

A Church Practice

for

HERITAGE

Baptist Church

“I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15).”

PO Box 6001
Goodyear Az, 85338
(623) 882-2351

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this church shall be Heritage Baptist Church, Goodyear Arizona.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

Section 1: Church Practices Document

The purpose of this document is to clarify our belief as it relates to the practice as a church so that “all things are done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40).” In all matters of faith and practice only the Scriptures are infallible and authoritative.

Section 2: Changes To Church Practices Document

This document may be changed to better articulate a Scriptural practice by the unanimous consent of the elders in harmony with the congregation. All changes must be in writing and announced from the pulpit to the congregation for no less than two weeks (14) days.

Section 3: Organization

Heritage Baptist Church is organized exclusively by the Lord Jesus Christ to bring glory to Him as a church. We seek to comply with the commands of Scripture as a local New Testament church. “To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen (Ephesians 3:21).”

Section 4: Ministries

Heritage Baptist Church exists for the purpose of glorifying God by obeying His commands as disciples, who seek to make disciples of all nations. The practice of taking “All of Scripture to All of Life” means that everything we say and do must be done for the glory of God and according to God’s Word (1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Cor. 4:6). We reject any attempt to categorize life into sacred and secular categories. This results in a practical denial of the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Col. 1:18). Every church service, wedding ceremony, formal gathering is done as religious worship to God. But so is every informal gathering in homes (Acts 2:46), home education (Deut. 6:4-9), and economic employment (Eph. 6:5-9). Everything for Christ! We purpose to minister to one another in Christian love and engage in meeting the needs of the body and community. The church shall ordain men to the Gospel ministry; evangelize the unsaved by the proclaiming of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; educate believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Scripture in Sunday services and various mid-week meetings, promote missions at home and around the world, and engage in any other ministry that the church may decide to pursue in obedience to the will of God.

Section 5: Government

1. This church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its only head and the Bible as its only infallible guide in matters of faith and government. “And He [Jesus Christ] is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence (Colossians 1:18).” Our main concern is the functional application of Christ's authority over His Church and to His world. Thus, the ministry of the Word and prayer are vital for obeying His will. Christ's authority is to be recognized by the governing responsibility of this congregation.

2. Christ gave the church authority to apply His truth to a variety of situations as the church is called to make wise judgments (Matt. 16:19; 18:20). This authority is expressed in areas of making disciples and church discipline. The ‘highest court’ is the will of the local church and is to be carried out by the “brethren” (Matt. 18:15-17; 2 Cor. 2:6-7; 2 Thess. 3:6). The church is responsible to Christ in matters of recognizing and appointing its officers and delegates (Acts 6:3-5; 11:22; 15:3-4, 22-23, 25; 1 Cor. 16:3; 2 Cor. 8:19). The church is responsible to its Head as Christ holds each local church responsible for their doctrine and practice (2 Cor. 2:6; 1 Thess. 4:9, 5:12-22; 1 Pet. 2:5,9; Jude 1-4; Rev. 2-3).

3. Every Christian is to follow Christ in their respective roles; those in authority lead (elders), the congregation submits itself to those in authority as directed by the Lord (Heb. 13:7). The Lord rules the church by His word through His Spirit. This practice is evidenced by a church with godly leadership (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9) and a congregation that is united in harmony with them (Acts 15:22). This was the ideal function of the New Testament church. Only a Christ centered community filled with the Spirit of God can function in this manner. To accomplish this the New Testament places most of its weight on the character of the leaders, the God given mission and function of the church, and the authority of God's Word, rather than a detailed list of church polity. We must endeavor to do likewise.

4. Every effort will be made to come to a congregational agreement under the authority of Jesus Christ as led by the elders. When congregational agreement is not realized, we shall seek to weigh the matters before the Lord, rather than to simply count them. This process will be given the time and attention it needs as we seek the Lord's will concerning such matters. Church Meetings, Men's Meetings, as well as specially called meetings will be vital to this process. “Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established (Proverbs 15:22).” At the culmination of this process where every reasonable effort has been made to come to congregational agreement, the elders have the responsibility to lead. The Scriptures state, “obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give

account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you (Hebrews 13:17).”

5. Each local church is a complete autonomous unit in matters of organization and governance.

ARTICLE III – RECEPTION OF CHURCH MEMBERS

Section 1: The Purpose Of Reception

1. The purpose of a reception procedure is to uphold the teaching that Christ’s church is to be composed by His chosen saints (Eph 1:1). Paul addressed his letter “to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints (1 Cor. 1:2). The membership of the church is to be composed of God’s called out saints. “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God (Eph. 2:19).” We desire and welcome the lost to attend a church service (1 Cor. 14:23-25), but must clarify the truth that an unbeliever is not part of Christ or His church. Unbelievers are encouraged to listen and observe, but must refrain from participating in the more ‘open’ (communion / prayer / sharing) times (1 Cor. 11:27; 2 Cor. 6:17).
2. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only way into the Church (Acts 4:12). “Then Jesus said to them again, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture’ (John 10:7-9).” Thieves and robbers will seek to enter the church by sneaking in without Christ to hurt the sheep (John 10:1). We are to beware of these wolves in sheep’s clothing and expose and expel them from the Church (Matt. 7:15; Eph. 5:11; 2 John 1:10-11).
3. Reception is the process of acknowledging the saving grace of God in a fellow believer’s life (Acts 15:3-4). All who have been received by Christ by His grace through faith in His shed blood alone shall be recognized and received into this assembly. “Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God (Romans 15:7).” God is the one who saves and places individual members into His body. “But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased (1 Corinthians 12:18).” The church is to recognize the saving hand of God in an individual’s life and affirm their membership in the church. When Apollos desired to move his ministry from the church at Corinth to Achaia “the brethren [from Corinth] wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace” (Acts 18:27). This is one example of a reception procedure that occurred as a brother moved from one church to another. Today, this is easily accomplished by a phone call or a letter.

Section 2: Qualifications For Reception Into The Church

1. “And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:47).” Those who were saved were immediately baptized by immersion in obedience to the Lord’s command and added to the church (Matt. 28:19, Acts 2:38-41, 9:18, 10:44-48, 16:15, 18:8). Thus, the only qualifications for reception into the church shall consist of persons (1) who have professed faith publicly in the Lord Jesus Christ giving evidence of regeneration (they belong to Christ) (2) who have been baptized by immersion (willingness to be identified with Christ).
2. These qualifications are based on God’s requirements for all believers who are part of the body of Christ. The moment a sinner is saved he is placed into the body of Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and recognized as a member of the Church. “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free -- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many (1 Cor. 12:13-14).” God’s actions in the Church universal provide the pattern for each church local.
3. Passages that speak of Christ’s Church universal are ones that often speak of the Church from God’s perspective as only He knows all who are His (Matt. 16:18, Eph 1:22; 3:10,21; 5:23,24,25; Col. 1:18,24; 1 Tim. 3:15). Passages that speak of Christ’s Church locally are the majority of usages in the NT. The gathering of a local church is expressed a number of ways that serves to distinguish one church from another (Acts 14:23 “every church”; Rom. 16:5; Phil 1:2 “church in their house”). One of the most common expression for the local church is the use of the plural word “churches” (Acts 9:31, 15:41; Rom. 16:4,16:16; 1 Cor. 14:33-34, 16:19; 2 Cor. 8:18; Gal. 1:22; 1 Thess. 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:4). One could not speak of the Church universal in the plural, as there cannot be ‘universal churches’. It is essential that the reality of Christ’s Church serve as the bases of what takes place in each local assemble. Thus, membership in the Church universal is recognized and expressed in each local church.
4. Each local church has the responsibility to recognize the membership of each believer. Membership is a Church universal issue that is expressed locally. Thus, a believer does not need to ‘join’ a local church and become a member because he already has been joined to Christ and is a member of His Church. However, each believer has the duty before God to express their membership in a local church as part of the body (1 Cor. 12:25). It is because God has made him a member of His Church that he should be recognized as a fellow member of this church.

Section 3: Procedure For Reception

1. Anyone desiring to unite with this church must meet with one of the elders to be examined. Having met with approval as to his or her qualifications, the candidate must be recommended to the church. All candidates must appear before the church and give a public testimony of their conversion. Only candidates with physical handicaps will be exempt from this, and may write a letter and have it read in their place. We are exhorted to “lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses (1 Tim. 6:12). Confessing a good confession the presence of many witnesses glorifies God, edifies the body, and is a public display of ones faith.
2. We are to receive one another as Christ received us. “Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God (Romans 15:5-7).” All candidates shall be received on their profession of faith. No member shall be received on the basis of a letter alone or transfer of membership from another church. All candidates transferring from another church must demonstrate, by letter or personal contact, their reason for leaving and that they are not under any disciplinary action.
3. No candidate will be received who is under church discipline from another biblical assemble, or who has been expelled without reconciliation. Jesus stated clearly that "if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector (Matt. 18:17).”
4. The congregation is given an opportunity to affirm a believer’s reception. If there are any questions concerning the reception of an individual these must be dealt with immediately under the supervision of the elders.

ARTICLE IV – RESPONSIBILITY OF CHURCH MEMBERS

Section 1: Voting Members

Only men who have attained the age of 20 shall be called upon to vote (Ex 30:14, Num 1:18,20, 14:29). Paul stated, “And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence (1Tim. 2:12)” The leadership shall give special attention and consideration to those households which do not have men to represent them in the congregation (Numbers 27:1-8).

Section 2: Covenant

1. The Purpose of This Covenant

To formalize our commitment as a body of believers to obey Scripture as we submit to our Head. This covenant is a voluntary commitment made before God and one another that we will obey Scripture as our authority. It is a covenant to keep God's Covenant as a New Testament (Covenant) Church.

Covenant making and keeping was a common practice for the people of God (Joshua 24:24-25, 2 Kings 11:17, 2 Chro. 29:10, Ezra 10:3, Job 31:1, Heb. 8:8-10). "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people (Hebrews 8:10)." When sin and apostasy grew, covenants were used to mark the way back to God. "The king [Josiah] stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant. (2 Kings 23:3)."

2. Church Covenant

“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in obedience to his holy will and divine ordinance, we whose names are here under written, being by His most wise and good providence brought together into this part of America, and desirous to unite ourselves into one Congregation or Church under the Lord Jesus Christ our Head, We covenant with the Lord and one with another; and do bind our selves in the presence of God, to walk together in all His ways, according as He is pleased to reveal Himself unto us in his blessed Word of truth.”¹

¹ The first six lines are drawn from the Covenant of the Charles-Boston Church 1630 with the remainder being from the Salem Covenant of 1629.

Section 3: Responsibility and Privilege To Serve

Those who are serving must be communion qualified and faithful to serve (1 Cor. 11:17-34). The Bible says, “moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful (1 Cor. 4:2).” They must be willing to uphold the teaching and practice of this church.

Section 4: Gender Roles In The Church

1. Biblical Gender Identity

We seek to be a community in biblical harmony with who God created us to be as male and female. Thus, we reject male domination or chauvinism (the superiority of men) and feminism (the emotional fight against male domination often asserting female superiority). The biblical ideal is that man and women are created equal in essence and value as persons created in the image of God who stand equal before Him in Christ (Gen. 2,3; Gal. 3:26-29). God created male and female to be equal in essence (Gen. 1:27; Gal. 3:28), yet distinct in function (Gen. 1-3; Eph. 5:22-33). This doctrine flows from God who is one in essence, yet is distinct in function as Trinity (1 Cor. 11:3). Equality, hierarchy, authority, obedience, love and honor all flow from the Triune God (John 1:1, 5:30, 14:10, 26). The biblical equality of the sexes in no way contradicts the different roles that God has assigned to men and women in their gender identity. Biblical equality teaches us to love and value one another in essence. Biblical function teaches how we are to express our gender in harmony with God’s purposes. The purposes for gender identity are determined by God and given at birth. Biblical gender refers to biological male and female revealed at birth and defined by God (Genesis 1-3, 17:10). Any attempt to redefine biological gender and confuse gender identity and responsibility is rebellion against God (Romans 1:18-32). Biblical gender identity applies anytime and anywhere a person goes. It is a universal truth. Below is how this truth directly affects our practice in the church, and indirectly influences our practice in the home and society.

2. Men in The Church

God said that only men are to teach in the meeting of the church (1 Cor. 14:26, 34-35; 1 Tim. 2:9-15). They are to lead during doctrinal discussions and in the sharing of truth in the church. Qualified men are to lead the church as elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-7). All men are to initiate service in the local church according to their gifts and abilities. (Acts 6:2-7; Eph. 5:21; 1 Pet. 5:1-5; 1 Tim. 3:2) Men are to initiate new ministry opportunities and set the overall tone of this church as they lead their homes for the glory of God. Men are to protect and serve women and children according to their various and covenantal relationships (1 Tim. 5:1-3).

3. Women in The Church

We celebrate the distinction of women to be women. We encourage biblical and traditional cultural norms that serve to celebrate this distinction with beauty and modesty (Deut. 22:5; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; 1 Timothy 2:9-15). We uphold and greatly value the God given role of a woman to be a wife and mother. One of the greatest expressions of faith and love a wife can give to the church is to “marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary (1 Tim. 5:14; 2:13-15).” Single woman may bless the church as they minister to other women and nurture life. Mature women are used by God in His church to teach the younger women the Christian faith (Titus 2:3-5). Women bless the church as they may sing, pray, and share Spirit led testimonies (1 Cor. 11:3-16). Women nurture strength as they remain quiet during teaching and discussion times (1 Cor. 14:34-34; 1 Tim. 2:11-12). Women are greatly used by God to facilitate hospitality as they serve in evangelism and discipleship (Luke 8:1-3, 10:38-42; Acts 16:15, 18:26). God’s design is for women to be protected by godly men. All forms of abuse against women and children must not be tolerated, but dealt with. This includes all forms for sexual abuse, violence, spiritual abuse, and women serving in the military.

4. Children in The Church

Children are commanded to be instructed by their parents in the ways of the Lord (Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20). This is the only command given specifically to children in the New Testament. The home is the primary teaching context for children (Luke 1:17; Eph. 6:4; Deut. 6:4-9). Children should participate with the community of faith within the context of their household (Acts 21:5, 11:14, 16:15, 18:8). They learn by belonging to a vital faith community, participating in the life of the church as they see the power of God. Children need to facilitate modeling in the church first by their parents and by other multigenerational relationships. Children need to be provided biblical instruction as an interpretation-of-life as they grow to understand the Christian life (Exodus 12:26). Children grow from the training their parents receive (Luke 1:17; Eph 5:22-6:4; Titus 2:3-5). Children and youth from lost households need to be ‘adopted’ into believer’s lives as God adopts His children.

Section 5: Discipline

1. Introduction

Discipline is an essential requirement to be a true disciple of Christ (Matthew 16:24). It is a clear command of Christ to His church (Matthew 18:15-20). It was commanded and practiced by the apostles (I Corinthians 5). Therefore, as a matter of faith and conviction, discipline must be part of the ministry and practice of each local church. It is a matter of obedience to God, not convenience or preference. It is a necessary part of fulfilling our divine commission to disciple all nations (Matthew 28:19,20).

2. Application: There are two general applications of discipline in the church.
- a. Formative Discipline: This refers to the public and private instruction of the Word of God and its application to daily life and public worship. This instruction is the responsibility of the church as a whole, including both vocational and lay ministers (Ephesians 4:11-16). Certainly this application of spiritual discipline or teaching should be the most prevalent and common.
 - b. Corrective Discipline: This refers to private and public confrontation of the offending member that may result in dismissal from membership. This becomes necessary when a member of the body of the church fails to positively respond to the formative discipline of the church.
3. Practice: Our practice of corrective discipline shall include the following:
- a. Purposes: Our ultimate purpose in discipline is to glorify God by obeying His commands to practice discipline. Our specific purposes are established in the following texts.
 1. Restoration of the erring brother (1 Cor. 5:4,5)
 2. Preservation of the purity of the church (1 Cor. 5:6,7)
 3. Maintenance of the testimony of the church (1 Cor. 6)
 4. Instruction of the church (1 Tim. 5:20)
 - b. Process: In our process in dealing with offenses, we will conform to the pattern of Matthew 18:15-18. This process will include whenever possible:
 1. Private Reproof (Matt. 18:15): Whenever a sinful offense or unrecognized condition exists between two believers, the offended brother should speak with the erring brother privately in order to bring about reconciliation and restoration.
 2. Private Confrontation (Matt. 18:16): If private reproof proves inadequate, the offended brother should confront the erring brother with one or two others (spiritually mature members of the church family- Gal. 6:1) in order to bring about reconciliation and restoration.
 3. Public Announcement (Matt. 18:17a)
 - (a) Elder involvement: If the erring brother refuses to heed the advice given in the private confrontations above, then the matter will be taken to the elders for their consideration.

(b) Church awareness: The refusal of the erring brother to acknowledge his sin and repent, after the above steps, requires that the matter be brought before the church to use its united endeavors to gain the brother (Gal.6:1-2; 2 Thess 3:15).

4. Public Exclusion (Mt. 18:17b)
After the church elders and congregation have made efforts to bring the erring brother to repentance but are still unsuccessful, the erring brother must be excluded from church membership. This process will be led by the elders.
5. This process will also be the pattern for dealing with personal disputes between members in harmony with 1 Cor. 6:1-7. We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the local church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses the necessary means to resolve personal disputes between members.

Section 6: Leaving This Assembly

When a member desires to leave this assembly, they are to submit their reason to the elders for prayer and guidance. Our desire is to bless households who desire to part with a time of prayer and open communication to the church. We desire to see households who move find other biblical churches where they can yoke together in worship.

ARTICLE V – OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

Section 1: Elders

1. Biblical Terms

Pastor (undershepherds) / Elders (spiritually mature) / Bishop (overseer) all refer to the same office (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-4). We seek to avoid confusing these biblical terms by calling one group of men elders (function is to rule) and another group pastors (function is to pastor).

2. Plurality And Parity

We will be sensitive to the needs of recognizing God's appointed elders (Acts 20:28) to meet its need for spiritual oversight believing that Christ, the Head of the Church, gives all necessary spiritual gifts to each local assembly (Eph. 4:11). At all times at least one elder should have and shall exercise the gift of pastor-teacher in a full-time capacity, not precluding outside interest or activity. We believe that a plurality of elders was the practice of the New Testament

church (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5, James 5:13, 1 Peter 5:1) as such we seek to have elders that consist of a plurality of godly pastors who share in the work of shepherding according to their giftedness and ability. We understand plurality and parity as an essential function to a growing body. However, we are not bound to make plurality an absolute necessity for every situation, rather as the body grows the need for more pastors increases. We must pray, train and seek to build up as many qualified men to serve the Lord as pastors as God provides.

3. Length Of Term

Since the church should endeavor to recognize all the men, and only the men, whom the Holy Spirit has endowed with the qualifications to pastor, the number of elders shall not be fixed. And since the elders may continue in office as long as they remain qualified, able, and willing to serve; therefore, the length of their term of office shall not be fixed by the church.

4. Appointment

It is God who appoints and gives pastors (Acts 20:28, Eph. 4:11-13). The Elders are responsible for appointing other elders to serve in the church (Titus 1:5). This appointment must be done by unanimous consent by the elders and a majority consent of the congregation.

- a. God appoints leadership based on character and skill. Thus, the qualifications for pastoral leadership are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. No man shall be considered worth of pastoral ministry who does not possess both the character specified in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, the family to validate his ministry, and the necessary skills in the Word of God that qualify him to be 'able to teach' as a pastor. He shall subscribe without reservation to the Statement of Faith and the Faith and Practice of this church. A man who has proven he meets the Scriptural requirements and is found faithful, by the unanimous consent of the elders and receives a vote of confidence by a majority vote from the church shall be ordained by the elders to serve as a pastor.
- b. Any member of this congregation who believes himself or another brother to be qualified may submit his name at any time to the elders that he may be taken under consideration for the service as a pastor. The elders may also propose to the congregation that a man or men be considered for the office of an overseer. The pastoral candidate or candidates will then be considered by the elders. If the candidate(s) appear eligible they will be submitted to the congregation for its comments concerning the scriptural qualifications of the pastoral candidate(s). The congregation will be given adequate time to present questions or scriptural disqualifications regarding the candidate to the elders. Once the congregation has had time to present

its comments to the elders, the elders will weigh the situation and make a determination regarding the scriptural qualifications of the candidate(s). A man who has proven he meets the Scriptural requirements and is found faithful, by the unanimous consent of the elders in substantial harmony with the congregation shall be ordained by the elders to serve as a pastor. Prayer and fasting before God is an essential part of this process. "Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust." (Acts 14:23)

- c. If a deficiency occurs in the elder team the Leadership Team shall act to meet the needs. The Leadership Team must approve a candidate by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote before they present him to the church. Any candidate recommended to the church must be accepted by a majority vote. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for pulpit supply during the vacancy of any elders. The salary and benefits shall be agreed upon by the church at the time of the calling of any elder.

5. Duties And Function Of The Elders

- a. To endeavor as a minister to hold forth the Word of Life as a servant.
- b. To have general oversight of the spiritual life, regular services, and administration of the ordinances of the church.
- c. The elders shall approve and invite guest speakers.
- d. To oversee the work of the church. Without lording over the congregation, the pastor(s), as undershepherds, lead by virtue of their spiritual gifts exercised in a love for the church that centers in the authoritative communication of God's Word.
- e. To feed the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers (Acts 20:28-32; Heb. 13:7, 17; I Tim. 5:17; I Pet. 5:1-4).
- f. To discipline church members in Christ's name and in His stead in the light of Scripture, as required.
- g. To function as a community of Spirit filled brothers who lead the community of the church by their example. They must submit to and love one another, challenge one another, and pray with each other. The gifts and abilities of each pastor should be a primary consideration in determining the delegation of specific tasks in the work of the ministry.
- h. To oversee the affairs of the church including its legal and administrative needs.

6. Remuneration

The support of the elders shall be initiated by the Leadership Team and decided by the church by a majority vote. The elders who rule well “in the word and doctrine” should be counted worthy to receive remuneration for their service (1 Timothy 5:17-18). His financial wage is based on his “labor in the Word and doctrine” along with the ability of the church to support him. It is our goal that at least one elder be supported full time as a vocational pastor. The church should seek to fully support its elders, but should not limit the addition of a pastor due solely to a lack of resources. A growing elder team will have elders who are not supported, yet showing honor in various forms is encouraged including love gifts (1 Timothy 5:17-18).

Section 2: Deacons

1. Qualifications Of Deacons

The qualifications for a man chosen to fulfill the office of deacon are particularly set forth in Acts 6:3 and 1Tim. 3:8-13. Any man called to this office must be able to affirm his agreement with our Statement of Faith and the Faith and Practice of this church. Should he at any time move from this position, he is under spiritual and moral obligation to make this fact known to the church.

2. Appointment

The number of deacons shall not be fixed. The church shall choose as many as are needed for the work to be done from among the men who give evidence of having the scriptural qualifications for that office. Any member of the church may at any time submit a name to the elders for their approval. A man who has been tested and found faithful by the unanimous consent of the elders and receives a vote of confidence by a majority vote from the church shall be ordained by the elders to serve as a deacon (Acts 6).

3. Purpose Of Deacons

A deacon is an officially recognized servant of the local church. Deacons are responsible to administer the ordinary business, and benevolent concerns of the church so that the elders may devote themselves without distraction to matters of the Word and prayer (Acts 6:3,4). They must fulfill the duties of their office in cooperation with and subjection to the elders.

4. The Function And Duties

- a. To minister to the outward needs of the membership of the church, showing mercy with cheerfulness to those in special need.
- b. To care for the material interest of the church; such as buildings, properties and land, and to recommend action to the church pertaining to these interests when needed.
- c. To superintend the collection and recording of church offerings.
- d. Administer, at their discretion, the Benevolence fund of the church, which exists for the relief of the needy of the church and the community.
- e. Ministry to Widows
 1. Financial aid to widows who are widows indeed (1 Tim. 5:3-6). Honor widows that are in good standing.
 2. Widows receiving any financial aid from this fund must meet the requirements Scripture (1 Tim. 5:3-16; Titus 2:3-5).
 3. This fund is to be put in the church budget and is to assist widows as follows: food, clothing, shelter, heat / air conditioning, medical care, and spiritual help.
 4. Widows receiving assistance from this fund must be visited to see if their needs are being met.
- f. To serve as trustees of the church where legal action is required.
- g. To assist in the spiritual unity and growth of the church as gifted by the Holy Spirit.

Section 3: Leadership Team

1. The Leadership Team consists of the elders and deacons (Phil 1:1).
2. Administrative Organization

The church shall have the following administrative offices as selected and performed by the Leadership Team.

 - a. Secretary

The Leadership Team shall select one from among them to perform the duties of church secretary. Both shall be unanimously approved by the elders and Leadership Team. The secretary is responsible for keeping an accurate register of the names of the church members with dates of admission, and discipline or death, together with a record of confession of faith and water baptism. He shall

also record and maintain the minutes of all congregational business meetings and record the historical activities and events of the church.

b. Treasurer

The Leadership Team shall select one from among them who has abilities in financial administration to perform the duties of church treasurer. He shall be unanimously approved by the elders and a majority of the church. Their duties shall be to establish and maintain an accurate accounting system to include all cash flow activities of the church. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each business meeting an itemized report of all receipts and disbursements for the preceding quarter. All disbursements must be in accord with the annual budget as approved by the church. Any item that is recommended for acquisition that has not been included in the annual budget costing more than \$1,000.00 must be presented in advance and approved for inclusion into the budget by a majority of the voting church membership. The church is not bound to expend funds, for purposes stipulated by individuals, unless approved by the church. At the first quarterly business meeting in the calendar year, the treasurer shall render an annual report showing the total amount of receipts and disbursements together with all other pertinent information. This report shall be audited by separate church members possessing qualified auditing talents. The financial record shall be available for inspection to the membership, either individually or collectively, upon request and unanimous approval of the leadership. Upon unanimous consent the Leadership Team shall present the budget to the church at the annual business meeting.

3. Other Administrative Offices

Other administrative offices will be designated, when required, as recommended by the elders and approved by the church.

Section 4: Moderator

The moderator in all business meetings shall be an elder chosen by the elders.

Section 5: Discipline Of Church Officers

1. The Warrant For Discipline Of Officers

a. While elders are overseers of the flock, they are themselves members of the flock. Therefore, each elder as an individual is under the oversight of his fellow elders and is subject to the same discipline as are all the members of the church.

- b. Church Officers are subject not only to the same rules of discipline as the other members, but in addition are subject to public reprimand by the elders (Gal. 2:14; 1Tim. 5:20) and/or removal from office, if they no longer are qualified for their office (1Tim. 3:1) or capable of fulfilling its functions, or if their behavior is disorderly or scandalous, thereby bringing reproach to Christ and the church and setting a bad example before the brethren.
2. The Procedure For Discipline Of Officers
- a. The process of discipline may be initiated either by the elders or by the individual members of the congregation. Any member who is offended at the behavior of any church officer should first approach that officer privately and express his concerns (Matt. 18:15; 1 Tim. 5:19) If the concerns are not resolved, the member should inform the elders of the situation and wait upon them in their determination of the matter (Mt. 18:16). Elders from other like-minded churches may be consulted in needed.
 - b. Since this is such a delicate and serious matter, the elders shall proceed with due caution and earnest prayer (1Tim. 5:19). If the elders judge discipline to be necessary, they shall inform the congregation of the basis for the proposed discipline. The removal of an officer shall require congregational approval at a duly convened congregational meeting led by the elders in good standing. In order to retain his office in such circumstances the officer must receive a vote of confidence by the church.

Section 6: Termination Of Office

1. Reasons for Termination
- a. By voluntary resignation. An officer may resign his office without prejudice if for good and valid reasons he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties of it.
 - b. By failure to receive confirmation. An officer is removed from office when he fails to be confirmed in his public ministry or is disqualified by failing to meet the biblical requirements of his office.
 - c. By failure through non-culpable incompetence. In cases where the elders determine that an officer is no longer competent to fulfill all the duties of the office by reason of infirmities not in and of themselves culpable, they shall in the absence of his resignation recommend to the congregation that he be removed from office.

- d. By removal through disciplinary action of the church. An officer may be removed from office by congregational vote.

Section 7: Implications of Termination

1. When a man leaves office he no longer retains the authority of that office and may no longer continue in its functions, privileges and titles with respect to this church, other churches, and the society at large.
2. It is expected that all former officers will respect the sanctity of the trust previously given to them and that they will maintain the confidentiality of all ecclesiastical matters (Prov. 11:13).
3. A man having previously held office and relinquished it may be reconsidered for office in the manner prescribed in Article V of this constitution.

ARTICLE VI – MISSIONS

Section 1: Policy

It is the command for the church to proclaim the Gospel and to support missions engaged in evangelization and in establishing New Testament churches. (Acts 1:18; Matt. 28:19-20).

Section 2: Associations

No missionary or mission board that is a member of the American Baptist Convention, National Council of Churches, or any group connected with the Ecumenical Movement will be supported by this church.

Section 3: Approval

Any missionary to receive support shall be approved by the church (Acts 15:3).

ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS

Section 1: Meeting Of The Church

Unless otherwise determined by the elders, the church shall meet every Sunday for public worship, mid-week for discipleship groups and hospitality, and monthly for prayer meetings.

Section 2: Meetings For Church Administration

1. The church shall have business church meetings as called by the elders. Any member may request that a business meeting be held and should be granted upon good reason. A quorum shall consist of the members present.
2. The moderator (elders) shall determine the rules of procedure according to his sense of fairness and common sense, giving all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The elders are the final authority on questions of procedure, and their decision is final.

Section 3: Special Meetings

1. The elders may call a special meeting by giving notice of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called to the church from the pulpit at least one Sunday and not less than one week prior to said meeting.
2. Bible conferences, missionary conferences, and revivals may be held as the elders deems beneficial.

Section 4: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the church shall begin January 1st and end December 31st .

ARTICLE VIII – ORDINANCES

Section 1: Lord’s Supper

The ordinance of the Lord’s Supper shall be a regularly observed practice by the church to remember our Lord Jesus Christ. The elders have the discretion to schedule the Lord’s Supper.

Section 2: Baptism

The ordinance of Baptism shall be administered to any person who has (1) professed faith in Jesus Christ and shows evidence of their salvation (2) understands what it means to be baptized, this determination shall be made by the elders and in connection with Article III.

ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEE

The elders shall appoint committees and designate a chairman for each committee and determine the membership of each committee along with its purpose, objectives, duration, and termination.

ARTICLE X –ORDINATION

Section 1: Ordination

When the church decides that one of its candidates possesses the Scriptural qualifications for ordination, the church shall call a council of ministers and brethren to examine the qualifications of the candidate and to recommend him to the church. After due consideration of the council's recommendation, that church shall decide upon ordination of the candidate.

Section 3: Women Candidates

We believe that the Scriptures teach that women should not be ordained to the ministry; therefore, the church shall not sponsor such applications (1 Timothy 2:12,13).

ARTICLE XI – FINANCES

The purposes and functions of this church shall be supported by the tithes and offerings of the members of the Heritage Baptist Church and those who are led by the Holy Spirit to contribute to its support. At no time may this church be permitted to use any unscriptural method, or methods, for raising funds. This outlaws all suppers for pecuniary gain, all sale of tickets, chances, merchandise, rummage sales, and any other method of raising funds that are not supported by the teaching of the Word of God.

ARTICLE XII – DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributions may suggest use for their contributions, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the 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 II, Section 4.

ARTICLE XIII – INDEMNIFICATION

Section: 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 competed 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 attorney's 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 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.

Section 2: Expenses Subject To Indemnification

To the extent that a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit, or proceeding referred to in the Article, or in defense of any claim, issue, or matter in that action, suit, or proceeding, he or she may be indemnified against expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding.

Section 3: Limitations Of Indemnification

Any indemnification made under this Article, may be made by the church only as authorized in the specific case on a determination that indemnification of the pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent is proper in circumstances because he has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in Section 1 of this Article. The determination shall be made by (a) a majority vote of a quorum consisting of the leadership who were not and are not parties to or threatened with the action, suit, or proceeding; (b) 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 (c) by a majority vote of the members of the church.

Section 4: Timing Of Indemnification

Expenses of each person seeking indemnification under this Article, 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 leadership in the specific case, on receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent to repay the amount of it is ultimately determined that he or she is not qualified to be indemnified by the church.

Section 5: Extent Of Indemnification

The indemnification provided by this Article shall be deemed to be discretionary unless otherwise required as a matter of law or under any agreement provided by insurance purchased by the church, both as to action of each person seeking indemnification under this Article in his 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 6: 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 Article.

INDEX

ARTICLE I – NAME	Page 2
ARTICLE II – PURPOSE	2
Section 1: Church Practice Document	2
Section 2: Changes To Church Practice Document	2
Section 3: Organization	2
Section 4: Ministries	2
Section 5: Government	3
ARTICLE III – RECEPTION OF CHURCH MEMBERS	
Section 1: Purpose Of Reception	4
Section 2: Qualifications For Reception Into The Church	5
Section 3: Procedure For Reception	6
ARTICLE IV – RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHURCH MEMBERS	
Section 1: Voting Members	6
Section 2: Covenant	7
Section 3: Responsibility And Privilege To Serve	8
Section 4: Gender Roles In The Church	8
Section 5: Discipline	9
Section 6: Leaving This Assembly	11
ARTICLE V - OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH	
Section 1: Elders	11
Section 2: Deacons	14
Section 3: Leadership Team	15
Section 4: Moderator	16
Section 5: Discipline Of Church Officers	16
Section 6: Termination Of Office	17
Section 7: Implications of Termination	18
ARTICLE VI – MISSIONS	
Section 1: Policy	18
Section 2: Associations	18
Section 3: Approval	18
ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS	
Section 1: Meeting Of The Church	18
Section 2: Meetings For Church Administration	18
Section 3: Special Meetings	18

Section 4: Fiscal Year	18
ARTICLE VIII – ORDINANCES	
Section 1: Lord’s Supper	19
Section 2: Baptism	19
ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES	19
ARTICLE X –ORDINATION	
Section 1: Ordination	20
Section 2: Women Candidates	20
ARTICLE XI – FINANCES	20
ARTICLE XII – DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS	20
ARTICLE XIII – INDEMNIFICATION	
Section 1: Actions Subject To Indemnification	20
Section 2: Expenses Subject To Indemnification	21
Section 3: Limitations Of Indemnification	21
Section 4: Timing Of Indemnification	21
Section 5: Extent Of Indemnification	21
Section 6: Insurance	22