

DISTINCTIVES

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

WE PREACH NOT OURSELVES BUT
CHRIST JESUS THE LORD.

WELCOME

Dear Visitor,

We are very grateful to have you visit our church and would like to help you get to know us better by providing this booklet about our church. Please feel free to call, write or speak to one of the elders if you have any questions regarding the content you find here.

The first thing you probably want to know is, “What kind of church is Heritage of Faith Church? HOFC is a non-denominational, Reformed church. By Reformed we mean we hold to the great doctrines of the Protestant Reformation. We believe and hold dear the doctrines of God’s saving grace which were recovered in the Reformation and are clearly taught in Scripture. We consider ourselves to be a New Testament church in the tradition of the historic protestant confessions of faith (the Westminster Confession of Faith and the London Baptist Confession).

The following pages will describe for you the specific doctrinal beliefs of Heritage of Faith Church. For more information we encourage you to get a copy of our church Statement of Faith.

May the Lord bless you as you seek to find a local body of believers with which to fellowship. Please feel free to call the office if you have any questions regarding this information or any other information from the church.

Your servants in Christ,

The Elders of Heritage of Faith Church

DOCTRINAL DISTINCTIVES

HOFC IS EVANGELICAL

Evangelical simply means “proclaiming the good news”. We proclaim the gospel that we are saved by the work of Christ alone, through faith in Him alone. A key verse we would point to regarding what it means to be Evangelical is Ephesians 2:8-9 which says “*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*” (see also I Corinthians 15:3ff)

HOFC AND THE BIBLE

HOFC is a local church which acknowledges the supreme authority of Holy Scripture. We believe the Bible, as it was composed in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, to be the only inspired, inerrant, infallible, and authoritative Word of God. The Bible, which in English translations is made up of 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is completely sufficient concerning all matters of belief and living. (II Timothy 3:16-17)

When we speak of the Bible being inspired we have in mind the idea of “God Breathed”. Inerrancy simply means without error and without contradiction. We believe that the Bible is completely true and without error. We also believe the Scriptures are sufficient in that they provide everything necessary for life and godliness. (II Peter 1:21)

HOFC IS REFORMED

We hold to what has historically been called a Reformed view of the sovereignty of God in salvation. What does that mean? It means we are convinced that God is sovereign—that He has predetermined who will be saved, and that we are saved not because of what we have done. That God, in the mystery of His will, has chosen us.

We also believe that man is responsible, and that people are completely responsible for the choices they make. The Gospel is freely offered to all. For some of us, this is in the realm of mystery. Both of these things are taught by the Scriptures. The part that really sets us apart is our belief that the Bible teaches, again and again, the doctrine of election and the sovereignty God. (Romans 3:10ff; 8:28,32; Ephesians 1:4,

11; Mark 10:45; Revelation 5:9; John 6:37,44; 10:27-29)

HOFC PRACTICES BOTH INFANT & BELIEVER'S BAPTISM

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.

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.

HOFC AND THE END TIMES (ESCHATOLOGY)

We believe that God has appointed a day when Jesus Christ will visibly return in glory to judge the world in righteousness. His justice will be displayed in the resurrection to eternal punishment of all unbelievers, who will be cast into hell, to experience separation from God forever. His mercy will be displayed by the gathering of all believers in resurrected and glorified bodies to everlasting life in fullness of joy in the presence of the Lord. We do not require uniform belief in a particular system of interpretation. (Matthew 24:36, 25:31; John 5:28, 29; Mark 13:26,27; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 21:8)

HOFC IS NON-PENTACOSTAL

While we recognize every believer has been given spiritual gift (I Corinthians 12:7; I Peter 4:10,11), we believe that revelatory spiritual gifts such as tongues and prophecy were foundational for the early church and are no longer given today. (Ephesians 2:20; Hebrews 2:4; II Corinthians 12:12)

PRACTICAL DISTINCTIVES

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

We are ruled by a plurality of elders under the headship of Christ. By plurality of elders we mean that all have equal status in the government of the church. While each has specific gifts and abilities, no one elder is held above the others. We believe that there are only two offices in the church — elder and deacon. The elders are to focus upon the ministry of the Word, shepherding, ruling and prayer. The deacons are helpers and focus primarily on benevolence, stewardship of the church property, church finances and logistics. We believe that the Bible says that women are not to teach or exercise authority over men in the church. (I Peter 5:1-5; Hebrews 13:17; Acts 10:17, 28; I Timothy 3:1-7; I Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-6; I Timothy 2:11-12)

PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

We believe that membership in a local church is to be something that is active. This means that one of the questions our elders are going to ask you is, “How has God gifted you? How would you like to serve Him in our church?” We seek to give a great deal of freedom in the exercises of these ministry gifts. HOFC also supports the development of gifts through formal training and the opportunity to exercise public gifts in various ministries. In addition, we seek to train fathers and fathers-to-be to be the spiritual leaders of their families. (I Peter 4:10-11, 2:9; I Corinthians 14:26; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; II Timothy 2:2)

CONSECUTIVE, EXPOSITORY PREACHING

As Reformed Christians we believe in the pre-eminence of the Preaching of the Word of God. Preaching the Word takes a central place in our regular worship services. Our norm is consecutive, expository preaching in which the elder(s) preach through a book of the Bible from beginning to end. We feel that God revealed His Word in a specific way and we seek to preach from it in the way in which it was given. This method allows the text to determine the purpose rather than the preacher. This method also gives people the opportunity to see “the whole” of a book over a period of time in order to gain better understanding. (II Timothy 4:2-4)

DEVOTION TO WORSHIP

We believe Scripture regulates what we do in worship. We are not free to add or subtract from the essential elements of worship that God has revealed. The focus of our meetings is not to please men with entertainment but to glorify God by worshiping Him in Spirit and in truth (John 4:24; Leviticus 10:1-2).

We seek to be like the early church in our devotion to the apostle's teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. By apostle's doctrine we mean Preaching of the Word (see above). In addition to a singing and hearing the Word of God our worship includes the additional aspects: (Act 2:42)

Fellowship — We gather joyfully around the Word as brothers and sisters in Christ. Lord's Day gatherings include teaching time when we gather as families for informal teaching as well as extended fellowship time after the service. We also have a monthly fellowship meal.

Breaking of Bread — We are convinced that the practice of the early church was to weekly have communion. They came together specifically for the breaking of bread.

Prayer — We pray throughout the morning service with short prayers and one long prayer.

Family Integrated — We consider it a privilege and a responsibility to keep our children with us during church activities. The work which God does via His Word and the Holy Spirit is something we desire our children to be a part of.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

At HOFC, we seek to practice Biblical church discipline. We feel that Scripture clearly teaches a method by which local church leadership can work to keep the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ pure. (I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Thessalonians 3:14-15; Titus 3:10)

SUPPORT OF MISSIONS

HOFC has, from the beginning, been a church with a heart for sending missionaries. We don't mean just sending money to some foreign field or agency, but sending people out from our church to the mission field. Lord willing we will raise up missionaries from our midst. Until then, we have been blessed by the Lord with the opportunity to financially support godly people who are well known to us who have gone out into the field. We will continue to seek opportunities to send more missionaries as the Lord provides the resources.

IMPORTANCE OF EVANGELISM

We believe our first responsibility in obeying the Great Commission is the evangelism and discipleship of the future generations. The family has a key role in this evangelism and discipleship of the next generation. That means that under the teaching and headship of the church, parents (and particularly fathers) are responsible to train up their children (Eph. 6:1-4, Col. 3:21; II Tim 3:15).

Our evangelism does not stop there. We must also take the gospel beyond our immediate families by sharing the good news with our extended families, neighbors, co-workers and friends. We seek opportunity to practice evangelism with our children in order to equip our children to be evangelistic in their adulthood. One concrete way we do this is by ministering as families in nursing homes.

MINISTRIES

One distinctive that is immediately apparent to all who visit is that we are intentionally family integrated in all we do. Our ministries revolve around equipping people to disciple others so that we might see many generations of faithful followers of Christ worshipping and serving Him. We are very careful not to create programs for the sake of keeping busy, but rather encourage ministries which families can do together. In this way, we are not only advancing the gospel, but discipling the future generation to go beyond us in faith and service.

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

Meeting at Waubensee Community College

Bodie Hall 150

Mailing: P.O. Box 831

Sugar Grove, IL 60554

Phone: 630-566-5106

Email: info@heritageoffaith.org