

Constitution & Bylaws

of

Preston Highlands Baptist Church

Dallas, Texas

Adopted on
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CONSTITUTION

Preamble

Since it pleased Almighty God, by his Holy Spirit, to call certain of his servants to unite here in 1890 under the name Renner Baptist Church of Renner, Texas, for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and since he has sustained and prospered this work to the present day; and

Whereas we, the members of Preston Highlands Baptist Church, having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of his Spirit, have recognized the need to reconstitute ourselves to conform more closely to his will for the Church in this age and prepare ourselves for greater efforts in his name;

Now therefore we, the members of Preston Highlands Baptist Church, do hereby organize ourselves in accord with the Texas Nonprofit Corporation Act and adopt this Constitution and Bylaws as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the Statement of Faith and Covenant of this church.

I. Name

This body shall be organized as a church corporation known as “Preston Highlands Baptist Church” (hereinafter referred to in the Constitution and Bylaws as the “church”).

II. Purposes of the Church

This church exists by the grace of God for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. This church glorifies God by loving him and obeying his commands through:

Worshipping him;

Equipping the saints through biblical preaching, instruction, and study;

Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching, personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of the Scriptures;

Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work, local, domestic, and international;

Administering the ordinances of baptism and communion;

Encouraging biblical fellowship among believers; and

Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ.

III. Statement of Faith

This church adopts the Baptist Faith and Message (2000) as our Statement of Faith:

A. 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.

B. 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.

i. 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.

ii. 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.

iii. 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 Saviour, 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.

C. 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.

D. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, 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.

i. 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 Saviour.

ii. 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.

iii. 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.

iv. 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; 11:1-12,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

E. 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.

F. 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.

G. 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 Saviour, 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.

H. 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.

I. 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.

J. 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.

K. 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.

L. 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.

M. 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.

N. 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.

O. 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.

P. 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.

Q. 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.

R. 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.

IV. Church Covenant

This church adopts the following as our Church Covenant:

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with each other.

We covenant to work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We covenant to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor to neglect to pray for ourselves and others.

We covenant to walk together in Christian love, as becomes the members of a Christian Church, to exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.

We covenant to rejoice at each others' happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows. We covenant to aid each other in sickness and distress, to cultivate Christian courtesy in speech, to be slow to take offense, and to always seek reconciliation without delay.

We covenant to bring up those under our care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.

We covenant to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation now to lead a new and holy life.

We covenant to work together to sustain the church's worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We covenant to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We covenant to, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

Finally, we agree to be bound by the Articles of Incorporation and the Constitution and Bylaws of the church.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE 1 MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 – Qualifications

Clause 1. To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration;

Clause 2. Has been baptized as a believer in obedience to Christ;

Clause 3. Holds without mental reservation the doctrines of our church as expressed in the Statement of Faith; and

Clause 4. Promises to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant and the Church Membership Agreement (see Appendix A).

Clause 5. The congregation is encouraged to provide input on a prospective member's qualifications for membership, but the elders will be finally responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. A person's qualifications for membership must be unanimously affirmed by the entire council of elders.

Section 2 – Admission

Clause 1. An applicant shall be received as a member of the church upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent agreement of a simple majority of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting.

Clause 2. No member of this church shall retain membership in any other church.

Section 3 – Duties and Privileges

Clause 1. Members shall be expected to participate actively in the life of the church by regularly attending its Lord's Day meetings;

Clause 2. By participating in and contributing to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God;

Clause 3. By faithfully observing its ordinances, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper;

Clause 4. By submitting to its discipline and instruction;

Clause 5. By attending its members' meetings; and

Clause 6. By voting on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership, and on all other matters submitted to the congregation's vote.

Clause 7. No person who is not a member or associate member shall lead any ministry or hold any office of the church. Non-members can be hired to fill administrative roles in the church.

Clause 8. No member of this church, nor any officer shall by virtue of such membership, office, or position, incur or be subject to personal liability to any extent for any indebtedness, obligations, acts, or omissions of this church corporation.

Section 4 – Voting

Clause 1. The following matters shall be presented to the members at a regular or special members' meeting for a vote, and shall be deemed approved upon obtaining the requisite majority indicated.

(a) Election of officers other than elders. A simple majority vote is required for all offices except elder.

(b) Election or dismissal of elders. A three-fourths majority vote is required.

(c) Calling of pastors. A three-fourths majority vote is required.

(d) Admission into, or termination of, membership. A simple majority vote is required.

(e) The Annual Budget. A simple majority vote is required.

(f) Acquisition or sale of real property, building projects, or indebtedness secured by the real property of the church. A three-fourths majority vote is required.

(g) Amendments to the Constitution or Bylaws. A three-fourths majority vote is required.

(h) Dissolution of the church corporation or the disposition of all, or substantially all, of the church assets. A three-fourths majority vote is required.

(i) Any other decision brought before a regular or special members' meeting for vote. A simple majority vote is required unless otherwise provided in the Constitution or Bylaws.

Clause 2. Only the votes of members present shall be counted in determining whether the requisite majority is obtained. Abstentions shall be counted as negative votes. Voting by proxy or absentee ballot is not permitted.

Clause 3. Voting shall be by voice vote, show of hands, or ballot as determined by the moderator; provided, however, if a voice vote is taken, and there are any dissenting votes, a show of hands or ballot shall be required.

Section 5 – Associate Members

Clause 1. Students and others temporarily residing in the Dallas area may be received as associate members of the church. An associate member could also be someone who temporarily moves away from this area (to attend school or serve in the military) with the intention of moving back when duties are completed.

Clause 2. Qualifications and admission procedures for associate members are identical to those for full membership as set out above.

Clause 3. Duties and privileges of associate members are the same as for other members except that (a) when absent from the area they are released from the responsibility to attend our church services; (b) while they will be encouraged to participate in members' meetings they will not be eligible to vote or stand for any office.

Clause 4. A person's association with the church shall terminate immediately upon the ending of residence in the Dallas area or by voluntary resignation. The church shall have authority to terminate the association of any associate member consistently neglectful of his or her duties, or guilty of scandalous conduct by which the reputation of Christ or his church is dishonored. In such an event, the elders shall refer disciplinary action to the pastor or elders of the excluded person's home church.

Section 6 – Church Discipline

Clause 1. Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties as embodied in the Church Covenant or the Constitution and Bylaws, or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored as determined by the elders, 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. Church discipline should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Clause 2. If private efforts to bring about the member's repentance and reconciliation are unsuccessful, one or more members or elders shall bring the matter to the attention of the elder board. The elders shall review and investigate the matter. After prayer and deliberation, the elders may (a) dismiss the matter, (b) take disciplinary action (other than termination of membership, which may only be effected by a vote of the members), or (c) submit the matter (with or without a recommendation for action) to the members at a regular or special meeting for a decision.

Clause 3. Members who have been dismissed by the church shall be restored to full membership privileges according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8 when their conduct is judged by the elders and the members to be in accordance with the Statement of Faith, Church Covenant, and biblical repentance. The elders will communicate such restoration to the church in a timely manner.

Clause 4. The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other reason the church deems necessary or prudent.

Clause 5. Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, removal from office, and termination of membership (*see* Matthew 18:15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15; 1 Timothy 5:19–20; 1 Corinthians 5:4–5).

The purposes of such discipline should be:

For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined;

See Proverbs 15:5; 29:15; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 6:4; 1 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; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1–5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14–15; 1 Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:13–14; James 1:22.

For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them;

See Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14 [NB: this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24–25.

For the purity of the church as a whole;

See 1 Corinthians 5:6–7; 2 Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2.

For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians; and

See Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13–16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1–14; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Peter 2:2; 1 John 3:10.

Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character.

See Deuteronomy 5:11; 1 Kings 11:2; 2 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; 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; 1 Peter 2:12.

Section 7 – Termination

Clause 1. Termination of membership in this church occurs when the church, at a regular or special members' meeting, recognizes the voluntary resignation of a member;

Clause 2. With respect to an associate member, when the church, at a regular or special members' meeting, recognizes the end of the period of his or her temporary residence in, or away from, the area;

Clause 3. Upon the death of the member; or

Clause 4. As an act of church discipline, when a simple majority of the members present and voting at a regular or special member's meeting vote to terminate the membership of the member. The elders must provide written notice to church members at least two weeks in advance of a regular or special members' meeting where a motion to remove a member will be made.

ARTICLE 2 WORSHIP SERVICES AND MEETINGS

Section 1 – Worship Services

The church shall meet together for public worship each Lord's Day morning, and at other times throughout the week as the church may determine.

Section 2 – Members' Meetings

Clause 1. The church shall hold a regular members' meeting at least every quarter, beginning in January, which shall not be held in place of the regular Lord's Day morning meeting, but at some other time.

Clause 2. Special members' meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request of at least ten percent of the voting membership of the church. Any request for a special members' meeting shall be signed by the members requesting the meeting and mailed or delivered in person to the elders. The elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

Clause 3. No members' meeting shall be held until the date, time, and place of such meeting shall be announced at every public meeting of the church for one week immediately prior to the members' meeting in question.

Clause 4. An elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church. The moderator shall have no vote, unless the members be equally divided on a question, and shall remain neutral during discussion on any matter.

Clause 5. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

Clause 6. The church, duly assembled in a members' meeting, shall be responsible to elect officers; to receive applicants into church membership; to recognize termination of membership due to death, transfer of membership, or voluntary resignation; to exercise church discipline; to approve, no more than three months before the end of the current fiscal year and no more than three weeks after the start of the new fiscal year, a church budget; to hear reports from the elders and, from time to time, the various deacons/deaconesses; and to take any other action they deem necessary or desirable.

Clause 7. Members' meetings shall proceed according to a reasonable order, and the members present shall constitute a quorum to do business. Unless otherwise provided in

the Constitution or Bylaws, matters presented to the members for vote shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the members present at the members' meeting.

Clause 8. Minutes of the regular and special members' meetings shall be taken and kept in the church records under the custody of the clerk.

ARTICLE 3 OFFICERS

Section 1 – Summary

The biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons. In addition, the church recognizes the administrative offices of clerk and treasurer. All officers must be members of this church prior to being elected to serve in any office.

Section 2 – Elders

Clause 1. Oversight of the ministry, resources, and facilities of the church shall be vested in a council of elders who satisfy the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

Clause 2. The authorized number of elders shall be an odd number, but in no event fewer than three. If there are only three elders, then only one elder is required to be a member who is not in the regular pay of the church. In every other case, a majority of the elders shall be church members not in the regular pay of the church.

Clause 3. Elders shall be selected as follows: The elders shall at any regular members' meeting present to the church a list of nominees to the office of elder. The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. For a period of at least one month, the church shall consider whether such nominees are qualified for the office. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting. If any member believes one or more of the nominees to be unqualified, that member shall express such concern to the elders, who may on the basis of that advice remove names from the list of nominees. No name shall be added to the list of nominees which was not included on the initial list. When a period of at least one month has elapsed, the elders shall at the next regular members' meeting present a final list of nominees to the church, who shall vote Yea or Nay on each of the nominees in turn. The moderator or his delegates shall count the votes, and any nominee having the approval of at least three-quarters of the members present and voting on his nomination shall be an elder, which men the church shall in due haste publicly recognize and set apart as such.

Clause 4. At least once in every year, the elders shall at any regular members' meeting solicit from the congregation recommendations for the office of elder, which recommendations shall be given to the elders in private, and not publicly. The elders shall give due consideration to any recommendation received.

Clause 5. In accordance with 1 Timothy 2:12 and 3:2, women shall not serve as elders.

Clause 6. With the exceptions of a preaching elder and staff elders, elders shall be reaffirmed by vote of the church every three years, and having served two consecutive three-year terms, shall not be eligible for re-election for one year. If the church fails to reaffirm its recognition of an elder, such elder's term of office shall terminate as of the third anniversary of his election as elder. Neither a preaching elder nor a staff elder shall be subject to a reaffirmation vote, nor to any term limit.

Clause 7. No elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

Clause 8. The council of elders shall choose their chairman and other officers. The council of elders shall serve as the board of directors of the corporation, and the chairman of the elders shall serve as the president of the corporation.

Clause 9. The elders shall, in keeping with the principles set forth in the Scriptures, especially Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; James 5:14; and 1 Peter 5:1-4, undertake the responsibility of shepherding God's flock by:

- (a) Devoting themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word;
- (b) Planning and overseeing worship services;
- (c) Oversee the ordinances, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper;
- (d) Examining and instructing prospective members;
- (e) Overseeing the process of church discipline;
- (f) Examining and recommending candidates for all offices and positions;
- (g) Overseeing the work of the deacons/deaconesses, committees, and all other agents of the church;
- (h) Coordinating and promoting the ministries of the church;
- (i) Mobilizing the church for world missions;
- (j) Hiring, overseeing, evaluating the performance of, and when necessary terminating paid church staff; and
- (k) Ensuring that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.
- (l) Taking any other action which shall be necessary and proper for faithfully overseeing and shepherding the church.

Clause 10. The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities.

Clause 11. The elders may also propose funding for new paid non-pastoral or pastoral staff positions. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position.

Clause 12. The elders shall elect a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also designate one of their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings. Meetings of the elders shall be conducted in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws and any procedures adopted by the elders. Unless otherwise provided by the Constitution and Bylaws or any procedures adopted by the elders, the act of the majority of the elders present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the elders. A quorum of elders shall consist of three-fourths of the elders of the church. Minutes of the meetings of the elders shall be recorded and circulated to the elders in a timely manner.

Clause 13. Any action required or permitted to be taken by the elders may be taken without a meeting, if all of the elders, individually or collectively, consent in writing to the action. Such action by written consent shall have the same force and effect as the unanimous vote of the elders. Such written consent or consents shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the elders.

Clause 14. An elder's term of office may be terminated prior to the expiration of his term by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern first to the elders and thereafter, if need be, to the congregation at any regular or special members' meeting. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and 1 Timothy 5:17–21. An elder who has received accusations according to the above principles shall enter a suspension period until the matter is resolved. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a three-fourths majority vote of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members. The elders are required to fill the vacated position in three months or less.

Section 3 – Preaching Elder

Clause 1. Primary responsibility for preaching and teaching the Scriptures in public meetings of the church may be vested in a preaching elder, commonly referred to as a senior pastor.

Clause 2. A preaching elder shall be selected as follows: The elders shall appoint a pastor search committee made up of members of the congregation and at least one non-staff and when possible one staff elder. At a regular or special members' meeting, this committee will present to the church the name of one nominee to the position of preaching elder. For a period of at least two weeks, the church shall consider the nominee's gifts in preaching and teaching, and his commitment to minister personally to the members of this church. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting. If any member believes the nominee to be unqualified, that member shall express such concern to the elders. When a period of two weeks has elapsed, the elders shall at the next members' meeting present the nominee for preaching elder to the church, who shall vote Yea or Nay

on his selection as such. The moderator or his delegates shall count the votes, and if the nominee receives the approval of at least three-quarters of the members present and voting on the question, he shall be a member of the church, an elder, and a preaching elder, whom the church shall in due haste publicly recognize as such.

Clause 3. A preaching elder shall meet all the qualifications and hold all the rights and responsibilities of a member of the church. He shall satisfy all the qualifications and hold all the duties and responsibilities of an elder. In terms of formal authority, there shall be no distinction between an elder and a preaching elder.

Clause 4. A preaching elder shall not be subject to a reaffirmation vote, nor to any term limit.

Clause 5. A preaching elder shall be removed from office upon the vote of three-fourths of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17 and those of the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 5:17-21.

Clause 6. In the absence or incapacity of the preaching elder, or senior pastor, the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which may be delegated.

Section 4 – Staff Elders

Clause 1. Other particular pastoral responsibilities may be vested in one or more paid or unpaid staff elders.

Clause 2. A staff elder shall be selected as follows: The elders shall at any regular members' meeting present to the church the name of one nominee to the position of staff elder. For a period of at least two weeks, the church shall consider the nominee's gifts in the particular area of service to which he is being called, and his commitment to minister personally to the members of this church. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting. If any member believes the nominee to be unqualified, that member shall express such concern to the elders. When a period of two weeks has elapsed, the elders shall at the next members' meeting present the nominee for staff elder to the church, who shall vote Yea or Nay on his selection as such. The moderator or his delegates shall count the votes, and if the nominee receives the approval of at least three-quarters of the members present and voting on the question, he shall be a member of the church, an elder, and a staff elder, whom the church shall in due haste publicly recognize as such.

Clause 3. A staff elder shall meet all the qualifications and hold all the rights and responsibilities of a member of the church. He shall satisfy all the qualifications and hold all the duties and responsibilities of an elder. In terms of formal authority, there shall be no distinction between an elder and a staff elder.

Clause 4. A staff elder shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the

office of pastor, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation. In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the elders.

Clause 5. A staff elder shall not be subject to a reaffirmation vote, nor to any term limit.

Clause 6. A staff elder shall be removed from office upon the vote of three-fourths of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17 and those of the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 5:17-21.

Clause 7. In the absence or incapacity of a staff elder, the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which may be delegated.

Section 5 – Deacons/Deaconesses

Clause 1. A deacon or deaconess shall be a church member who satisfies the requirements and description in 1 Timothy 3:8–13 and Acts 6:1–7. The number of deacons/deaconesses shall vary as the church has need.

Clause 2. The deacons/deaconesses shall not meet together regularly as a body. Each deacon/deaconess shall serve a particular need of the church, and shall be created or dissolved upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent agreement of a majority of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting.

Clause 3. Deacons/deaconesses shall be selected as follows: The elders shall at any regular members' meeting present to the church a list of nominees to the office of deacon/deaconess. The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. For a period of at least one month, the church shall consider whether such nominees are qualified for the office. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting. If any member believes one or more of the nominees to be unqualified, that member shall express such concern to the elders, who may on the basis of that advice remove names from the list of nominees. No name shall be added to the list of nominees which was not included on the initial list. When a period of at least one month has elapsed, the elders shall at the next regular members' meeting present a final list of nominees to the church, who shall vote Yea or Nay on each of the nominees in turn. The moderator or his delegates shall count the votes, and any nominee having the approval of a simple majority of the members present and voting on his nomination shall be a deacon/deaconess, which men or women the church shall in due haste publicly recognize and set apart as such.

Clause 4. At least once in every year, the elders shall at any regular members' meeting solicit from the congregation recommendations for new deacon/deaconess positions and for qualified persons to fill vacant positions, which recommendations shall be given to the elders in private, and not publicly. The elders shall give due consideration to any recommendation received.

Clause 5. Deacons/deaconesses shall be reaffirmed by vote of the church every three years and thereafter may only be elected to another term after a sabbatical of one year.

Clause 6. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6, deacons/deaconesses shall not exercise a ministry of spiritual authority, but shall support the elders' ministry of the Word, work to maintain the unity of the church, and care for the physical needs of the church.

Clause 7. The church may recognize deacons/deaconesses to take responsibility for:

- (a) Seeing that the sick, the sorrowing, the aged, and the infirm receive spiritual and physical comfort;
- (b) Leading the hospitality ministries of the church;
- (c) Attending to the normal care and maintenance of church properties;
- (d) Receiving, holding, and disbursing a fund for benevolence, and for reporting from time to time on the use of such funds to both the elders and the church;
- (e) Attending to the accommodations for public worship;
- (f) Assisting in distributing the elements during the Lord's Supper;
- (g) Attending to the financial administration of the church; and
- (h) Serving in other specific capacities as the church has need.

Clause 8. The deacons and deaconesses, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

Clause 9. No person or group shall solicit money on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders and the deacon/deaconess of finance.

Clause 10. A deacon/deaconess may be removed from office by a decision of the elders, or upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent agreement of a majority of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting.

Clause 11. In the event a deacon/deaconess position becomes vacant, the elders may appoint a person to fill that position and assume its responsibilities, until such time as some person can be duly recognized by the church as a deacon/deaconess.

Section 6 – Deacon/Deaconess of Finance

Clause 1. The church shall select a deacon/deaconess of finance, who shall, with the advice and approval of the elders, work with the Treasurer and church administrator to present to the church at the last regular members' meeting of every fiscal year a budget, which shall be considered and voted upon by the church at the final regular members' meeting of every fiscal year.

Clause 2. The budget shall be adopted upon the motion of the deacon/deaconess of finance and the subsequent agreement of a majority of the members present and voting on the question.

Clause 3. Once adopted, the total amount budgeted shall not be overspent. The council of elders shall have responsibility to faithfully oversee the budget. Amendments to the budget shall be adopted upon the motion of the deacon/deaconess of finance and the subsequent agreement of a majority of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting.

Clause 4. Oversight of and authority over all other resources of the church shall be vested in the assembled congregation. Upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent agreement of a majority of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting, the congregation may fund certain designated accounts, distinct from the operating budget, which shall be under the oversight and authority of the elders.

Section 7 – Clerk

Clause 1. The Clerk shall record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church, keep an accurate roll of the membership, prepare the annual report for the local association, and give reports as requested by the senior pastor, the elders, the deacons/deaconesses, or the church. The church clerk also shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent version of the Constitution and Bylaws are available for all members. In compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of Texas, the Clerk shall serve as the secretary of the corporation.

Clause 2. The Clerk shall be selected to a renewable term of three years upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent agreement of a majority of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting. In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the elders shall appoint another member to perform the duties of the clerk.

Clause 3. The Clerk may be removed from office by a decision of the elders, or by a majority vote of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting.

Section 8 – Treasurer

Clause 1. The Treasurer shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as designated by the church. The Treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The Treasurer shall render to the elders at least once in

every year, or whenever they may require it, an account of all financial transactions and of the financial condition of the church. The Treasurer shall be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the church at regular members' meetings; this responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the elders. The Treasurer shall also be responsible to work with the Deacon/Deaconess of Finance in preparing the annual budget.

Clause 2. The Treasurer shall be selected to a renewable term of three years upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent agreement of a majority of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting

Clause 3. No elder, or paid staff member of the church, nor the deacon of finance, shall be eligible for the office of Treasurer.

Clause 4. The Treasurer shall be removed from office by a decision of the elders, or by a majority vote of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting.

ARTICLE 4 CHURCH CORPORATION

For purposes of the corporation laws of the State of Texas:

Section 1 – Directors

The elders shall serve as the directors of the church corporation, and the corporate powers of the church corporation shall be exercised by or under their authority. No salary or compensation shall be paid to any director in his capacity as a director, but nothing herein shall be construed to preclude any director from serving the church in any other permitted capacity and receiving reasonable compensation therefor. Moreover, directors may receive reasonable reimbursement for church related travel and other approved expenses upon request and submission of proper written documentation.

Section 2 – Officers

The officers of the church corporation shall be president, treasurer, and secretary, and may include one or more vice presidents as the directors may from time to time determine. The officers must be members of the church, and the president must also be an elder of the church. Unless otherwise determined by the directors, the senior pastor shall serve as the president, the church clerk shall serve as the secretary, and the church treasurer shall serve as the treasurer of the church corporation. In the event of a vacancy in the office of secretary or treasurer because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or any other reason, the directors may appoint a member of the church to serve in such office on an interim basis until such time as a successor has been nominated and elected by the church.

Section 3 – Annual Meeting of the Directors

The annual meeting of the board of directors shall be held contemporaneously with the first elders'

meeting of the fiscal year. Notice of such elders' meeting given in accordance with the procedures established by the elders shall constitute proper notice of the annual meeting of the board of directors.

Section 4 – Annual Meeting of the Members

The annual meeting of the members shall be held contemporaneously with the first members' meeting of the fiscal year. Notice of such members' meeting given in accordance with the Bylaws shall constitute proper notice of the annual meeting of the members.

Section 5 – Trustees

The elders shall nominate and the church shall elect three or more Trustees to serve as legal officers of the church to act on behalf of the church in the legal affairs of the church. The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. A majority of the elected Trustees may bind the church in legal matters. The Trustees shall hold in trust the church property. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, the Trustees shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property. When signatures of the Trustees are required, at least a majority of the Trustees shall sign legal documents involving the sale, purchase, mortgage, lease, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to Church approved matters. Trustees shall be elected for a three year term and shall be eligible for reelection.

ARTICLE 5 DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the church (*see, e.g.*, Matthew 18:15–20, 1 Corinthians 6:1–8), the church expects its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically-based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall follow biblically-based principles and seek to avoid lawsuits to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or non-Christian and whether individuals or corporate entities. The elders shall adopt policies and procedures to effect these requirements and aspirations.

ARTICLE 6 INDEMNIFICATION

Section 1 – Mandatory

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was a director, officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

Section 2 – Permissive

With the unanimous decision of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

Section 3 – Determinations

If a quorum of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

ARTICLE 7 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The elders and any of their designees shall be responsible for overseeing the development, maintenance and periodic review of policies and procedures for the day-to-day functions of the church. Such policies and procedures shall be maintained in a Policies and Procedures Manual, which shall be available at the church office for members to review.

ARTICLE 8 DISPOSAL OF PERSONAL AND REAL ASSETS

Upon dissolution or discontinuance of Preston Highlands Baptist Church, the personal and real assets held by same will be transferred to an educational, religious, charitable, or other similar organization that is qualified for exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

ARTICLE 9 AMENDMENTS

The Constitution or Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any regular or special meeting of the church by a three-fourths majority vote of all members present, provided (a) the proposed amendment is presented at a previous members' meeting, and mailed or made available to the members at least four weeks before the meeting to act on the amendment; and (b) the meeting to consider the proposed amendment is announced at all Sunday morning services on two consecutive Sundays before the vote is taken, one of which may be the same day as the meeting.

Appendix A: Church Membership Agreement

We believe that to carry on the religious mission of the church, to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons who associate with the church as members should abide by and agree to the following statements and conduct themselves in accordance with them.

_____ **1. Statement of Faith**
(initial)

I have read and believe the Baptist Faith and Message (2000).

_____ **2. Church Covenant**
(initial)

I am committed to carrying out the principles and spirit of the Church Covenant.

_____ **3. Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality**
(initial)

I believe in the church's Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality as found in Appendix B.

_____ **4. Statement on Church Discipline**
(initial)

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Cor. 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin and promoting purity (1 Tim. 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Gal. 6:1).

The Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted the local church with the authority and responsibility to discipline members for flagrant sin or serious doctrinal error, with the goal of the restoration of the offender. This discipline is entrusted to the council of elders and is to follow the biblical pattern as set forth in Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:7-8; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 3:10-11; and 2 John 7-11. Any member of this church who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct that, in the judgment of the council of elders, is opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, or is threatening to the testimony of this church, or is divisive to the body, shall be subject to church discipline.

Discipline will follow the said biblical pattern, and is an effort to bring the individual to repentance and protect the church from unrepentant sin. Discipline may involve exclusion from participation in ministry and communion, as well as dismissal from the fellowship of this church. An individual may be disciplined by the council of elders short of dismissal from the fellowship, as they deem appropriate for the specific circumstance (for example, an individual may remain in certain circumstances a member of this church but be denied the privilege of serving in a particular ministry).

The council of elders, as is required by Scripture, may report to the congregation the names of those who have lost membership by reason of church discipline, and the reason for that discipline, as described in Matthew 18:15-20.

The members of this church further knowingly and voluntarily agree that a member cannot voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership in the midst of the discipline process, and may only voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership if they are not the subject of a discipline proceeding at the time or only after a disciplinary process, of which they are the subject, has been concluded as determined by the council of elders.

_____ **5. Statement on Mediation**
(initial)

I agree to submit any legal dispute with the church for mediation before a mutually agreed-upon mediator, or if none can be agreed upon, one selected by Peacemaker Ministries. Lawsuits between believers, or threats of lawsuits between believers, are a matter of grave concern for the church, are contrary to biblical and church teaching, and mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a biblical fashion (1 Cor. 6:1-7).

Mediation will be governed by the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ICC Rules), unless modified as stipulated by the parties. (Visit: http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.nuIWL7MOJtE/b.5335917/k.D8A2/Rules_of_Procedure.htm to access the ICC Rules) In particular, subject to the more detailed provisions of the ICC Rules, mediator(s) will attempt to assist us in reaching a voluntary settlement of any disputes through mediation. The confidentiality of the mediation process will be protected and these matters will not be discussed with people who do not have a necessary interest in them. If settlement can be agreed upon, the conciliators may, at their discretion, issue an advisory opinion. Neither the opinion, nor any communications exchanged in the mediation process, will be admissible for any purpose in any subsequent legal proceeding.

_____ **6. Statement on Life**
(initial)

I believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in his image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Psalm 139).

_____ **7. Statement of Final Authority on Matters of Faith and Conduct**
(initial)

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For the purposes of Preston Highlands Baptist Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our council of elders is our final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

I have reviewed the statements above as indicated by my initials before each of them, and agree to be governed by all the provisions herein.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B: Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18, 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, transvestism, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Preston Highlands Baptist Church as a local body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the members of Preston Highlands Baptist Church and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Preston Highlands Baptist Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

While we affirm that the gospel of Christ declares that we are to communicate the message of the gospel, we shall do so in a manner befitting of Christ and the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Preston Highlands Baptist Church.