary to the beliefs of the Church as stated in the Baptist Faith and Message or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an elder, such grievance may be brought before the Elders by any two members in good standing of the Church. If the other elders, after thorough investigation and consideration, believe the grievance to be true and substantial, then the elder may be removed from office upon the recommendation of the Elders, when supported by closed ballot of a majority of those members of the Church present and voting at any annual, quarterly, or special meeting with at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the Church present at such meeting. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting. Removal in this fashion of any staff elder also carries with it termination of the elder's employment with the Church.
- f. Licensing and Ordination. In the matter of licensing and ordaining any person to the Gospel Ministry, the Church shall follow, as far as possible, a formal procedure recommended by the Elders.

Section 3 – Deacons

1. Composition, Responsibilities, Term, Calling and Removal.
- a. The Deacons shall be men. The number of deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men in the Church.
 - i. The Deacons shall be called to a term of office by vote of the membership of the Church as follows:
 - ii. The Elders shall recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for deacon. Qualifications for the office of deacon are included in the Biblical text, I Tim. 3:8-12. The Elders shall provide for individual members of the Church either to nominate candidates or to present themselves to the Elders as candidates for office and for the Elders' further investigation. In no instances shall any individual be considered a nominee for the office without the nominee's consent. In those cases where the Elders conclude that a nominee is not qualified for office, they shall so inform the nominee, stating the reasons for this conclusion.
 - iii. The Elders shall present a ballot of candidates for calling or reaffirmation as deacons to the congregation at any annual meeting, quarterly meeting, or meeting specifically called for this purpose. The written ballot of nominees must be available for review in the church office at least ten days in advance of the business meeting and be announced publicly to

- the Church by mail to its members or in the Sunday morning worship at least ten days in advance of the meeting.
- iv. Deacons shall be called by the Church for a normal term of three years. They shall stand for reaffirmation not later than the third annual meeting of the Church following their call or previous reelection. Calling or reaffirmation of a deacon shall be by two-thirds vote of those members present and voting at the meeting. Deacons shall serve no more than two consecutive terms. Following two consecutive terms, the deacon will not serve actively in office for a period of one year. Following this period, they are again eligible for nomination for another term. For purposes of this provision, a term during which a deacon serves not more than one year, shall not be considered a term in office.
 - v. Deacons must subscribe to the Baptist Faith and Message in writing at their call and at each subsequent reaffirmation. This document can only be amended in the same manner as these by-laws.
 - vi. The Elders shall call the Church to prayer and fasting at the beginning of any such selection process.
- b. Responsibilities. The Deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the Church, and the care for the members of the congregation. Their responsibilities may include but are not limited to:
 - i. providing care to the widows/widowers and the administration of a deacon family ministry;
 - ii. administering a fund to assist the poor and needy and otherwise providing aid in times of crisis or distress;
 - iii. providing for the greeting and welcoming ministries of the Church;
 - iv. assisting in administering the ordinances of the Gospel;
 - v. assisting at fellowship gatherings of the Church;
 - vi. assisting in the care and maintenance of the church facilities;
 - c. Organization. The Deacons shall organize itself however it determines best to achieve the mission of the Church. Deacons will meet monthly. Meetings of the Deacons may be held at any location and may be conducted by means of electronic communication through which the Deacons may simultaneously hear each other. Meetings of the Deacons may be held immediately upon notice. A quorum for meetings of the Deacons is defined as at least one-half of the Deacons. The Deacons shall annually select its Chairman and Vice Chairman from among its current members.
 - d. Removal.
 - i. Resignation. A deacon may resign his office at any time if he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties of the office, or he can no longer subscribe to the Baptist Faith and Message.
 - ii. Grievance. Where a grievance exists against a deacon, either due to the adherence to and propagation of beliefs contrary to the beliefs of the Church as stated in the Baptist Faith and Message or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting a deacon, such grievance may be brought before the Elders by any two members in good standing of the Church. If the Elders, after thorough investigation and consideration, believe the grievance to be true and substantial, then the deacon may be removed from office upon the recommendation of the Elders, when supported by closed ballot of a majority of those members of the Church present and voting at any annual, quarterly, or special meeting with at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the Church present at such meeting. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting.
 - e. Ordination. In the matter of ordaining any person to the office of deacon, the Church shall follow, as far as possible, a formal procedure recommended by the Elders.

ARTICLE III – Church Finances

Section 1 – FUND RAISING

- a. Membership in the Church implies financial support for its ongoing ministries. This support shall be from regular and proportionate giving. Each member is encouraged to Scriptural, cheerful giving, with tithing as the ideal minimum.
- b. Special offerings may be sought by the Church from time to time, or by any of its organizations or divisions, only with the approval of the Elders.
- c. Individual members may make special contributions or gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may move them, i.e., benevolence, missionaries, etc.
- d. All methods of raising funds must be approved by the Elders. Funds may not be raised for ministry purposes in a way that may bring harm to the witness of the church in the community or by forfeiting the responsibility of the church to provide for its ministries by practicing consistent, sacrificial, and cheerful giving.
- e. All funds donated and designated for missions by the ministries and organizations of the Church shall pass through the financial accounts of the Church so that due record and credit be given to the Church.

Section 2 – FINANCIAL PLANNING

The financial planning of the Church shall be carried out through annual and long range budgets. Annual budgets shall be adopted by the Church upon recommendation of the Elders at the annual meeting. Matters of staff compensation shall be the responsibility of the Elders. When the staff compensation budget is presented to the Church, the total only shall be disclosed, but the church office shall maintain details of this budget for examination by any member of the Church.

The Church's fiscal year shall be the calendar year.

Section 3 – ACCOUNTS

Financial receipts from all sources shall be accounted for by the Elders or their appointees according to the purposes for which contributions are designated. Funds shall be promptly disbursed according to the financial program of the Church as detailed in the budget or other authorized plan of expenditure.

Section 4 – INDEBTEDNESS AND AUTHORITY TO BIND THE CHURCH

No note or contract for an expenditure exceeding 1% of the total annual budgeted expenditures, which was not approved in the annual budget, shall be made without the approval of the Church upon the recommendation of the Elders.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Elders are the only officers who have authority, in accordance with these By-Laws and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate. Appointees of the Elders may be authorized by them to execute other legal documents.

ARTICLE IV – Meetings

Section 1 – WORSHIP

Services shall be held each Sunday and at other times as the advancement of the work of the Church may require. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated a minimum of six times throughout the year at one of these church services.

Section 2 – BUSINESS MEETINGS

- a. Annual meeting. The annual meeting shall be held sometime during the last quarter of the fiscal year for the purpose of calling and reaffirming the officers, approving the annual budget, reviewing lists of staff, appointees, volunteers, etc., and for other business. New personnel in any category shall assume their duties at the beginning of the calendar year.
- b. Quarterly meetings. Quarterly meetings of the Church for conducting business and hearing reports on the ministries of the Church shall be in January, April, and July.
- c. Special meetings. The Elders, or any ten members in good standing, may call for a special meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be given by the Elders from the pulpit or by other notification, in writing, at least ten days in advance of the meeting, the particular object of such meeting being clearly stated in the notice.
- d. Quorum. Any number of members shall constitute a quorum for ordinary matters of business. At meetings dealing with particular matters stipulated in these By-Laws, the quorums prescribed shall apply.
- e. Rules Governing Business Meetings. Robert's Rules of Order shall be recognized as the general pattern for the conduct of the business meetings of the Church. Seeking the Lord's wisdom and blessing through thankful prayer shall be part of every meeting.
- f. Notice Provisions. Unless specifically defined in other sections of these By-Laws or the Constitution, "resident membership" means those members who reside within 75 miles driving distance from the church building, "notice...in writing" means a written announcement sent by regular U.S. mail, and "notice...from the pulpit" means an oral announcement at each of the Sunday morning services.

ARTICLE V – Organization of Members for Ministry

Members of this Church shall have the liberty to participate in and organize themselves for ministry, provided that such participation and organization does not conflict with Article II of the Constitution. Any such organization may seek Church sanction from the Elders as an official ministry of Harvard Avenue Baptist Church. Such sanction shall be granted, provided that 1) the object, purpose, belief and conduct of the organization and its members is consistent with Article II of the Constitution, and 2) the primary officers of the organization are: members of the Church or other regular attendees of the Church who have been approved under guidelines established by the Elders. Sanction by the Elders does not necessarily imply support of the organization by the Church with personnel, finances or facilities. Such support may be requested.

ARTICLE VI – Discipline

- a. The discipline of members shall be a responsibility of the Elders under such rules and procedures as the elders may from time to time establish on the basis of Scripture. All such proceedings shall be guided by a spirit of prayer, mingling Christian kindness, forbearance, and holy firmness under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- b. Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the Elders and the discipline of the Church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and the example of Scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

- c. Church discipline can include the following:
 - i. admonition by the Elders or congregation,
 - ii. suspension from communion for a definite period,
 - iii. deposition from office,
 - iv. and excommunication
(*Matthew 18: 15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3: 14–15; 1 Timothy 5: 19–20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4–5*).
- d. The purpose of such discipline should be for:
 - i. the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual *disciplined* (*Proverbs 15: 5; 29: 15; I Corinthians 4: 14; Ephesians 6: 4; I Timothy 3: 4–5; Hebrews 12: 1–11; Psalm 119: 115; 141: 5; Proverbs 17: 10; 25: 12; 27: 5; Ecclesiastes 7: 5; Matthew 7: 26–27; 18: 15–17; Luke 17: 3; Acts 2: 40; I Corinthians 5: 5; Galatians 6: 1–5; II Thessalonians 3: 6, 14–15; I Timothy 1: 20; Titus 1: 13–14; James 1: 22*);
 - ii. For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (*Proverbs 13: 20; Romans 15: 14; I Corinthians 5: 11; 15: 33; Colossians 3: 16; I Thessalonians 5: 14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; I Timothy 5: 20; Titus 1: 11; Hebrews 10: 24–25*);
 - iii. For the purity of the church as a whole (*I Corinthians 5: 6–7; II Corinthians 13: 10; Ephesians 5: 27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21: 2*);
 - iv. For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (*Proverbs 28: 7; Matthew 5: 13–16; John 13: 35; Acts 5: 1–14; Ephesians 5: 11; I Timothy 3: 7; II Peter 2: 2; I John 3: 10*);
 - v. Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see *Deuteronomy 5: 11; I Kings 11: 2; II Chronicles 19: 2; Ezra 6: 21; Nehemiah 9: 2; Isaiah 52: 11; Ezekiel 36: 20; Matthew 5: 16; John 15: 8; 18: 17, 25; Romans 2: 24; 15: 5–6; II Corinthians 6: 14–7: 1; Ephesians 1: 4; 5: 27; I Peter 2: 12*).

ARTICLE VII – Amendments

GENERAL

Amendments to these By-Laws may be introduced through written motion at any regular or special meeting, but shall not be acted on for a minimum of 30 days, at which time an affirmative vote of the majority of the membership of the Church, or a two-thirds majority of those members present at the meeting and voting, shall be required for acceptance; provided, however, that at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the Church be present at such meeting, and that notice of the proposed change or amendment be given from the pulpit on at least two Sundays and in writing to the resident membership in the interim period between the meetings.