

*Heritage of Faith Church*  
*Deuteronomy 6:7      A Home Discipleship Church*

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CONSTITUTION  
AND  
BY-LAWS

Adopted: April 30, 2007

## Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>CONSTITUTION</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Preamble</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Article I: NAME</b>  | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Article II: PURPOSE</b>                                      | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Article III: STATEMENT OF FAITH</b>                          | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Article IV: FORM OF GOVERNMENT</b>                           | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Article V: CORPORATION STATUS</b>                            | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Article VI: AFFILIATIONS</b>                                 | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Article VII: MEMBERSHIP</b>                                  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Article VIII: CHURCH OFFICERS</b>                            | <b>3</b>  |
| Section 1. Elders   | 3         |
| Section 2. Deacons  | 3         |
| <b>Article IX: CHURCH DISCIPLINE</b>                            | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Article X: ADDITIONAL HERITAGE OF FAITH CHURCH DOCUMENTS</b> | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Article XI: DISSOLUTION</b>                                  | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Article XII: AMENDMENTS</b>                                  | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>STATEMENT OF FAITH</b>                                       | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>BY-LAWS</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Article I: MEMBERSHIP PROCEDURES</b>                         | <b>8</b>  |
| Section 1. explanation  | 8         |
| Section 2. Qualifications                                       | 8         |
| Section 3. Transfer of Membership                               | 9         |
| Section 4. Responsibilities                                     | 9         |
| Section 5. Dual Membership                                      | 9         |
| Section 6. Announcements Concerning Departing Members           | 9         |
| <b>Article II: CHURCH MEETINGS</b>                              | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Article III: Sacraments (ORDINANCES)</b>                     | <b>10</b> |
| Section 1. Baptism  | 10        |
| Section 2. The Lord's Supper                                    | 11        |
| <b>Article IV: CHURCH DISCIPLINE</b>                            | <b>11</b> |
| Section 1. General  | 11        |
| Section 2. Offenses Addressed                                   | 11        |
| Section 3. Processes Used                                       | 11        |
| <b>Article V: FINANCES</b>                                      | <b>13</b> |
| Section 1. Collections  | 13        |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Section 2. Payments _____                                   | 13        |
| Section 3. Designated Giving _____                          | 14        |
| Section 4. Monthly Procedures _____                         | 14        |
| Section 5. Annual Procedures _____                          | 14        |
| Section 6. Salary Compensation _____                        | 14        |
| <b>Article VI: ELDER BOARD DECISION-MAKING POLICY _____</b> | <b>14</b> |
| Section 1. Policy _____                                     | 14        |
| Section 2. Non-Discipline Issues _____                      | 15        |
| Section 3. Discipline and Removal Issues _____              | 15        |
| <b>Article VII: APPOINTMENT OF CHURCH OFFICERS _____</b>    | <b>16</b> |
| Section 1. Qualifications _____                             | 16        |
| Section 2. Procedure _____                                  | 16        |
| Section 3. Indemnification _____                            | 16        |
| <b>Article VIII: AMENDMENTS _____</b>                       | <b>17</b> |
| <b>Article IX: Fiscal year _____</b>                        | <b>17</b> |

# CONSTITUTION OF HERITAGE OF FAITH CHURCH

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## PREAMBLE

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We, the Elders of Heritage of Faith Church, establish and approve the following Articles.

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## ARTICLE I: NAME

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The name of this local body of Christ shall be Heritage of Faith Church.

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## ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

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God's purpose in establishing this local expression of the body of Christ is that His manifold wisdom, which He demonstrated in Christ Jesus our Lord, shall be made known (Ephesians 3. 10). In response, we purpose to glorify the Lord God in the following mutually supportive ways as directed by the Holy Scriptures:

- a. By gathering together for worship and prayer in the unity of the Spirit (Acts 2.42);
  - b. By the exercising of spiritual gifts for the edification, maturing, and equipping of God's people for service to God (1 Corinthians 12.4-7; 2 Timothy 3.16, 17);
  - c. By proclaiming the gospel of God's saving grace in Jesus Christ to the world and future generations through word and practice (Acts 1.8; Matthew 5.13-15).
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## ARTICLE III: STATEMENT OF FAITH

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The Holy Bible, consisting of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is the only authority in all matters of faith and practice. Appendix A to this Constitution contains the official Statement of Faith for Heritage of Faith Church. The "Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689" (BCF) and the "Westminster Confession of Faith" contain a more detailed expression of beliefs and is recommended for further study with the following qualifications (based on BCF Chaptering):

- a. Chapter 26, Paragraph 4: While the authority of the Pope of Rome is in no way acknowledged, the matter of the identity of the Antichrist is an open question subject to the unfolding of the last days.
- b. Chapter 26, Paragraph 9: The participation of the congregation in the calling of the officers of the church is defined in Article VIII of this Constitution.

- c. Chapter 26, Paragraph 10: The Biblical terms for the office commonly referred to as Pastor are Bishop (Overseer) and Elder (Presbyter). Some may be fully supported in this ministry, while others earn a living outside of the church. They are all, however, equal in authority and office, yet may be gifted differently.

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#### **ARTICLE IV: FORM OF GOVERNMENT**

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The government of this church shall be under the headship of Jesus Christ and in obedience to the Word of God (Colossians 1.17-18). Under Christ's leadership, Heritage of Faith Church shall have Elders (pastors) to under shepherd, administer, and oversee the affairs of this church in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and associated By-laws. Authority to carry out these responsibilities is shared equally by all the Elders. In addition, Heritage of Faith Church shall have Deacons who will primarily minister to the physical needs of the church, both corporately and individually (1 Timothy 3.1-16; 1 Peter 5.2, 3; Titus 1.5-9).

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#### **ARTICLE V: CORPORATION STATUS**

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Heritage of Faith Church is a religious corporation as filed with the State of Illinois and is not organized for the private gain of any person. It is organized under the Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law exclusively for religious purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

No substantial part of the activities of this corporation shall consist of carrying on political propaganda, attempting to influence legislation, participating or intervening in any political campaign (including the publishing or distribution of statements) on behalf of any candidate for public office.

The property of this corporation is irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes, and no part of the net income or assets shall be used for the personal benefit (private gain) of any officer, member, or private person. (This is not to be understood to preclude salaries paid to staff.)

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#### **ARTICLE VI: AFFILIATIONS**

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The government of Heritage of Faith Church may not be subordinated by affiliation to that of any other organization. Heritage of Faith Church may, however, cooperate with other organizations of like mind and purpose and may even affiliate with the same as long as the right of withdrawal is reserved.

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#### **ARTICLE VII: MEMBERSHIP**

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The membership process allows a means of maintaining the purity of Heritage of Faith Church and ensuring the administration of pastoral care (1 Peter 1.15,16).

Any person desiring to become a member of Heritage of Faith Church may do so by indicating that desire to any Elder at any time, and by fulfilling all membership requirements. These requirements include a profession of belief in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, a willingness to submit to the authority of Scripture, a desire to participate in ministry, and an understanding and acceptance of the authority and leadership of the Elders of Heritage of Faith Church as they submit to God (Romans 3.21-26; 1 Corinthians 12.4-7; Hebrews 13.17).

A list will be maintained of all current members of Heritage of Faith Church, as well as all those who are routine attendees, so that watchcare responsibilities can be facilitated (for detailed procedures see the By-laws).

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## ARTICLE VIII: CHURCH OFFICERS

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The officers of this church shall consist of men in the position of Elders and Deacons. The process of appointing church officers is addressed in the By-laws.

### SECTION 1: ELDERS

Elders shall be men called of God who are qualified according to I Timothy 3.1-7, Titus 1.6-9, and 1 Peter 5.2,3, and have accepted the Heritage of Faith Church Statement of Faith. Unless providentially hindered, there shall be no less than two Elders at any given time, and up to as many as the Lord calls to the undershepherding role. Each Elder will serve as long as he remains Biblically qualified, available, and desires to continue to serve.

The duty of Elders is to provide oversight of all ministry areas, including:

- a. Attending to the ministry of the Word, which takes place through teaching and preaching
- b. Carrying on watchcare and oversight responsibilities relating to the flock entrusted into their care
- c. Ministering to the body through persistent corporate and individual intercessory prayer
- d. Instructing, edifying, encouraging, and admonishing the body
- e. Implementing church discipline, as needed
- f. Approving and overseeing all other leadership positions and ministries of the body
- g. Establishing policies and practices relating to church matters that are not explicitly covered by this Constitution and By-laws
- h. Providing information to the body on a routine basis on all significant matters relating to the life of the church
- i. Ensuring Biblically sound doctrine is the basis for all teaching, preaching, and ministry within the church, whether performed through members or guests
- j. Overseeing the recognized ordinances of the church – Baptism and the Lord's Supper
- k. Providing oversight of the acquisition or disposal of church property
- l. Conducting open, monthly business meetings to address affairs of the church.

### SECTION 2. DEACONS

Deacons shall be men called of God who are qualified according to I Timothy 3.8-13 and have accepted the Heritage of Faith Church Statement of Faith. Unless providentially hindered, there shall be no less than two Deacons at any given time, and as many as the Lord calls to this ministering role. In the case where the church is providentially hindered from having the stated number of deacons, the Elders may, until such time as the hindrance

is removed, assume the roles set aside in the by-laws for deacons. Each Deacon will serve as long as he remains Biblically qualified, available, and desires to continue to serve.

The duty of Deacons is to assist the Elders by:

- a. Dispensing benevolence funds according to the physical and spiritual needs of the body
- b. Exercising caretaker and stewardship responsibilities over all church properties
- c. Exercising oversight of financial matters of the church, including: all expenses throughout the year; the annual review of the church budget, staff salaries, and financial needs of those whose ministries the church supports
- d. Acquiring or disposing of all church property of any kind (subject to Article XI)
- e. Providing oversight of all items relating to the logistical aspects of church services
- f. Remaining aware of the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the body
- g. Conducting routine, open meetings to address temporal affairs of the church
- h. Establishing policies and practices relating to Deaconal ministry areas that are not explicitly covered by this Constitution and By-laws.

## **ARTICLE IX: CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

It is the aim of Heritage of Faith Church to vindicate the integrity and honor of Christ by maintaining the local church government that He prescribed (Matthew 18.15-18; Romans 16.17; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Thessalonians 3.6-15; 1 Timothy 5.20, 6.3; Titus 1.13, 2.15, 3.10) and thereby the purity of the local church and her worship (I Corinthians 5.6-8). To that end it is the aim of Heritage of Faith Church to apply consistently Biblical principles in order to restore offenders (Matthew 18.18; 1 Corinthians 5.5; Galatians 6.1) and deter others from sin (I Timothy 5.20).

Church discipline may be applied to any member of Heritage of Faith Church. Members cannot avoid the possibility of church discipline by removing their name from the membership roles (for detailed procedures see By-laws Article IV).

## **ARTICLE X: ADDITIONAL HERITAGE OF FAITH CHURCH DOCUMENTS**

All policy statements, position papers, or ministry guidelines approved by the Elder Board are to be in agreement with this Constitution and By-laws. Should contradictions be found, this Constitution and associated By-laws are to take precedence until the discrepancies are corrected either by formal changes to this document or to the other documents in question. All policy statements, position papers, or ministry guidelines approved by the Elder Board are to be made readily available to the church at large.

Additional documents generated by Heritage of Faith Church may include the following:

- a. Heritage of Faith Church Policy Statements. Policies that are specifically intended for wide distribution and represent the position for the entire church. These policies are intended to govern decisions and actions of all members and routine attendees of Heritage of Faith Church.
- b. Heritage of Faith Church Elder Board Policy Statements. Policies that are used primarily by the Elder Board to govern decisions. Although intended for Elder Board use, they may be used as a pattern by other Heritage of Faith Church leadership to guide decisions.
- c. Elder Board Position Papers. Position papers present current Elder Board understanding relative to matters of Biblical doctrine, belief, or Christian living not specifically addressed in the Statement of Faith. These papers are intended for wide distribution.
- d. Heritage of Faith Church Ministry Guidelines. Guidelines that provide specific guidance relative to a particular ministry area of the church. They are intended only to ensure constancy of purpose, approach, and continuity without restricting flexibility and creativity in the accomplishment of the ministry area.

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### **ARTICLE XI: DISSOLUTION**

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In the event of the dissolution of Heritage of Faith Church by the Elder Board, no member, officer of the church, or private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any assets. Upon dissolution, assets of the church shall first be used to pay any outstanding debts. Following this, the remaining assets of the corporation shall be given to a nonprofit corporation of like faith and practice and/or to missionaries supported by the church.

The selection of recipients, as well as the timing of the actual transfers, will be determined by vote of the Elder Board with consideration given to recommendations made by the Board of Deacons. Actions required to carry out the dissolution will be performed by the Deacon Board, who will seek out legal assistance (if necessary) to complete the process.

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### **ARTICLE XII: AMENDMENTS**

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Amendments to this Constitution shall be approved by the Elder Board at a regularly scheduled Elder Board meeting. Notice of proposed amendments must be made to the membership of Heritage of Faith Church for at least 30 days prior to formal approval and incorporation by the Elder Board to solicit comments and recommendations.

# HERITAGE OF FAITH CHURCH

## STATEMENT OF FAITH

### I. THE WORD OF GOD

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. Proverbs 30:5-6; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20,21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31,32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32

### II. THE TRINITY

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit); that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption. Genesis 1:1,26; Deuteronomy 6:4; John 1:1,3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19,20; Ephesians 4:5,6

### III. GOD THE FATHER

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, 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 Jesus Christ. Luke 10:21,22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; I Timothy 1:1,2; 2:5,6; I Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6

### IV. JESUS CHRIST

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth. Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 8:36; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30, 31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; 6:9,10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28; I Timothy 3:16

### V. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. John 3:3-8; 14:16,17,26; 15:26,27; John 16:7-14; Romans 8:9-11; I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26

### VI. SALVATION

We believe that man was created by God in His own image; that he sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners by choice and therefore under condemnation. We believe that those who repent and forsake sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures, delivered from condemnation and receive eternal life. Genesis. 1:26; 5:2; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17; 3:19; Eccl. 2:11; John 3:14; 5:24; John 5:30; 7:13; 8:12; 10:26; Romans 9:22; II Thess 1:9; Rev. 19:3,20; 21:18; Psalm 51:7; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14; Romans 3:19; 5:19; Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:9; John 3:16; John 1:13; II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1

## VII. THE CHURCH

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of baptized believers in Jesus Christ and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. We believe this global mission field begins at home and spreads out in concentric circles. The church is a multigenerational community of faith. Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Acts 1:8; 2:42; Ephesians 2:19-22; 5:19-21; 6:1-4; Hebrews 10:23-25

## VIII. CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellow men; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. I Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:1-3; Hebrews 12:1-2; John 14:15,23-24; I John 2:3-6; II Corinthians 9:6-9; I Corinthians 4:2; Col. 1:9-10

## IX. THE SACRAMENTS (ORDINANCES)

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. We affirm that water baptism signifies union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, the baptism by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, the washing away of sin, the washing of regeneration, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the circumcision of the heart. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-7; I Corinthians 11:23-26; 12:13; Colossians 2:11-12; Titus 3:5, 6

## X. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other. I Timothy 2:5; Romans 14:7-9,12

## XI. THE LAST THINGS

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous and the endless suffering of the wicked. Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Phil. 3:20; I Thessalonians 4:15; II Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 4:5; I Corinthians 15; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:4-6,11-15

# BY-LAWS OF HERITAGE OF FAITH CHURCH

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## ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP PROCEDURES

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### SECTION 1. EXPLANATION

Membership at Heritage of Faith Church is generally reckoned by household when the head of that household meets the criteria of SECTION 2 below. This is done while remaining silent concerning whether a non-professing child is an individual member of the church or not.

This simply means that the Elders of our church are not making a judicial declaration concerning the status of our children as individual members of the church. The Elders are not saying that our children are excluded from membership in the church, and they are not saying that our children are included in membership in the church. This determination is left to the individual households to declare. Nevertheless, all the children are related to the church through their membership in member households.

The Elders of the church recognize, through admitting the head of the household into such membership, that he is responsible before God for the spiritual condition of that household. The head of the household therefore makes recommendations to the Elders concerning members of his household on such matters as baptism and the Lord's Supper. Under the headship of Christ, the administration of church sacraments (or ordinances) remains with the Elders. However, in such administration, the Elders are to respect the spiritual responsibility of the head of the household. Therefore, credo-baptist heads of households will be responsible to present their family members to the Elders for baptism upon a credible personal profession of faith of that child. Paedo-baptist heads of households will be responsible to present their infant children, as well as any other unbaptized family members, to the Elders for baptism at the earliest opportunity.

All Elders of the church will reckon both historic-protestant forms of baptism as legitimate. At the same time, no Elder will be required to perform a baptism that he has personal reservations about. Because of our commitment to the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3), these differences will be procedurally resolved between us.

### SECTION 2. QUALIFICATIONS

Any household (one or more persons) desiring to become a member of Heritage of Faith Church may indicate that desire to any Elder at any time. At the earliest convenient time, two or more Elders will interview the prospective household and discuss the following membership requirements:

- a. Belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Romans 3.21-26);
- b. A willingness to submit to the authority of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16);
- c. A desire to share in the ministry of this local church family by using the spiritual gift(s) God has given (1 Corinthians 12.4-7);

- d. A willingness to submit to the leadership and authority of the Elders of this local body as they submit to God and the authority of Scripture (Hebrews 13.17).

Upon acceptable understanding and a positive acceptance of the above requirements, the household will be asked to make a public commitment to membership in the church. Upon completion of these requirements, the household will be considered a member of Heritage of Faith Church.

### **SECTION 3. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP**

Recognizing the need for orderly transfer of membership, it may be necessary to determine whether a transfer from another church body is in order and based upon Biblical grounds. If any outstanding difficulties are uncovered, the Elders shall work with the prospective member for their resolution.

For those members of this local body who wish to transfer to another church, a letter of transfer shall be submitted to the accepting church should it be desired by those transferring. When such letter is granted, membership in this church shall be considered terminated.

### **SECTION 4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

All members are expected to attend the Sunday morning worship service of Heritage of Faith Church. In addition, they shall earnestly pursue the application of their spiritual giftedness and natural abilities and talents to ministries of Heritage of Faith Church (Hebrews 10.24,25; Romans 12). Each member is also expected to be familiar with the contents of the Heritage of Faith Church Statement of Faith, Constitution, and By-Laws.

Heads of households are expected to actively apply the Word of God to their families. This is done through regular reading of the Bible, Scripture memorization, catechism recitation and the encouragement of secret devotions. The Elders of Heritage of Faith Church will provide the necessary tools, training and support to see that every head of household is equipped to fulfill this duty.

### **SECTION 5. DUAL MEMBERSHIP**

Any person who is currently a member of another church, yet through a temporary relocation has routinely been in attendance at Heritage of Faith Church, shall be encouraged to have dual membership status. This status shall facilitate proper watchcare and oversight while the person is under the care of Heritage of Faith Church.

### **SECTION 6. ANNOUNCEMENTS CONCERNING DEPARTING MEMBERS**

Upon departure of a member from Heritage of Faith Church an appropriate announcement will be made to the congregation at a subsequent service. Discretion must be used when giving the reason for leaving, therefore, general agreement among the Elders will be reached before the reason is given in a public announcement.

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## **ARTICLE II: CHURCH MEETINGS**

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Heritage of Faith Church holds service every Sunday morning and the Elders may schedule additional regular meetings or special meetings as appropriate. Heritage of Faith Church acknowledges families (which includes singles, widows, divorcees, grandparents, etc.) as God's building blocks of the church, and maintains family-integrated rather than family-segregated meetings.

During the Sunday morning meetings, the preaching of the Word will predominantly be expository in nature. The teaching or preaching during other meetings may normally be topical in nature.

Any meeting is intended to complement the Sunday morning service such that the body will be provided with a balance of those elements essential to Christian worship (e.g., corporate prayer, teaching, preaching, sharing, mutual edification, praise, singing, Christian ordinances, exercising of spiritual gifts, etc.). Throughout the week there may be smaller, group meetings for specific purposes, such as: home fellowship, discipling, etc.

There shall be at least one formal Elder Board meeting each month for the conduct of business associated with oversight of Heritage of Faith Church. This meeting shall be open to the entire body to attend, however, only Elders may vote when a vote is required. Other meetings may be called by the Elders (with limited attendance) to address sensitive shepherding issues not appropriate for public exposure, extended times of prayer, and mutual shepherding.

There shall be at least one annual Heritage of Faith Church meeting for conduct of business that affects the entire body. This meeting will be held in the first quarter of the calendar year (Jan-Mar) and will include presentation of the budget for the next fiscal year (see Article XII).

In addition, other meetings may be called or established for worship, fellowship, or business, as required. These additional meetings are to be approved by the Elder board and may be requested by anyone associated formally or informally with Heritage of Faith Church.

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## **ARTICLE III: SACRAMENTS (ORDINANCES)**

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Heritage of Faith Church recognizes that the Lord has established two sacraments (ordinances) to be faithfully observed in the church. These are: baptism, which is to be undergone once; and the Lord's Supper, which is celebrated regularly.

### **SECTION 1. BAPTISM**

The Lord has commanded baptism with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20). Baptism with water is a sacrament (or ordinance) of the Christian church, and the Elders of the church are responsible to ensure that baptisms are administered in a scriptural fashion, and the proper signification of water baptism preserved and maintained. Water baptism signifies union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3-7), the baptism by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13), the washing away of sin (Acts 22:16), the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5), the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:6; Acts 10:44,47), and the circumcision of the heart (Colossians 2:11-12).

Water baptism does not impart grace by means of water. God imparts grace to His saints to enable them to obey Him (2 Corinthians 9:8), and strengthens them further by grace in that obedience (Hebrews 12:14-15). The faithful observance of water baptism constitutes one part of that obedience, and is therefore a means of grace. Legitimate modes of water baptism include immersion, pouring, or sprinkling in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Romans 6:4; Acts 10:44-48; Hebrews 9:9-10). The scriptural significance of water baptism is not nullified by the mode of application.

The head of the household makes recommendations to the Elders concerning members of his household regarding the matter of baptism. Under the headship of Christ, the administration of baptism remains the responsibility of the Elders. However, in such administration, the Elders are to respect the spiritual responsibility of the head of the household. Therefore, credo-baptist heads of households will be responsible to present their family members to the Elders for baptism upon a personal profession of faith of that child. Paedo-baptist heads of households will be responsible to present their infant children, as well as any other unbaptized family members, to

the Elders for baptism at the earliest opportunity.

## **SECTION 2. THE LORD'S SUPPER**

Because the Lord exhorted us to do this in remembrance of Him (I Corinthians 11.23), and in light of the practice of the early church (Acts 2.42, 20.7), Heritage of Faith Church observes the Lord's Supper regularly. While the service does not need to be conducted by an Elder, the ordinance shall be carried out under the supervision of the Elders. Participation in the Lord's Supper is open to all believers in attendance, regardless of their local church affiliation, unless they are under church discipline (see Article IV of By-Laws) or have unresolved sin against God or a brother (Matthew 5.23,24; 1 Corinthians 11.28,29).

## **ARTICLE IV: CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

### **SECTION 1. GENERAL**

This portion of the By-laws addresses church discipline as described in Matthew 18.17,18. The disciplinary measures described below are to be exercised only against offenders who profess to be Christians; they are not to be exercised against those who make no claim to be Christians, even though they be clearly guilty of the listed offenses.

"Fair warning" is an essential of justice, and so an Elder is to advise each applicant for membership of the discipline policy of Heritage of Faith Church.

If an excommunicated member withdraws from Heritage of Faith Church:

- a. The departee's membership status is withdrawn and not in good standing.
- b. The Elders are obliged to inform the departee's new church, if known, of his status.
- c. Reinstatement to membership in good standing requires the completion of the disciplinary procedure described below.

### **SECTION 2. OFFENSES ADDRESSED**

- a. Divisiveness (e.g., Titus 3.9-11; Romans 16.17,18; Hebrews 13.17)
- b. Scandalous immorality (e.g., I Corinthians 5.9-11, 6.9,10; Exodus 20.12-17)
- c. Rejecting the essential doctrines of the Christian faith (e.g., 1 Timothy 1. 19,20, 6.3-5; 2 John 9-11).

### **SECTION 3. PROCESSES USED**

- a. General. The disciplinary processes mentioned below are not to be initiated by any individual Elder, but only by the Elders acting as a board. They are to be applied only in the event of proven instances of any offenses described above. Offenses that have not resulted in reconciliation in response to the second step outlined in Matthew 18.15-18 may be taken to the church. The first step in taking an issue to the church is the taking of the issue by those who have unsuccessfully sought the offender's repentance to the Elders of the church. The Elders, in turn, are then to do everything possible to assure that the disciplinary steps described below are properly carried out.

The elders are first to conduct an investigation to determine if the accused is guilty of the charge. If the charge of the offense listed above is adequately supported by actions proved by witnesses or a confession,

the Elders are to initiate admonition (defined below) (2 Thessalonians 3.14,15; 1 Timothy 5.20; 2 Timothy 4.2, 16,17; Titus 1.13, 2.15, 3.10,11). If admonition is rejected by the offender, or admonition does not lead to cessation of the unacceptable behavior, the Elders are to initiate the excommunication process (defined below) (I Corinthians 5. 11, 13). Excommunication and admonition will continue until restoration (defined below) (2 Corinthians 2. 5-11).

Disciplinary measures will be documented in writing and will include:

- i. A brief history of the case
- ii. A list of proven offenses
- iii. A list of the corrective actions required
- iv. A schedule of counseling sessions with one or more of the Elders
- v. In the case of admonition, a clear statement of the consequences of failure to take the required corrective actions
- vi. When the offender is successful in fulfilling all corrective actions, an acknowledgment; or, in the case of prior excommunication, a statement of full restoration.

The Elders may not receive a charge against an Elder unless the charge is supported by two or more witnesses and provided in writing. Removal from office is not, strictly speaking, disciplinary. Removal should follow, with or without discipline, whenever an office holder is found to be unqualified for his office.

b. Admonition is to include:

- i. A description of the unacceptable behavior
- ii. A description of the behavior that must replace the unacceptable behavior
- iii. The definition of a procedure for monitoring the offender's behavior over a period of time
- iv. A warning that excommunication will follow if corrective action is not taken.

The length of the monitoring period is to be determined by the Elders. If the offender acknowledges the justice of the admonition, agrees to take the required corrective action, and agrees to submit to the monitoring, the Elders are to carry into effect the monitoring procedure that they have designed. This monitoring period will be considered successfully terminated when the end of the period has been reached and the Elders are satisfied that the offensive behavior was not repeated during the monitoring period.

c. Excommunication is:

- i. The exclusion of an offender from the privilege of participation in the public services of the church
- ii. The exclusion of the offender from the social meals, get togethers, and recreational activities of the church and the individual members of the church
- iii. The removal from the membership roll.

When the Elders determine excommunication is appropriate, they will inform the church of the reasons behind their decision and explain to the membership the duty of all members with respect to the action.

- d. Restoration is the return to the offender of the privileges that were previously withdrawn in excommunication. Restoration will be offered to the offender by the Elders when the offender has satisfied the Elders that full repentance is a reality. When the Elders determine restoration is appropriate, they will inform the church of the reasons behind their decision and explain to the membership the duty of all members with respect to the action.

## **ARTICLE V: FINANCES**

In order to be above reproach before God and one another as stewards of all the Lord has entrusted to Heritage of Faith Church, it is important to establish proper financial accountability (1 Timothy 6.9,10; 1 Corinthians 16.3,4). To ensure this, the Deacon Board will exercise oversight of all financial matters of the church. To support this responsibility, a Treasurer shall be assigned to account for all Heritage of Faith Church finances.

Upon approval by both the Elder Board and the Deacon Board, the Treasurer shall serve as long as availability and desire to continue to serve remains.

The duties of the Treasurer are to:

- a. Ensure that no expenditure exceeds its annual item allocation without Deacon Board approval
- b. Minister closely with the Deacon Board to ensure timely dispensing of funds when required for various physical needs of the body
- c. Oversee the counting and banking of all funds collected by the church
- d. Oversee the maintaining of an accurate record of funds received and dispensed by the church
- e. Report the financial position of the church at the annual financial review in December
- f. Submit a preliminary budget for the next year to the Deacon Board and Elder Board
- g. Make available to the Elder Board and the Deacon Board a monthly, written financial statement
- h. Recommend to the Deacon Board policies and practices relating to financial management that are not explicitly covered by this Constitution and By-laws.

Detailed descriptions of the procedures to be followed relative to the above responsibilities are contained in the following sections.

### **SECTION 1. COLLECTIONS**

After each service in which collections are received, the Treasurer, or his designee, and one other person (preferably an Elder or Deacon) shall count the receipts and sign a register recording the amount. The Treasurer is responsible to ensure the deposit of all collections and to keep accurate records of each individual or family's giving, if known.

### **SECTION 2. PAYMENTS**

All payments or reimbursements must be approved by either a Deacon or Elder who is not directly involved with the transaction. Benevolence payments must be approved by the Deacons prior to actual distribution.

### **SECTION 3. DESIGNATED GIVING**

Designated gifts shall be permitted to be contributed only to the fund accounts established by the Deacons and identified in the Heritage of Faith Church chart of accounts. Disbursement of funds from fund accounts shall be in accordance with the purpose of the fund account and under the supervision and control of the Deacons.

### **SECTION 4. MONTHLY PROCEDURES**

A monthly church expense and budget report will be prepared by the Treasurer to be presented to the Elders and Deacons. Independently, a Deacon will review the report and verify that proper procedures were followed. Each employed staff member of Heritage of Faith Church who requires expense reimbursement will submit an expense reimbursement report for review by the Treasurer and a separate Deacon. The monthly expense and budget report shall be available for review by any church member on request. However, confidentiality of individual or family giving will be maintained.

### **SECTION 5. ANNUAL PROCEDURES**

The Treasurer shall compile a new calendar year budget (based upon inputs from the Elders, Deacons, and other ministry leaders) to be presented first to the Deacon Board, then the Elder Board, then the entire church prior to December each year. The annual budget is to be made available to the church for review for at least one month prior to formal adoption by the Elder Board. Whenever the Deacon and Elder Board must make significant budget adjustments (affecting 5 % or more of the total annual budget), these will be presented to the church for review prior to formal adoption by the Elder Board.

The Deacons shall appoint an individual to review the year's financial records and report findings back to the Deacon and Elder Boards.

### **SECTION 6. SALARY COMPENSATION**

Salaries to be paid to Heritage of Faith Church staff shall be recommended by the Treasurer and follow the same procedure for approval as the annual budget. Any person receiving compensation from the church shall not be in a position to set the amount of the salary.

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## **ARTICLE VI: ELDER BOARD DECISION-MAKING POLICY**

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### **SECTION 1. POLICY**

The Elder Board shall earnestly strive to make all decisions by consensus. In the course of discussions between Elders and with others who may be participating, each Elder must:

- a. Earnestly strive to seek God's will and counsel (Psalm 143.10)
- b. Ensure scriptural admonitions are not violated (2 Timothy 3.16,17)
- c. Show mutual regard for one another (Philippians 2.2-4)
- d. Submit himself one to another (Ephesians 5.21)

- e. Wait patiently upon one another (Ephesians 4.2)
- f. Genuinely consider one another's interests and perspectives (Proverbs 15.22; Philippians 2.4)
- g. Prefer and defer to one another and other delegated decision groups on all minor issues (Proverbs 13.10)
- h. Maintain a teachable spirit (Proverbs 18.15)

**SECTION 2. NON-DISCIPLINE ISSUES**

If a consensus cannot be reached in a reasonable period of time on decisions not relating to church discipline, then a motion may be made (and must be seconded by another Elder) to:

- a. Discuss the issue in further detail, or
- b. Delay the decision for prayerful consideration and obtain more information as required, or
- c. Consider delegating the discussion to another group for more thorough investigation and recommendations, or
- d. Call for a vote — in which case a quorum of the Elders may vote with a simple majority needed to decide the issue.

A quorum is attained when half or more of the Elders are present. Also, when an Elder knows he will be absent, he may use his proxy vote on an issue scheduled to be decided upon.

In addition, an Elder may choose to abstain from voting. In such a case, his opportunity to vote will not be counted in the number present.

**SECTION 3. DISCIPLINE AND REMOVAL ISSUES**

If a consensus cannot be reached in a reasonable period of time on decisions relating to application of church discipline of a member or removal of an Elder or Deacon from office, then a motion may be made (and must be seconded by another Elder) to:

- a. Discuss the issue in further detail, or
- b. Delay the decision for prayerful consideration and obtain more information/counsel as required, or
- c. Call for a vote — in which case all Elders must be present to vote, and a two-thirds majority will be needed to decide the issue as follows:

| <b>NUMBER OF VOTING ELDERS PRESENT</b> | <b>VOTES TO CARRY</b> |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1                                      | N/A                   |
| 2                                      | 2-0                   |
| 3                                      | 2-1                   |
| 4                                      | 3-1                   |
| 5                                      | 4-1                   |
| 6                                      | 4-2                   |
| 7                                      | 5-2                   |
| 8                                      | 6-2                   |

|    |     |
|----|-----|
| 9  | 6-3 |
| 10 | 7-3 |

An Elder on a leave of absence will not be required to be present for a vote. Also, in decisions relating to discipline or removal of an Elder, the Elder in question will not be counted as a voting Elder and will not vote.

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## ARTICLE VII: APPOINTMENT OF CHURCH OFFICERS

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### SECTION 1. QUALIFICATIONS

God is the one who calls a man to the task of Elder or Deacon as He is the one who so equips the man both with the spiritual gifts and character needed for the office (Acts 20.28, Ephesians 4.11). It is therefore the responsibility of the church to discover and evaluate those whom God has called to the office of Elder and Deacon (Acts 6.3). This evaluation shall be based upon the Biblical qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3.1-13, Titus 1.5-9, and 1 Peter 5.23.

Each Elder and Deacon will serve as long as he remains Biblically qualified, available, and desires to continue to serve.

### SECTION 2. PROCEDURE

A candidate for either office may be recommended to the Elders by any member of Heritage of Faith Church. A man who believes that God is calling him may also seek the counsel of the Elders for possible candidacy (1 Timothy 3.1). It is the responsibility of all the Elders to examine the qualifications of a candidate for either office. In addition, the Deacons are to examine and approve a candidate for the office of Deacon.

If there is consensus among the Elders regarding the qualifications of a candidate, then the candidate will be presented to the membership for consideration, prayer, and a time of evaluation (1 Thessalonians 5.12; Acts 6.3-5). If consensus cannot be reached by the Elders, then the candidacy will be suspended.

A period of at least three months will be given for the membership to pray and ask questions of the candidate (or the Elders) with regard to his qualifications.

At the end of this time period, the Elders will evaluate both the responses from the membership and the status of the candidate. If there is still consensus among the Elders as to the qualifications of the candidate, he will then be brought before the membership in a worship service, in which he will be formally presented and acknowledged as one whom God has called to the task of Elder or Deacon.

### SECTION 3. INDEMNIFICATION

- a. The Board of Elders may choose to indemnify and advance the church-related expenses of any officer, employee, or agent of the church.
- b. Subject to the provisions of paragraph c. of this section, the church shall indemnify any elder or deacon or former elder or deacon of the church against claims, liabilities, expenses, and costs necessarily incurred by him in connection with the defense, compromise, or settlement of any action, suite or proceeding, civil or criminal, in which such person is made a party by reason of being or having been an elder or deacon, to the extent not otherwise compensated, indemnified or reimbursed by insurance, if:

- 1) The conduct of the elder or deacon was in good faith;
  - 2) The elder or deacon reasonably believed that his conduct was in the best interests of the church, or at least not opposed to its best interests; and
  - 3) In the case of any criminal proceeding, the elder or deacon had no reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful.
- c. The church may not indemnify an elder or deacon in connection with a proceeding brought against him by or in the right of the church, in which he was adjudged liable to the church, or where the elder or deacon is charged with receiving an improper personal benefit and he is adjudged liable on that basis.

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**ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS**

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Amendments to the By-Laws shall be approved by the Elder Board at a regularly scheduled Elder Board meeting. Notice of proposed amendments must be made to the membership of Heritage of Faith Church for at least 30 days prior to formal approval and incorporation by the Elder Board to solicit comments and recommendations.

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**ARTICLE IX: FISCAL YEAR**

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The fiscal year of Heritage of Faith Church shall be from April 1 through March 31.