

Hilltop Baptist Church Constitution

(June 9th, 2017)

Article I

NAME and PURPOSE

Section 1- Name

This assembly will be known as the Hilltop Baptist Church of Midway, West Virginia.

Section 2- Purpose

Hilltop Baptist Church exists to magnify God's name by spreading the Gospel message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, developing believers to Christ like maturity, and equipping them for ministry (Matthew 28: 19,20).

Article II

Statement of Faith and Covenant

This statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of Hilltop Baptist Church's beliefs. Historically, Hilltop Baptist Church has held a longstanding and sincere belief of religious doctrine that includes Biblical standards (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Psalm 119:89; 1 Thessalonians 2:13) and these standards are being actively followed in actual practice. The Bible itself as the inspired and infallible Word of God speaks with absolute authority concerning truth, morality, and proper conduct of mankind. It is the sole and final source of all we believe. The pastor and elders are to oversee and confirm Hilltop Baptist Church's faith, doctrine, practice, and discipline (Acts 15:1-29; Acts 20:17, 28-31; Ephesians 4:11-14; 1 Timothy 3:1; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:9; Hebrews 13:17; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:2).

Section 1 - Statement of Faith

A) The Holy Scriptures

We believe that 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 the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old Testament and New Testament are the complete and divine revelation of God to man. The Scriptures will be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, “21). The King James Version of the Bible will be the official and only translation used by the church.

B) Dispensations

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 are divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these dispensations – the law, the church, and the 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; Colossians 1:24-27; Revelation 20:2-6).

C) 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 and having the same attributes and perfections (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 14:10, 26; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

D) The Person and Work of Christ

1. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6; Luke 1:35; John 1:1,2,14; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21, Galatians 4:4,5; 2 Corinthians 2:5-8).

2. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a substitution sacrifice and that our

justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:22-36; Romans 3:24,25; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 2:24).

3. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and is now exalted at the right of God where as our high priest He fulfills the ministry of representative, intercessor, and advocate (Acts 1:9-10; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24, 7:25; 1 John 2:1,2).

E) The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

1. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement and He is the supernatural agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption (John 16: 8-11; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13,14, 4:30).

2. We believe that He is the divine teacher who assists believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and that is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 1:17, 18; 1 John 2:20, 27).

3. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists and pastor/teachers to equip believers in the assembly to do the work of the ministry (Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11; Ephesians 4:7-12; 1 Peter 4:10, 11).

4. We believe that God gives spiritual enabling gifts to all believers for the edification of the body of Christ. We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing were conformational and temporary in nature and ceased with the completion of the Canon of Scriptures at the end of the first century AD. We believe that speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit and the ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, through God frequently chooses to answer the prayer of believers for physical healing (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 13:8-13, 14:21; Ephesians 4:11, 12; James 5:14, 15).

F) The Total Depravity of Man

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God but because in Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God and that man is morally corrupt, and of himself utterly

unable to remedy his lost condition (Genesis 1:26,27; Romans 3:22,23, 5:12, 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3, 4:17-19).

G) Salvation

We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace alone and received by turning away from sin to personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7, 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18,19).

H) The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers

1. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 6:37-40, 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 38, 39; Ephesians 2:8, 9; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; 1 Peter. 1:4, 5).

2. 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).

I) The Church

1. We believe that the church, which is the body and espoused bride of Christ is solely made up of born-again persons (1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22, 23, 5:25-27).

2. 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 3:25-27).

3. We believe that God has ordained and created the local church to be self-governed free from any outside authority or control answerable only to God and His Word (Acts 13: 1-4, 15:19-31, 20:28; Romans 16:1,4; 1 Corinthians 3:9, 16, 5:4-7, 13; 1 Peter 5:14).

4. We recognize water baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper as the scripture ordinances of obedience for the church of this age (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 2:41, 42; 1 Corinthians 11: 23-26).

J) Separation

We believe that all saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord and that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasure, practices, and associations is commanded of God (Romans 12:1, 2, 14:13, 16:17, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

K) The Second Advent of Christ

We believe in that “blessed hope,” the personal, imminent return of Christ Who will rapture His church prior to the seven-year tribulation period. At the end of the tribulation, Christ will personally and visibly return with His saints to establish His earthly Messianic kingdom, which was promised to the nation of Israel (Psalms 89:34; Daniel 2:31-45; Zechariah 14:4-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Revelation 3:10, 19:11-16, 20:1-6).

L) The Eternal State

1. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to judgement for rewards and the unsaved to judgement for everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46; John 5:28, 29, 11:25, 26; Revelation 20:6, 12, 13-15).

2. 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; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philemon 1:23, 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:4-6).

3. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain after death in conscious punishment and torment in hell until the second resurrection, when with spirit, soul, and body reunite. They will appear at the Great White Throne Judgement, be judged according to their evil deeds, and 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).

M) The Personality of Satan

We Believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the tempter whose rebellion led to the fall of man; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (Job 1:6, 7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:1-11, 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

N) Creation

We believe that God created the universe in 6 literal 24-hour periods. We reject evolution, The Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural and theories of origin (Genesis 1-2; Exodus 20:11).

O) Civil Government

We believe that God has ordained and created all authority delegated to three basic institutions: 1) the home, 2) the church, 3) the state. 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, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective biblically assigned spheres of responsibilities under God (Romans 13:1-7; Ephesians 5:22-24; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 2:13, 14).

P) Gender Sexual Identity

We believe that God wonderfully and without mistake creates each person as a biological male or female. Only these two separate, distinct, and complementary genders reflect the image of God (Genesis 1:27, 28; Matthew 19:4-6; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16). We believe the rejection in any manner of one's biological birth gender is a rejection of the image and nature of God within that person. We believe that God has not created a third gender and that gender is not determined by altering of physiology, anatomy, or the psychological conception of oneself. We believe the identification of gender is defined as biologically designed and determined at conception by God and revealed at birth and not by the changing of gender on a birth certificate or other documents at a later date (Psalms 139:13-16; Psalms 22:9-10; Jeramiah 1:5).

We believe the rejection and altering of one's biological gender is to reject the work of God as creator implying God's fallibility. God does not make mistakes

(Genesis 1:31; Numbers 23:19; Psalms 139:13-16, 147:5; Isaiah 46:9-10, Isaiah 55:8-9; 1 John 1:5b).

Q) Human Sexuality

We believe that God has commanded abstinence from sexual activity except in marriage between a man and a woman. All forms of sexual immorality including but not limited to adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, indecent exposure, lesbianism, sexual harassment, use of pornography, transvestites, sexual communications, sexual abuse of a minor, and other activity are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex and are offensive to God. Such sinful patterns, if not repented, will be a barrier to membership, ministry positions of service, employment, and leadership at Hilltop Baptist Church (Genesis 2:24, 19:5-13; Leviticus 18:1-30, 20:10-16; Romans 1:24-32; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 19:4-6). We believe that celibacy is a gift of God that allows the unmarried to live a life of purity and contentment, so that a person does not have to engage in sex to have a full and satisfying life (1 Corinthians 7:7-9).

R) Marriage

We believe that marriage is the uniting of one biologically born man and one biologically born woman as defined and referenced in (P) "Gender Identity". We believe that God has ordained marriage and defined it as a covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself (Ephesians 5:22-32). We believe the essence of a biblical Christian wedding is the worship of God and His divine blessing on the bride and groom as they exchange vows and as the congregation witnesses those vows (John 2:1,2). We believe that marriage unites one man and one woman in a lifetime commitment to each other. We believe that marriage is binding until the death of a spouse. We believe marriage provides for intimate companionship, pure sexual expression, procreation, and reflects the relationship of Christ and the church. We believe that God disapproves and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by medical, surgical, appearance, or the changing of one's birth certificate or other document at any time. Therefore, we will not recognize a marriage union or civil union in any form between two men or two women (same gender, transgender, same sex, or transsexual). We will not perform any ceremony which celebrates same gender or same sex unions. Furthermore, we will not permit our facilities, staff, officers, or resources to be used for any such unions (Genesis 2:25; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:31-33; Genesis 1:28; Proverbs 5:15-19; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5).

S) Divorce and Remarriage

God hates divorce (Malachi 2:14-17). The occurrence of remarriage during the lifetime of a former spouse is an act of adultery. However, we believe divorced and remarried persons may hold positions of valuable service and be greatly used of God (Matthew 19:3-10; Romans 7:1-6; 1 Corinthians 7:10-17).

T) Abortion

We believe that human life begins at the time of conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion at any stage constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of human life. It is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of fetuses 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; Psalms 51:5, 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24, 49:1-5; Jeramiah 1:5, 20:15-18).

U) Missions

We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ, we must use every legitimate means to go into all the world and make disciples (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

V) Lawsuits between Believers

We believe Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes 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 (1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31, 32).

W) 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 the tithe as a basis for giving, but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the local church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel (Genesis 14:20; Proverbs 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7; Galatians 6:6).

X) Music

We believe music provides a medium whereby believers may worship God in spirit and truth. Music which appeals to or reflects the old man's life in any way, form, or fashion has no place in the life of the new man and particularly his corporate worship (Ephesians 5:19-20; John 4:24; Colossians 3:1-17).

Section 2 - Covenant

Having being led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on profession of our faith, having been baptized in the Name of our Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the prescience of God, His holy 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 give it a sacred pre-eminence over all institutions of human origin; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred, acquaintances, and all others; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful to our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from worldliness; to be free from all oath-bound secret societies and partnerships with unbelievers; to abstain from the sale or use of tobacco in any form, narcotic drugs or intoxicating drink as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

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 of speech; to be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure reconciliation without delay.

When we remove from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with a likeminded church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

Article III

Membership

Section 1- Qualification for Membership

Any individual who is at least 18 years of age and desires to become a member of Hilltop Baptist Church must personally indicate his or her desire for church membership and comply with the following guidelines for church membership within this section of the church constitution.

After satisfactory examination of the individual's testimony by the pastor and elders, and upon a majority vote of the members present at any church meeting, membership shall be extended to all who have had and whose lives evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior; who renounce sin; who endeavor to live a consecrated life wholly unto the Lord; who fully subscribe to the statement of faith contained herein, and who enter in the church covenant contained herein, and who fully subscribe to the current membership policy, and upon compliance with any one of the following conditions:

- A)** By baptism (immersion) as a true believer in Christ Jesus as personal Savior;
- B)** By letter of transfer from another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice, or other written statement of good standing from the prior church and the applicant has been baptized by immersion subsequent to a profession of faith:
- C)** By testimony of faith, having been baptized by immersion;
- D)** By restoration, if having been removed from membership upon majority vote of the congregation, after confession is made publicly before the church membership of the sin or sins involved, and satisfactorily evidencing repentance to the pastor and elders.

Section 1a - Junior Membership

Junior membership shall be offered to an individual under the age of 18 who has met with the elders and has given a clear testimony of his or her salvation and has been baptized by immersion. Junior membership does not allow voting privileges but rather, is provided to those who have not reached their eighteenth birthday as an incentive to be part of Hilltop Baptist Church from an early age. Upon turning eighteen he or she must follow the constitutional guidelines to receive full membership with all of its privileges and responsibilities.

Section 2 - Associate Membership

Associate membership is available for students and other temporary residents who desire to retain membership at their home church. All requirements and procedures are the same as for full membership. However, no voting privileges will be extended to the associate member.

Section 3 - Duties of a Member

A) On becoming a member of this church, in addition to honoring the statement of faith and the covenant contained in Article II, each one further covenants to love, honor, and esteem the pastor, elders, and leaders; to pray for them and to recognize their authority in spiritual affairs of the church; to demonstrate a brotherly love for all members of the church; to support the church in prayer, attendance, tithes, offerings, and with other financial support as the Lord enables; and in accordance with biblical commands to support through an obedient life-style, affirmation of the beliefs and practices of the church.

B) Any member who is not regular in attendance will be considered inactive and may not serve in any leadership capacity in any church ministry. Regular attendance is considered every scheduled service unless sick or otherwise legitimately hindered. The pastor and elders shall determine active and inactive member status.

Section 4 - Privileges of Membership

- A)** This congregation functions not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the pastor and elders as the overseers. Membership in this church does not afford those individuals with any property, contract, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Determination of the internal affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures.
- B)** Every member of this assembly has the privilege of shepherding by the pastor and elders. This includes the positive aspects of instruction, edification, and counsel and the negative aspects of rebuke and discipline.
- C)** Every member of this assembly has the privilege to 1) participate in corporate worship of God in a biblical manner, 2) receive instruction from the Holy Scriptures, 3) enjoy fellowship with other members, 4) be provided opportunities for evangelizing the lost, and 5) serve with their spiritual gifts and talents.
- D)** All workers with youth (newborn to age 18) must qualify by completing the current "Child Protection Program" of Hilltop Baptist Church.

Section 5 - Discipline of a Member

- A)** Authority for discipline has been granted to the local assembly by the Lord "where two or three are gathered together in (His) name" – (Matthew 18:20). When any member remains unrepentant and having been confronted in love (Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1), the offender will be removed from membership at a regular business meeting at the recommendation of the pastor and elders. These men will have sole authority in determining heretical deviations from the statement of faith and violations of the church covenant. An accusation against an elder must be substantiated by two or more witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19). If the pastor or an elder is subject of a disciplinary matter, he will not sit as a member of the board of elders. He will be entitled to the same rights as other church members and be subject to the same discipline.

B) Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member has been offended and cannot cover the incidents with love, he is to immediately go alone to the offending party and seek reconciliation (Matthew 18:15). If a member has caused the offense, he is to immediately go alone to the offended party and seek forgiveness (Matthew 5:23-25). If one members sees another member overtaken in a sin, he is to restore him to fellowship (Galatians 6:1). If reconciliation (and restitution if needed) is secure in any of these situations, the matter is not discussed again.

C) If after repeated efforts, reconciliation is not secured, a second and/or third member is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter as witnesses (Matthew 18:16). If reconciliation is secured, the matter is not discussed again.

D) If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections **B** and **C** have been taken, the pastor and elders will hear the matter (Matthew 18:17). If the matter is not resolved at this time, the member will be removed from membership upon a majority vote at a church business meeting called by the elders for the purpose of disciplinary action.

E) If an unrepentant member is removed from the church membership, all contact with him from that point forward must be for the sake of restoration (except family members).

F) Restoration to fellowship will be welcomed upon confession/restitution that is deemed genuine and acceptable by the pastor and elders and the matter forgiven (2 Corinthians 2:5-11). Restoration to leadership, if possible, will be sought after an appropriate period of evaluation.

Section 6 - Transfer of Membership

Members not under the disciplining process of Section 5, may request that letters of transfer be sent to another church of like faith. No letter of transfer or written statement of good standing will be issued without the recommendation of the pastor and elders.

Section 7 - Termination of Membership

A) The membership of any individual shall be automatically removed without notice or congregational action if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the church in the preceding six (6) months. Upon good cause this provision for termination may be waived at the discretion of the pastor and elders.

B) No member of this church may hold membership in another church (except associate membership). If any member unites in membership with another church, that person's membership is automatically removed from this church without notice.

C) A member upon a signed and dated statement may resign from their membership at any time. This statement must be given directly to the pastor or an elder.

Article IV

Officers

Section 1 - Church Officers

The church officers are the Pastor, Elders, Deacons, Trustees, Church Clerk, and Church Treasurer. Other staff positions may be created by the pastor and elders as needed.

Section 2 - Eligibility for Continuance in Office

- A) All church officers will affirm their agreement with the statement of faith (as set forth in Article II) annually in the presence of each other.
- B) All church officers must be approved initially and thereafter annually by the pastor and elders in order for them to commence or continue in their efforts.
- C) Only active church members are eligible for election or appointment to any church office or position.

Section 3 - Terms of office

The length of terms of office shall be as follows:

- A) Approval by 80% of the active church members present and voting is required to extend the call of pastor. The relationship between the pastor and the church will be ongoing unless dissolved at the option of either party by giving a month's notice or less by mutual consent. The severance of the relationship between the pastor and the church may be considered at any church business meeting provided notice to that effect has been given from the pulpit to the church two Sundays prior to said church business meeting. A three-fourths (3/4) majority of the active members present and voting shall be required to decide the matter. The resignation or disciplinary removal of the pastor from office automatically terminates his membership. A restoration to membership after disciplinary removal will be subject to the requirements of Article III, Section 5 (F).

B) The term of service for elders and deacons shall be no longer than a three (3) year term. After serving a three year term, they may be nominated for re-election in compliance with the guidelines of the constitution. No more than one half (1/2) of the elders or deacons should be relieved from service within any given year. Recommendation for elders and deacons are accepted from within the congregation by those who are active members in good standing. Examination of all candidates will be performed by the current leadership team. Nominations of elders and deacons will be submitted by the elders to the congregation in a business meeting for congregational approval. Approval by 80% of the active members present and voting is required for the election of an elder or deacon.

C) The term of service for all other offices and positions in the church shall be one (1) year, at the expiration of which they may be re-appointed. A vacancy occurring in any office or board, except in the case of pastor, may be filled at any church business meeting.

D) All officer shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly elected or appointed unless they are removed by elder recommendation and dismissed by a three-quarter (3/4) majority vote of active members present at any church business meeting called for this purpose.

E) Recommendation for church trustee, church clerk, and church treasurer are accepted from within the congregation by those who are active members in good standing. Nominations for trustee, clerk, and treasurer will be submitted by the elders to the congregation in a business meeting for congregational approval. Approval of 80% of the current active members present and voting is required for election of trustee, clerk, and treasurer.

Section 4 - Election of Officers

The annual election of officers by the church membership shall occur during the annual church business meeting.

Section 5 - Pastoral Oversight of Staff

- A)** Subject to the approval of the elders and on the condition that they will become a member of the church upon assuming their duties, the pastor may hire associates and assistants to assist the pastor in carrying out his God-given responsibilities.

- B)** All church staff, whether paid or volunteer, will be under the supervision of the pastor and elders who have the sole authority to hire, appoint, or dismiss the same.

Article V

Qualifications of Officers

Section 1 - The Pastor

- A)** The pastor is an elder by office and must meet the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- B)** The pastor must believe and unqualifiedly adhere to this constitution and be uncompromising in the preaching of its truths.

Section 2 - The Elders

- A)** The elders must meet the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and be full active members of Hilltop Baptist Church in good standing.
- B)** The elders must believe and unqualifiedly adhere to this constitution and be unfailing in their support of its truths.

Section 3 - The Deacons

- A)** The deacons must meet the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and be full active members of Hilltop Baptist Church in good standing.
- B)** The deacons must believe and unqualifiedly adhere to this constitution and be unfailing in their support of its truths.

Section 4 - Other Officers

All other officers must be full active members of Hilltop Baptist Church and in good standing and adhere to this constitution and support of its truths.

Article VI

Duties of Officers

Section 1 - The Pastor

A) The pastor as head-elder will lead by example, give oversight to the whole church and advance the spiritual welfare of the membership through the ministry of the Word of God and prayer. He will regularly preach the Gospel evangelistically and be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God as the Lord leads him. He will administer the ordinances of the church and act as moderator at all church meetings for transaction of church matters.

B) The pastor will appoint the leaders of the various ministries at the annual church business meeting. He will publicly inform all newly elected officers of the particular function and the responsibilities of their respective offices. He is an ex-officio member of every ministry of the church. He will extend the right hand of fellowship to all new members on behalf of the church and perform such duties as generally appertain to such a position. With the support and confirmation of the elders the pastor shall choose the means and methods by which he exercise the ministry that God has given him.

Section 2 - The Elders

A) The elders are to shepherd the flock of God (teach, nourish, admonish, protect, and pray for), willingly taking the oversight (ruling) of all ministries of the local church and be examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:1-3). Thus they will lead the membership in accomplishing the five (5) purposes of the local church: worship, instruction, fellowship, evangelism, and service. They will share 1) the administration of the ordinances, 2) the visitation of the membership, and 3) the oversight, maintenance, and improvement of the real and personal property of Hilltop Baptist Church

B) Unless providentially hindered or mutually agreed, the elders will meet at least once monthly. The pastor will be the moderator at all meetings. In the event of a pastoral absence, an elder will moderate the meeting. No elder meetings will be held without the notification of the pastor.

Section 3 - The Deacons

A) The deacons, as put forth in Scripture, are primarily responsible for the ministry to and care of widows within the membership of the local church (Acts 6:3-6). Since the very meaning of the term deacon is “servant” the function of a deacon would also extend beyond the walls of the local church into the community we seek to reach for the Lord Jesus Christ. The deacons’ ministry will include the ministry of mercy and caring for the poor and suffering by demonstrating the compassion and love of Jesus. The deacons have no ruling capacity over the membership, but have authority derived from the elders and will manage relief by collecting, coordinating, and distributing funds and goods to the church as well as others in the community who are determined to have legitimate needs. They will be responsible for the collecting, counting, and banking of all church funds.

B) Immediately following the annual church business meeting the deacons will assemble and elect from their own number a chair, a vice chair, and a secretary.

C) Unless providentially hindered or mutually agreed, the deacons will meet at least once monthly. At the discretion of the pastor and/or elders, the deacons may join the elders’ meeting. The deacons are directly accountable to the pastor and elders. No deacons’ meeting will be held without the notification of the pastor.

Section 4 – The Trustees

The board of trustees will always have at least two (2) members to be directly accountable to the pastor and elders, submit a report at the annual church business meeting and exercise the following powers:

- 1.** To purchase, hold, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the church and to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church;
- 2.** To sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of the real and personal property of the church;
- 3.** To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church, if such action is mandated by vote of the church membership.

Section 4 - The Church Clerk

The church clerk will keep records of church proceedings, of the membership roll, of all baptisms, of certificates of ordination, licenses, and commissions as directed by the church and preserve all documents, papers, and letters coming into his hands during his term of office. All records are to be kept in the church office and be delivered to any successor upon leaving office. He will keep an account of any special events in the life of the church which are of historical interest and give a report at the annual church business meeting of the status of the church membership roll in the last year.

Section 5 - The Church Treasurer

The Church Treasurer will account for all funds contributed to the church, disburse the same as ordered by the church, and adhere to all financial policies and controls of the church. He will present budget reports 1) to members on request, 2) to all officers monthly, 3) at the quarterly business meetings, and 4) make a general report for the year at the annual church business meeting.

Section 6 - Duties of All Officers

A) All officers will prepare a written report of their work for the annual church business meeting and will surrender any records in their possession to the church clerk at the close of their term of office to be filed as a permanent record of the work of the church. All records are the property of the church and must be kept in the church office.

B) Any officer who neglects his duties as outlined in the constitution for a period of three months may be removed from his office at the discretion of the pastor and elders. Another may be appointed by the pastor and elders to serve the unexpired term

Section 7 - Installation of Officers

An installation service, in which all newly appointed and elected officers of the church are to be dedicated to their respective offices, will be at a public church service following their appointment or election at the annual church business meeting.

Article VII

Meetings

Section 1 - Meeting of worship

Unless otherwise determined by the pastor and elders, the church will meet each Sunday for public worship both morning and evening and at least once during the week for Bible study and prayer. The Lord's Supper will be observed a minimum of once per quarter.

Section 2 - Meetings for Church Business

A quarterly church business meeting will be held on the first Sunday evening of each quarter, at which time church business will be considered. A quorum will consist of the members present. All new business to be discussed in any church business meeting must first be presented to the pastor and elders for review.

Section 3- Special Meetings

A) The pastor and elders may call a special meeting by giving notice of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called and announced to the church at least one (1) week prior to said meeting. A meeting for election of a pastor may be called by the elders for any regular church meeting at least two (2) weeks in advance.

B) Bible conferences, missionary conferences, revivals, and etc. may be held as the pastor and elders deem beneficial.

Section 4 - Fiscal Year

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

Article VIII

Ministry of Education

Section 1 - Purpose

The church believes that it is to provide the members' children with an education which is based upon and consistent with biblical teachings. The church believes that the home and church are responsible before God for providing a Christian education. To this end, the church will engage in ministries in education in keeping with the following dictates:

Section 2 - Church Participation

All education programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the church will be primarily for the benefit of the members of the church; however, the pastor and elders may permit non-members to participate in church educational programs or courses of instruction if they deem it in the best interest of the church.

Section 3 - Staff Membership

All instructors, teachers, and administrators will be members of this church. This provision will not apply to visiting missionaries, evangelists, or preachers engaged for the purpose of delivering sermons, conducting revivals, or other special meetings on a temporary basis.

Section 4 - Statement of Faith Accord

All educational programs or courses of instruction will be taught and presented in full accord with the statement of faith of the church.

Section 5 - Unity

All educational programs or courses of instruction will be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the church.

Section 6 - Teaching

All educational programs or courses of instruction will be consistent with the teachings of the inerrant Word of God. Any assertions or belief which conflicts with or questions a Bible truth is a pagan deception and distortion of the truth which will be disclaimed as false. It is the responsibility of every instructor and teacher to present the inerrant Word of God as the sole infallible source of knowledge and wisdom.

Section 7 - Christian Walk

All administrators, instructors, and teachers will continue or adopt a lifestyle consistent with the precepts which they teach, whether in or out of the classroom.

Article IX

Ordination and Commissioning

Section 1 - Ordination and Commissioning Qualifications

Any member of this church or its mission churches, who gives evidence of a genuine call of God into the work of the ministry and possesses the qualifications stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 may be ordained or commissioned as a minister of the Gospel.

Section 2 - Ordination and Commissioning Procedure

- A)** Upon a conference with the pastor and elders and approval of the candidate for ordination or commissioning, the pastor and elders will call a council to examine and verify the qualification of the candidate. The council will consist of ordained ministers of like faith, invited to participate in the examination of the candidate.
- B)** If the candidate is found worthy of ordination or commissioning by the council, the council may ordain or commission the candidate on behalf of the church.
- C)** The pastor and elders will arrange for the ordination or commissioning service.

Article X

Tax-Exempt Provisions

Section 1 - Private Inurement

No part of the net earnings of the church will inure to the benefit or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church will be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in the furtherance set forth in Article I, Section 2 thereof.

Section 2 - Political Involvement

No substantial part of the activities of the church will be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The church will not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Section 3 - Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the church, the trustees will, after paying or making provision for payment of the liabilities of the church, dispose of all the assets of the church to such organization(s) formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization(s) under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law), as the pastor and elders shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to organizations who agree with the church's statement of faith.

Section 4 - Racial Nondiscrimination

The church will practice racial nondiscrimination and therefore will not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color, nationality, or ethnicity origin.

Article XI

Designated Contributions

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish funds to accomplish specific goals. These goals may be identified but not limited to missions, building, benevolence, and love gifts. All solicitations for any new non-established funds or goods are to have the actual approval of the pastor and elders. Contributors may suggest uses for their designated contribution but all suggestions will be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control of the church under the oversight of the pastor and elders. The church as much as possible will honor approved designated giving that conforms and furthers the church's purpose and mission. All designated giving are to follow the approved written policy on how the funds will be used. If for any reason the approved purpose for which a fund was established is no longer active or needed the church is to vote on how the funds will be directed. To prevent commingling with other funds all designated funds are to be properly identified, documented, and kept segregated. The pastor and elders will evaluate the acceptance of a restrictive gift. No fiduciary obligation will be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article 1, Section 2.

Article XII

Church Policies and Bylaws

Section 1 - Review, Develop, and Implement

In addition to policies and bylaws, the church may from time to time, review, develop, and implement bylaws and policies that are consistent with the Constitution of Hilltop Baptist Church. The pastor and elders may seek from the church membership those that are in good standing with the Church Constitution, Bylaws, and Policies of Hilltop Baptist Church to review and develop additions to the Church Bylaws and Policies. Finalization of church bylaws and policies as determined by the pastor and elders will be presented to the active membership in good standing at a scheduled business meeting for confirmation.

Section 2 - Church Policy Documents

The church clerk will compile all written church policies implemented by confirmation of the membership of Hilltop Baptist Church. These documents will be placed in a manual entitled “Hilltop Baptist Church Policies.” These documents will be updated as necessary. This manual will be maintained in the church office and made available to the church membership.

Article XIII

Amendments

This constitution may be revised or amended by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote of the active members in good standing, present, and voting, at any church administration meeting, provided that said revision or amendment has been submitted in writing and announced from the pulpit fourteen (14) days before the vote is taken.

Adoption

This constitution was adopted by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote of the active members present and in good standing and voting at a duly called meeting of the church. This constitution, supersedes any other constitution of Hilltop Baptist Church.

Church Bylaws

Number 1

Each active member of the church (18 years of age or older) will be entitled to vote on the following matters: the calling or dismissal of a pastor, election of elders and deacons, membership or disciplining of members, the purchase or sale of real property, the annual budget, and any other matters deemed necessary by the pastor and elders.

Number 2

All appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements thereof including time, place, and the use of church property for purposes other than regularly-scheduled assemblies will be under the control of the pastor and elders.

Number 3

All literature used in the church will be in complete agreement with the statement of faith.

Number 4

The following order will be observed at the regular church administration meeting:

- (a) Devotion and prayer
- (b) Reading of minutes
- (c) Reception of members
- (d) Dismissal of members
- (e) Reports of officers
- (f) Reports of standing committees
- (g) Reports of special committees
- (h) Unfinished matters
- (I) Election of officers
- (j) New matters
- (k) Adjournment
- (l) Benediction

Number 5

These bylaws may be altered, suspended or amended at a regular church administration meeting by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote of the active members present and voting.