

Handbook for Church Members
of
Heartland Baptist Church
Altamont, IL

Constitution and By-Laws

What we believe...

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Constitution Heartland Baptist Church Altamont, IL

PREAMBLE

We, the members of Heartland Baptist Church, in orderly manner do hereby establish the following principles by which we mutually agree to be governed in the affairs of our Church.

ARTICLE I - COVENANT

Having been led as we believe by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and having been scripturally baptized, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expense of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate the children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world, to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, back-biting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale or use of intoxicating drinks as beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Saviour, to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that, when we remove from this place, we will 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.

ARTICLE II - ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. The Holy Scriptures

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed, and therefore are the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament are the

only complete and divine revelation of God to man. They shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning. The Word of God was written by human authors divinely inspired and has been preserved from the originals without admixture of error. The King James Version shall be the official and only translation recognized as the Word of God by the church. (Psalm 12:6-7; 119:89, 160; 138:2; Proverbs 30:5-6; Luke 24:44; John 10:35; 17:17; Romans 3:4; 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 1:23, 25; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Revelation 22:18-19)

We believe the Word of God is the center of our communion with Christ and each other. (Psalm 19:7-11; 119:105, 130; Proverbs 2:1-12; 30:5-6; Luke 16:31; John 5:39; 17:17; 1 Peter 1:23; Revelation 22:18-19)

We believe the Word of God is our standard for conduct (Psalm 119:11; 37:31), creeds (Acts 24:14; 26:22; 28 :23), and opinions (Isaiah 8:20; Galatians 1:8-12).

We believe the Word of God judges everything. (Deuteronomy 18:19; John 12:48; Revelation 20:12;)

2.The Godhead

We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, having the same attributes and perfection they are unified in plan and purpose, and work distinctly yet harmoniously. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; 10:30; 14:10, 16, 23, 26; 15:26-27; Acts 5:30-32; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 2:18; 4:5-6; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 5:7)

3.The Person and Work of God the Father

We believe that God the Father is perfect in holiness, infinite in wisdom, and measureless in power. We rejoice that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through the Lord Jesus Christ. (Genesis 1:1; 17:1; Exodus 15:11; 20:2-3; Psalm 50:10-12; 83:18; 90:2; 147:5; Proverbs 16:9; Jeremiah 10:10; 33:3; John 3:16; 10:29-30; Romans 5:8; 11:33; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Timothy 1:17;)

4.The Person and Work of Christ

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. (Genesis 3:15; Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:30-35; John 1:1-3, 14; 10:27-30; Acts 5:30-31; Romans 3:25-26; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 4:5; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 1:1-12; 2:17; 5:9; 1 John 4:10; 5:20). We further believe that Mary (the mother of Jesus), when found with child of the Holy Ghost, was a virgin. She was not, however, born sinless. As our Lord's mother she was a sinner blessed among women - not blessed above them. (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35, 46-47)

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross (His blood had to be shed) as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (Acts 2:18-36; Romans 3:24-25; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 2:24) We believe Jesus took the sinner's place and met the penalty of a Holy God through His substitutionary death for all men. (John 3:16; 10:18; Romans 3:24-25; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; Philippians 2:7-8; Hebrews 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 2:2; 4:10) Jesus bore man's sins. (Isaiah 53:4-7, 11-12; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 2:24) By the shedding of Jesus' blood the Law was satisfied. (Matthew 26:28; Acts 20:28; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:12-15, 22) The righteousness of Christ is imputed by grace through faith to everyone who believes. (Philippians 3:9; Romans 5:17-19)

We believe that Christ rose bodily (physically) from the tomb on the third day "according to the Scriptures." (Matthew 28:6-7; Luke 24:1-7, 38-40; John 20:1-16, 27; Acts 10:40-41; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Hebrews 7:25) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended bodily into Heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our Great High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 8:1; 9:24; 12:2; 1 John 2:1-2) We believe it is only through His resurrection that we have a sure hope of everlasting life. (Acts 1:11; Romans 4:25; 5:10; 6:5; 8:11; 10:9; 1 Corinthians 15:12-26; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1-2; Revelation 3:21)

5. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the third person of the trinity, Who having come forth from God, convinces the world of sin and of righteousness and judgment; Who also, regenerates, sanctifies, comforts, indwells, enlightens, empowers, baptizes, guides, and teaches, all who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. (Genesis 1:2; Matthew 3:11; Luke 1:35; 24:49; John 3:5-6; 14:16-17, 26; 16:8-11, 13; Acts 5:32; Romans 8:9, 14, 16, 26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12; 3:16; 6:19; 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2:18)

We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who assists believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and that it is recommended that all the saved be filled, led and guided with and by the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18; Hebrews 10:16; 1 John 2:20, 27)

We believe that the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-13, 28)

We believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary. We believe that speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 13:8-10; 14:21-22)

6. The Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, sinless and innocent.

Furthermore, we believe that all men by nature and by choice are sinners; that men became sinners through the fall of Adam when he disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden; that Adam sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God and condemned to Hell. In the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word, and deed, therefore, are under the same condemnation. Man is totally depraved and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his condition. (Genesis 1:26-28; 3:1-24; Psalm 51:5; 58:3; Ezekiel 18:19-20; Romans 1:18-21, 28, 32; 3:10-19, 22-23; 5:12, 19; 6:23; 8:6-8; Galatians 3:22; Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:17-19; Colossians 2:13)

7. Salvation

We believe in salvation by Grace through Faith; that repentance and faith are the one condition of salvation; that men are justified by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ through faith in His finished Work on the Cross. Therefore, those who accept Christ as Saviour will rejoice forever in God's presence, and those who refuse to accept Christ as Saviour will be forever separated from God. (John 1:12; 3:16; 20:31; Acts 4:12; 16:31; Romans 1:17; 5:1, 9; 10:9; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; Titus 3:5-8; 1 Peter 1:18-19)

We believe that works cannot save. Good works are, however, a natural result and evidence of Holy Spirit regeneration in a life. (Romans 11:6; Ephesians 2:8-10; James 2:17-20)

8. The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers

We believe that the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. Everlasting life must last forever. It will not end nor can it be taken away. The Father planned it, the Son secured it, and the Holy Spirit sealed it. (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 35-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; Hebrews 10:10, 12, 14; 1 Peter 1:4-5; 1 John 4:17)

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

9. The Church

We believe that the New Testament church is a local, visible body of believers, Scripturally baptized, for the common goal of fulfilling the Great Commission. It is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, and is solely made up of born-again persons. (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 11:2; 12:8-14; 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:11; 5:25-27)

We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures. (Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28-32; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Ephesians 5:25-27)

(1) Christ is its head. (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23-24; Colossians 1:18)

(2) The Holy Spirit is its Power, Comforter, and Guide. (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:5-14; Acts

1:8; Romans 8:6-11; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 12:4, 11)

(3) The Bible is its only source of faith and rule of practice (doctrine). (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:26; 6:17; Colossians 4:16; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12; 5:12; James 1:23-25; 1 Peter 1:23-24; 2:2; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control. (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Romans 16:1-4; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7,13; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

We recognize water baptism and the Lord's Supper as the only two Scriptural ordinances of obedience for the church in this age. Neither is required for nor secures salvation. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

(1) Scriptural baptism testifies to the world that a person has been born of the Holy Spirit and is a child of God. It is also symbolic of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and is the first step in obedience to following Christ in your new life. It must occur under the authority of a local, New Testament church and must be by immersion in water. The testimony of baptism is completed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Baptism is a prerequisite to church membership and the Lord's Supper. (Matthew 3:6, 16; 28:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:38, 41; 8:38; 10:44-48; Romans 6:3-6)

(2) The Lord's Supper is a prophecy of Christ's coming again and a memorial for saved church members who have examined themselves and confessed all known sin. Unleavened bread represents the broken body of Christ and Unleavened (non-alcoholic) fruit of the vine, (grape juice) represents the shed blood of our Lord. Together they commemorate the obedience of Christ to the Father unto death, "even the death of the cross." (Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:13-17, 22-26; 1 Corinthians 11:2, 17-34)

10. Dispensationalism

We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to his purpose. Three of these dispensations but not limited to - the law, church, and kingdom - are subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture. (Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 9: 17; 2 Corinthians 3:9-18; Galatians 3:13-25; Ephesians 1:10; 3:2-10; Colossians 1:24-25, 27; Revelation 20:2-6)

11. Separation

We believe that the church should separate itself from worldly and ecumenical philosophies and organizations such as the National Association of Evangelicals, National Council of Churches, World Council of Churches, Southern Baptist Convention, etc. We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Saviour and Lord; and, that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations is commanded of God. (Amos 3:3; John 17:15-16; Romans 12:1-2; 14:13; 2 Corinthians 6:14 - 7:1; Ephesians 5:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Hebrews 11:23-26; 1 John 2:15-17;

2 John 9-11; Revelation 18:4-5)

We further believe that local church discipline may, as a last resort, require separation from an erring brother in order to win him back. (Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 18:15-17; Luke 17:3-4; 1 Corinthians 5:1 - 6:8; 2 Corinthians 7:8-12; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 5:1-5; 1 Timothy 5:20)

12.The Second Advent of Christ

We believe in that “blessed hope:” the personal, imminent return of Christ, Who will return in the air and rapture His Church prior to the seven-year tribulation period. Believers will stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ and eat at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. (Matthew 24:27, 42; John 14:1-4; Acts 1:11; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 2 Corinthians 5:8-10; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Revelation 19:7-9)

We further believe that at the end of the Tribulation, Christ will personally and visibly return to the earth with His saints. He will establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom for 1,000 years as promised to the nation of Israel (Psalm 72:8; 89:3-4; Isaiah 11; Daniel 12:9-12; Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:32; 1 Corinthians 15:25; Revelation 19:11 - 20:15)

13.The Eternal State

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. (Matthew 25:46; John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Revelation 20:5-6, 12-15; 21:8)

We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; John 14:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:4-6)

We further believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment in Hell until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment. At this judgment, they shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment and torment. (Matthew 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:8)

14.Heaven, Hell and the Lake of Fire

We believe that Heaven, Hell and the Lake of Fire are real, literal, physical places. Heaven and the Lake of Fire are places of eternity.

(1)Heaven is the eternal dwelling place of the saved, it’s light emanating from the presence of God himself. (Psalm 21:4; 121:8; Isaiah 60:19-20; Matthew 6:20-21; Luke 10:20; 24:43; John 14:1-4; Revelation 21)

(2)Hell is a place of indescribable torment and punishment separated from God, where all the unsaved go at death. Those in Hell will only be released long enough to bow before God at the Great White Throne Judgment prior to being cast into the Lake of Fire. (Matthew 22:13; Luke 16:19-31; Philippians 2:10; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 20:13-14)

(3)The Lake of Fire was originally prepared for the devil and his angels. It is the place where the unbeliever will suffer eternal conscious punishment and torment separated from God. (Matthew 13:40,42; 25:41; Revelation 14:10; 19:20; 20:10, 14-15; 21:8)

15.The Personality of Satan

We believe that Satan is real, the god of this world, the author of sin, the influence behind the fall of man, and that he is working to blind “the minds of them which believe not.” He was once perfect in his ways but fell through pride and ambition in his desire to be “like” the Most High. In his fall he brought with him a host of heavenly angels. He is a created being (an angel), the open and declared enemy of God and man, behind all that is against God and His Word, and he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:14-17; Matthew 4:1-11; 13:25, 39; 25:41; Luke 22:3-4; John 14:30; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; 11:13-15; Ephesians 2:2; 6:11-12; 1 Thessalonians 3:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-11; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 2:4; 1 John 3:8; Jude 6; Revelation 12:7-10; 20:1-3, 10)

16.Creation

We believe the Genesis account of creation that God, as a direct act, spoke the universe into existence in six literal 24-hour days. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin. (Genesis 1-2; Exodus 20:11; Nehemiah 9:6; Job 26:7; Psalm 33:6-9; Jeremiah 10:12; John 1:3; Acts 4:24; 17:23-26; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 10:6)

We further believe man was created in God’s image, as a living soul, higher, separate, and apart from all animal life. (Genesis 1:26-30; 2:7; 5:1; 9:2, 6; Leviticus 24:21; Psalm 8:6; 100:3; John 3:6; Acts 17:26-29; 1 Corinthians 15:39; Colossians 3:10)

17.Human Sexuality

1. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God’s gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one’s gender by surgery or appearance.(Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thessalonians4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4)

2. We believe that the only Scriptural marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:22-23)

3. We further believe that God hates sin - not the sinner. His love was demonstrated toward all

men by Christ's death on the cross to pay our sin debt. His love is not demonstrated by tolerating or condoning sin.

18.Divorce and Remarriage

We believe that God hates divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies.

Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery. Although divorced and remarried persons may hold positions of service in the church and can be greatly used of God in Christian service, they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon.

We further believe that Christians are not to be unequally yoked together with the unbeliever. (Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:32; Mark 1:1-12; Luke 16:18; Acts 6:3; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6)

19.Abortion

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother are acceptable. (Job 3:16; Psalm 51:5; 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)

20.Soul winning and Missions

We believe that God has given to the church, and therefore to all members in particular, a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. This responsibility begins at home and extends to the uttermost parts of the earth. As ambassadors for Christ we must use all available means to go into foreign nations with the Gospel and not wait for them to come to us. Therefore, we believe a New Testament church will both pray for and financially support missionaries. (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:13-15; 2 Corinthians 5:20; 9:1-7; Philippians 4:15-17; 1 Timothy 6:17-18)

21.Lawsuits Between Believers

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all of the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes and conflicts between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (Matthew 5:39-40; Romans 12:17-19; 1 Corinthians 5:12; 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31-32; 1 Thessalonians 5:15)

22.Giving

We believe that every Christian as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is

obligated to support his local church financially. We believe that God has established a tithe as a basis for giving, but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel.

We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to individually direct the use of the tithe or offering once the gift has been made. (Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:32; Proverbs 3:9-10; Malachi 3:6-10; Luke 11:42; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:1-7; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; Hebrews 7:1-2; 1 John 3:17)

23. Prayer and Fasting

We believe that God consistently commands us to pray. It is his way for us to receive things, experience fullness of joy, and relief from trouble, anxiety, and worry. Answered prayer is an unanswerable argument against unbelief and skepticism. It is through prayer that confession is made unto salvation. Fellowship with God requires prayer (us talking to God) and Bible reading (God speaking to us). Honest, regular communication with our Saviour will naturally bring us closer to Him. (Psalm 55:22; Matthew 26:41; Luke 11:13; 18:1; John 16:24; Romans 10:9-10; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Timothy 2:1; James 4:2-3; 1 Peter 5:7)

We further believe that fasting pleases God. Christ Himself said that His disciples would fast, "When the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days."

There are a host of Bible precedents for fasting: humility, purification, skill and wisdom, providential intervention, direction, power, postponement of judgment, etc. (Psalm 35:13; Daniel 1:8, 17; 6:18; Luke 5:33-35; Acts 10:30-33; 13:3-4; 14:23)

24. The Family

We believe the family is God's first line of defense against Satan and his attacks. God established the institution of marriage before any other and charged fathers and mothers with the care of His children as "an heritage of the Lord." We are responsible to point our children to Christ daily - and throughout the day. (Genesis 1:28; 9:1; Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Psalm 103:13; 127:3-5; 128:3-4; Proverbs 13:24; 17:6; 19:18; 22:6; 23:13-14; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 2:9-15; 2 Timothy 1:3, 5; 1 Peter 3:1-7)

AUTHORITY OF STATEMENT OF FAITH

This statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the soul and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing statement of faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible, and therefore, is binding upon all members.

ARTICLE III - PURPOSE

The Purpose of this local church shall be:

A. To carry out the "Great Commission of Christ" as given in Matthew 28:19, 20.

B. To administer the ordinances of the New Testament, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

C. To edify the saints of God through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God as set forth in the Articles of Faith of this Church.

By-Laws

ARTICLE IV - ORGANIZATION

Section 1 - Name

The name of the Church Corporation is Heartland Baptist Church of Altamont, Illinois.

The term Baptist is used solely to identify us doctrinally in relation to other religious bodies.

Our church holds no doctrine that is new or different from our forefathers' belief. In addition to our "Articles of Faith," the following beliefs, which made Baptist Churches distinctive in past history, we hold and seek to practice:

1. A free church (separated) in a free state.
2. A regenerated church membership.
3. The Priesthood of the individual believer

Section 2 - Authority

We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions:

1) Home; 2) Church; and 3) State (Government). Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word.

God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other.

The home, church, and state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. Because civil government is by divine appointment and for our own good in society, rulers and leaders in all capacities are to be prayed for, honored, and, except in those things opposed to God's will, obeyed.

However, in matters ecclesiastical, we recognize no Head but Jesus Christ the Lord and no organization higher than the local church.

Section 3 - Affiliations

This church shall ever retain the right and assume the responsibility to act for itself according to the Word of God under the counsel of the Holy Spirit. We shall sincerely seek and welcome fellowship with other Christians everywhere of like faith who give evidence of true salvation through their faith and conduct.

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1

All members of the Church are members of the corporation.

Section 2

Membership in the church may be gained in one of the following ways.

1. Any person professing faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour may be received into membership after baptism by immersion.
2. A person may be received by letter from a church of like faith and order.
3. A person may be received by their statement of experience of regeneration, if having already been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as a believer.

Section 3

Every member of the Church is expected to:

- 1.Attend all meetings of the church, to labor for its welfare in such ways as conviction or church appointment may indicate;
- 2.Contribute regularly, systematically and scripturally;
- 3.Inform the church of their current place of residence.

Section 4

A member in good standing, changing residence and applying for a letter of dismissal to another and nearer Baptist Church is entitled to receive it promptly.

Section 5

A member who absents themselves from church or is lost to the knowledge of the church for three months shall be placed upon the suspension list, and is ineligible to vote until restoration is made. If the suspended member remains unrestored or undiscovered for one year following their suspension without satisfactory explanation they shall be erased from the rolls by vote of the church and can be restored to full membership upon making satisfactory confession and explanation. Suspended members will be dismissed by majority vote of all active present members (who choose to vote) at a business meeting called for that purpose. The business meeting must be announced two weeks prior to said meeting, and the suspended member must be notified if possible.

Section 6

Membership in this body is a privilege and not a right and carries with it specific responsibilities and moral obligations. Therefore, the membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate without notice if the member states that he or she is actively involved in any conduct described in Article 2, section 17: 1, 2, 3 or files a lawsuit in violation of Article 2, section 21.

ARTICLE VI - GOVERNMENT, OFFICERS, CHURCH LEADERSHIP POSITIONS, AND ELECTIONS

Section 1

The government of Heartland Baptist Church shall be congregational and representative. All officials shall be approved by the church congregation.

Section 2

The officers of the church shall be:

- 1.A Pastor.
- 2.Deacons (when applicable).
- 3.Trustees.
- 4.Treasurer.
- 5.Missionary treasurer.
- 6.Secretary.
- 7.Sunday School Superintendent.

8. Head Usher.

9. Assistant to the Pastor (when applicable).

Section 3

The officers shall be elected as needed at annual business meetings.

Section 4

The manner of choosing officers, their duties, etc., shall be as follows:

1. A Pastor, called by the Lord and the church, whose duties and qualifications are defined in the Epistles of Timothy and Titus, who is to conduct the worship of the congregation, to preside at all meetings of the church including the regular and special business meetings except at such times when a moderator has been duly appointed, shall be called in the following manner.

The church as a whole shall call a Pastor. They may call a Pastor to preach (more than once) with a view to being called as a candidate. After hearing him and interviewing him, the church may again call him to preach to the church as a candidate to be voted on by the church. The church must not call more than one candidate at a time. A vote of three-fourths of the active members present (who choose to vote) shall be necessary to constitute an election of Pastor. No election of Pastor shall take place except at a meeting called for that purpose, public notice of which shall have been given from the pulpit at a regular Lord's Day service, at least two weeks previously.

The Pastor's duties include, but are not limited to: the welfare and oversight of the entire church.

He may call the church together for special business and his leadership shall be in every phase of church life. He shall have authority to purchase supplies necessary for the church and his work as needed up to, but not to exceed two-hundred dollars per month. Any money spent that exceeds two-hundred dollars must be approved by the majority of the church. The Pastor also has full authority over the pulpit, i.e.; who is to preach, speak, sing, etc.

The Pastor shall be granted two weeks paid vacation annually, which shall include two Sundays. The amount of the Pastor's salary shall be determined by vote of the church, and shall be subject for revision from time to time in fair proportion to the prosperity of the church and due consideration has been given to the needs of the Pastor and his family.

The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite term, the relation to be broken by mutual agreement after not less than thirty days written notice given by either party.

Anyone desiring the Pastor's dismissal must have legitimate reasons why and must follow the procedure laid down in Matthew 18:15-17. If no resolution can be made then the party seeking dismissal is permitted to circulate a petition one time. If the petition is signed by 51% of the active membership then a special meeting will be called with seven days prior notice to vote on his dismissal. Majority vote of the active membership present (who choose to vote) is sufficient for his dismissal. Upon his dismissal he can choose to finish out thirty days from the time of dismissal or accept thirty days full severance pay, to include wages, paid vacation that is due and any other benefits. In the event that the church cannot afford to pay the severance in one lump sum then an alternative payment plan will be established as follows. The church is obligated to pay in weekly payments of one hundred dollars or in bi-weekly payments of two hundred dollars until severance has been made in full.

2. The Deacons, who are scripturally qualified men, according to Acts 6:1-7 and 1 Timothy 3, are

to be chosen by the Pastor and will be elected by three-fourths vote by the active, present members of the church (who choose to vote). The Pastor, by virtue of his office is ex-officio a member of the board of Deacons.

The Deacons are to be servants of the Lord and the church. They are to be active in the soul-winning program. It shall be the duty of the deacons to look after the poor, to visit the sick, and they are to cooperate with and assist the Pastor as he instructs them.

Deacons shall serve a three year staggered term. At the end of three years they are ineligible for re-election for one year.

3. Trustees shall act as the legal and financial representatives of the church, but whose acts shall be binding as long as they are authorized by the church. The Pastor, by virtue of his office is ex-officio the president of the board of Trustees. Trustees' terms will be indefinite as long as all parties are content. Trustees will be elected by three-fourths vote of active present members (who choose to vote).

4. The Treasurer shall receive and deposit all money and pay all bills by check and keep a true record of the same. All tithes and offerings shall be counted by two or more people. The Treasurer shall distribute an annual financial report to the church. Under no circumstances will the Treasurer be allowed to pay or distribute money without proper authorization from the Pastor. The Treasurer will serve a two year term and can be re-elected to consecutive terms indefinitely. Treasurers will be elected by a three-fourths vote of active present members (who choose to vote).

5. The Missionary Treasurer shall receive and deposit all money, pay all bills and missionary financial support by check and keep a true record of the same. All Missionary offerings shall be counted by two or more people. The Missionary Treasurer shall distribute an annual financial report to the church. Under no circumstances will the Missionary Treasurer be allowed to pay or distribute any money without proper authorization from the Pastor. The Missionary Treasurer will serve a two year term and can be re-elected to consecutive terms indefinitely. Missionary Treasurer will be elected by a three-fourths vote of active present members (who choose to vote).

6. The Secretary/Church Clerk shall be appointed by the Pastor and approved by the church by three-fourths vote of active present members (who choose to vote). The Clerk shall keep an up to date record of the minutes of all meetings and proceedings of the church; and preserve all records, and keep a register of all members of the church, and act as corresponding secretary. The Clerk's term can be broken without notice by the Pastor, or by majority vote of the church after two weeks notice have been given to the clerk, or by the clerk who is required to give two weeks notice. Otherwise the term is indefinite as long as all parties are content.

7. The Sunday School Superintendent shall have supervision (under the Pastors guidance) of the Sunday School. He shall keep records of attendance and Sunday School membership, collect all Sunday School monies, order materials as needed, and communicate well with the teachers as well as the Pastor. In the case of a teachers absence he must be ready to fill in. The Sunday School Superintendent will serve a one year term and can be re-elected to consecutive terms indefinitely. He will be elected by a three-fourths vote of active present members (who choose to vote).

8. The Head Usher, who will be under direct supervision of the Pastor, shall be responsible for appointing ushers to pass and receive the offering plates during all services. The Head Usher will also make sure visitors get a welcome packet and any other information made available to them. The ushers he appoints, as well as himself, will also be responsible for maintaining order on the premises during all services. He/ they will make themselves readily available at all times to the Pastor and to the congregation. An usher will have many other responsibilities as they arise. The Head Usher will serve a one year term and can be re-elected to consecutive terms indefinitely. He will be elected by a three-fourths vote of active present members (who choose to vote).

9. Assistant/Associate Pastor or Assistant to the Pastor will be chosen by the Pastor and must be accepted by the church by a three-fourths vote of active present members (who choose to vote). He must meet the same qualifications of the Pastor. He can be dismissed two ways: 1) by the Pastor or 2) by the same procedure of dismissal applied to the Pastor. (See section 4. #1 last paragraph).

* In addition to the qualifications previously prescribed, it is believed essential that all officers and leaders of this church lead by example in accordance to the following guidelines:

1. They should be faithful attendees at all services of the church.
2. They should be faithful in their witnessing to the lost of the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Saviour.
3. They should be found faithful in all areas of their Christian life.

** Any officer or leader who finds he or she cannot fulfill their aforementioned duties on a continuing basis should resign.

*** The Pastor reserves the right to appoint other positions as needed in the church, (i.e. Sunday school teachers, song leaders, bus captains, choir directors, etc.)

**** Any officer who's life is not in accordance with this handbook can be dismissed by majority vote of active present members (who choose to vote). Every attempt must be made to win back the erring officer. Two weeks prior notice must be given from the pulpit for any meeting concerning such a vote.

ARTICLE VII - MANNER OF CONDUCTING BUSINESS

Section 1

An annual business meeting shall be held on the fourth Sunday of every January.

Section 2

Special meetings can be called by the Pastor at anytime as he deems necessary. (Two weeks

prior notice of meetings called by the Pastor will be left at the Pastor's discretion). Any member that wishes to call a meeting must do so by informing the Pastor of said meeting. The Pastor will then immediately give two weeks notice of said meeting or call the meeting to order at the next regular Sunday night service.

Section 3

Those members 18 years old and over can vote. Any member who has been absent for three consecutive months that is not providentially hindered is ineligible to vote until restoration has been made. (If necessary, the church will determine whether a member is providentially hindered by three-fourths vote). Anyone wishing to restore his membership must be restored 4 weeks prior to voting at any meeting.

Section 4

Abstaining from voting will not count for or against any candidate or issue that is being voted on. Although it will be documented how many chose to abstain.

ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS

Section 1

This constitution and by-laws shall be subject to such amendments as are necessary to the function of the church and that are consistent with the King James Bible.

Section 2

Any proposed amendment to this document must be submitted in writing, signed by its sponsor and presented to the Pastor to be announced two months prior to a business meeting except in urgent matters. At the business meeting the proposed change(s) will be discussed and voted on. This constitution may be amended by an affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds vote of all active present members.

ARTICLE IX - RESOLUTIONS

The governing board of Heartland Baptist Church, resolves to protect the Bible-based moral values of this ministry. The following policies represents the ministry's commitment to preserve Scriptural morals in the face of the outside societal influences seeking to degrade the Biblical family, pervert the moral values of our nation, and to intimidate God's people from speaking God's truth in love.

THEREFORE, be it hereby resolved that the following policies be communicated to each staff member and ministry volunteer and enforced as the guiding policies of this ministry:

Church Attendance/Services

Attendance in the general worship services of this church shall be open to the general public subject to the standard and expectations contained in this resolution and other applicable ministry policies.

Behavior Standards

In all services and programs of this ministry, reasonable standards of decorum and order shall be

maintained at all times. As such, no one shall, by appearance or behavior, be permitted to draw attentions to themselves in contravention to the ministry's purpose. Any individual who, in the sole discretion of the pastor or ministry leadership, is found to be in violation of this policy shall be removed from the ministry premises immediately.

Special Class Designations

Where appropriate, the pastor, in his sole discretion, shall designate specific assignments and qualifications for various special classes or group activities. Such assignments and qualifications shall be enforced for all individuals who wish to attend the ministry function. Individuals who do not meet the qualifications for a specific class or activity, in the sole discretion of the pastor, shall not be allowed to participate in the designated activity.

Staff Training

All volunteers or staff that have contact with the general public on behalf of the ministry are perceived to be speaking on behalf of the ministry. These positions include, but are not limited to, receptionists, ushers, greeters, and anyone else who has contact with the general public as a representative of the ministry. All staff with contact to the general public are required to exhibit the utmost display of Christian character. Use of abusive or pejorative language of any kind is strictly prohibitive and shall be grounds for discipline. No staff member shall ever be disrespectful to any person for any reason.

Ushers

Ushers are required to conduct their activities with decorum and respect. Any conduct that an usher observes that may be distracting to the activities of the ministry should be brought to the attention of the pastor immediately. An usher should never touch any person in an effort to remove that individual from the premises except when absolutely necessary to prevent the individual from injuring himself or others. If directed by the pastor, an usher may contact the authorities to respond to the scene in an effort to remove the individual(s) causing the disturbance and restore order.

Receptionists

Receptionists are responsible for greeting anyone who contacts the ministry by telephone or visits the ministry. Receptionists are not official spokespersons for the ministry. As such, any questions regarding the Scriptural position or activities of the ministry should be directed to the pastor for further handling. Prospective participants in the ministry should be mailed an information packet. Receptionists shall not answer questions regarding the position of the church in matters of faith, practice, or policy over the phone or to persons unknown to the ministry. Answering such questions shall be grounds for immediate removal from the position including termination of employment.

ARTICLE X - DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution of this organization, proceeds shall be used for a non-profit organization chosen by the membership.

History of Heartland Baptist Church

On September 18, 1996 Pastor Ron Crank started Lighthouse Baptist Church in his home. The first service consisted of 22 members present. Later the services moved to Peoples State Bank in Altamont. On different occasions the services were held in the park when the bank was unavailable. From there the church met in the Living Museum in Altamont.

On August 21, 1998 the church purchased the property at 2473 E. US Hwy 40 in Altamont from Stone Sandblasting and Painting. The property consisted of a house and a pole building. Services were held at the house while construction was being done on the pole building to transform it into a church. In 2001 new construction had begun to add on a church fellowship hall, kitchen and restrooms.

In November 2004, Pastor Ron Crank resigned the church and went into evangelism. Pastor Robert Tucker served as an interim pastor from December 2004, until May 29th, 2005 at which time the church called Anthony Troy Kurtz to serve as their pastor, and at the time of this document was still serving to that capacity.

From 2005 till September 30th, 2014 many remodeling project have taken place; new drywall and dropped ceilings, new bathroom stalls, carpet, cabinets, heating and cooling, among other smaller projects.

On October 1st, 2014 Lighthouse Baptist Church sold their property to Jason Wildbur from Louisville IL for the use of a Cub Cadet dealership. On October 1st, 2014 Lighthouse Baptist Church began meeting at the Living Museum at 102 S. Main St. in Altamont IL.

After many months and even years of consideration, prayer and counseling it was decided to hold a meeting on December 6th, 2014 to put to vote the future of Lighthouse Baptist Church. At the meeting it was decided that it would be in the best interest of the church to dissolve and re-charter. On April 5th, 2015 Lighthouse Baptist Church came to an end and on that same day the new church was renamed, re-constituted and re-chartered and Heartland Baptist church was birthed into existence.

Future plans are to purchase a building or a piece of property and build a new church building all for the glory of God.