

# Constitution



harvest time  
bible church

# Constitution Of Harvest Time Bible Church

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# CONSTITUTION OF HARVEST TIME BIBLE CHURCH

1802 Dixon Avenue Rock Falls, Illinois

## ARTICLE 1 NAME

The name of the church shall be: HARVEST TIME BIBLE CHURCH

## ARTICLE 2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be to promote the worship of God by the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ at home and abroad, trusting that as a result sinners will be saved and believers edified; to administer the ordinances of the New Testament; and to earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints. It will be exclusively charitable and Educational and religious within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Federal Code. Its purpose is further expressed in the church covenant.

## ARTICLE 3 CHURCH COVENANT

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

We commit, 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 ordinances, doctrines, and discipline; 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 commit to maintain family and private devotions; to disciple our children; to seek the salvation of all people; to walk guardedly in the world; to be just in our dealings; faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our behavior; to avoid all tattling, back-biting, and excessive anger; to abstain from use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to use our influence to combat the abuse of drugs and the spread of any form of immorality (ie: Adultery,

Pornography, Homosexuality, etc. as defined by scripture); and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

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

We commit that when we move from Harvest Time Bible Church, we will as soon as possible unite with a church of like faith that upholds the principles of God's Word and carries out the spirit of this covenant.

## **ARTICLE 4 STATEMENT OF FAITH**

### 1. THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible was written inerrant in its original languages by men divinely inspired, and it is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction, that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the true revelation of Christ, and the Supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

**II Timothy 3:16, 17/ Peter 1:10-12 /Proverbs 30:5, 6 /I John 4:11/ Philippians 3:16**

### 2. THE TRUE GOD

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent, perfect spirit and personal being, the Creator, Preserver, and Supreme ruler of the universe, inexpressibly glorious in holiness and all Supreme Ruler of the Universe, inexpressibly glorious in holiness and all other perfections, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

**Exodus 3:14, John 3:16-17, John 4:24, James 1:17, Matthew 3:16-17, Matthew 28:19, John 1:1-4, Deuteronomy 6:4, II Corinthians 13:14, Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6, John 1:14, John 8:58, John 10:30, Acts 1:10-11, Philippians 2:5-11, Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 4:14-16, John 14:26, John 16:7-15, Romans 8:14-17, I Corinthians 12:4-7, Ephesians 1:13-14, II Thessalonians 2:13**

### 3 . THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man was created under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but by choice, being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil, and therefore under just condemnation of eternal ruin without defense of excuse.

**Genesis 1: 27/ Genesis 1: 31/ Genesis 3: 6-24/ Isaiah 53: 6/ Ezekial18:19-20/ Romans 1:20/ Romans 5:19**

### 4. THE WAY OF SALVATION

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace through the mediatorial office of the Son of God, who by appointment by the Father, freely took upon Himself our nature; that being conceived by the Holy spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, yet without sin, He honored the divine law by His personal obedience and by His death made a full atonement for our sin; that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in Heaven and that He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate and all-sufficient Savior.

**Ephesians 2:8/ John 3:16/ Isaiah 53:4-5/ Hebrews 7:25/ Colossians 2:9/ Hebrews 2:18**

### 5. JUSTIFICATION

We believe that the great Gospel blessing, which Christ secures to such as believe in Him, is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, removal of guilt, and the promise of eternal life; that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but only through faith in the Redeemer' s blood, by virtue of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us by God; that justification brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

**John 1:16/ Acts 13:39/ Romans 5:9/ Romans 4:4-5/ Romans 5:1-2**

### 6 .THE FREENESS OF SALVATION

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them a cordial penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel, which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

**Isaiah 55:1/ Romans 16:25-26/ John 5:40/ John 3:19**

## 7. REGENERATION

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated or born again, that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind, that is affected in a manner above comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith and newness of life.

**John 3:3/ II Corinthians 5:17 /Galations 5:16-23 /Ephesians 5:9/ John 3:8 I Peter 1:22-25**

## 8. SACTIFICATION

We believe that: sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, believers are made partakers of His holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the heart of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness and prayer.

**I Thessalonians 4:3/ I John 2:29/ Romans 8:5 /Philippians 2:12-13**

## 9 THE PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS

We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

**John 3:31/ I John 2:19/ Romans 8:28/ Philippians 1:6**

## 10. THE PRESERVATION OF SAINTS

We believe that the security of the believer is sure. The believer has been indwelt by God Himself in the Person of the Holy Spirit; that the believer has been sealed unto the day of redemption; that the Father's purpose is to keep us in spite of everything; that God therefore sees the believer as predestined, justified, and glorified and thus his eternal destiny is secure.

**John 10:28-30/ Romans 8:29-30/ I Corinthians 6:19/ John 13:1/ Ephesians 4:30/I John 5: 13**

## 11. THE GOSPEL CHURCH

We believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its true mission is found in the Great Commission and that for it to exhibit the

success of the church in Acts 1, the people must be in "one accord", dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Matthew 18:17/ I Corinthians 1:1-13/ I Corinthians 11:2/ Matthew 28:19/  
Acts 2:41-21/ I Corinthians 11:26/ Romans 6:4**

## 12. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water, "in the name of the Father, and Son and Holy Ghost, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life. We believe that the Lord's Supper, in which the believers of a Gospel church commemorate together the dying love of Christ, is to be preceded always with solemn self-examination.

**Acts 8:36-39/ John 3:22-23/ Matthew 28:19/ Acts 2:41-42/ I Corinthians 11:26 /Romans 6:4**

## 13. THE LORD'S DAY

We believe that Sunday is the first day of the week and is referred to in the New Testament as the Lord's Day, and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes; that believers are to consistently gather themselves together for worship of God and fellowship; that on this day we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

**Acts 20:7/ Psalm 118:24/ Hebrews 4:3-11**

## 14 CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; that Legislators are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; that this is to be followed until such government might attempt to cause believers to violate God's law; in any such case, we must obey God rather than men.

**Romans 13:1-7/ Matthew 22:21/ Acts 5:29/ Matthew 23:10**

## 15. THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such as only through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and sanctified by the Holy Spirit are truly righteous in God's esteem, which all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in God's sight wicked and under the curse; that this distinction is held among men, both in and after death, with the righteous having everlasting life and blessedness, and the wicked everlasting punishment and condemnation.

**Malachi 3:18/ Romans 1:17/ I John 5: 19/ Luke 16: 25**



## 16 THE FUTURE

We believe that the end is approaching; that Christ will rapture His own before a great time of tribulation and return to reign for 1,000 years on the earth; after which the lost shall be cast into eternal punishment and the redeemed shall be with the Lord forever.

**Acts 1:11/ Acts 24:15/ Revelation 22:11/ I Thessalonians 4:13-18/ Matthew 24:31-46/  
I Corinthians 15:15-58**

## 17. MARRIAGE & SEXUALITY

We believe that the term 'marriage' has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sin as defined by Scripture.

**Genesis 2:22-24/ Ephesians 5:22-33/ Romans 1/ 1 Corinthians 7:1-16/ Galatians 5:19/  
1 Thessalonians 4:3-7/ Hebrews 13:4-7**

Marriages outside of these parameters will not be performed by church ministers or on church property.

## **ARTICLE 5 MEMBERSHIP**

SECTION 1. Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of regeneration, and accepting the Statement of Faith and the Covenant held by this Church may, upon baptism, be received into its membership.

SECTION 2 Members from other churches of the same faith and order may be received by letter of recommendation and dismissal from their respective Churches.



SECTION 3 Those who have been scripturally baptized and who accept the view of faith and practice as adopted by this Church may be received by virtue of their experience.

SECTION 4. Excluded members may, by a majority vote, be restored to membership on confession of their error and by giving evidence of the repentance.

SECTION 5 Where it is deemed expedient, the candidate shall appear before the Pastor and Deacons\* for advice and instructions before the name is presented for membership.

## **ARTICLE 6 MEMBERSHIP RULES**

SECTION 1 Active Members: All those who show their interest in the welfare of the church and the Kingdom of our Lord by regular attendance and financial support and those who because of sickness or infirmities are unable to attend services or contribute financial support to the work shall be classed as active members.

SECTION 2 Non-Resident Members: All those who live too far removed from the church to maintain active membership, but who prefer to remain as members and do keep in touch with the Church by keeping the Clerk informed as to their address and making an offering at least once a year for the support of the church, unless they are dependent, shall be classed as non-resident members.

SECTION 3 Inactive Members: All those who do not classify as non-resident members, who without reasonable excuse do not attend regular services of the Church for a period of six months and all members who fail to communicate with the Church for a period of one year may be placed on an inactive list. Names of the inactive list shall not be counted in any statistical reports. Any members on the inactive list shall automatically become active members upon their resumption of regular attendance and financial support.

## **ARTICLE 7 DUTIES OF MEMBERS**

SECTION 1 It is a duty of all members to read the Church Covenant at least once a year and strive to adhere to the standards outlined therein.

SECTION 2 All members should bring themselves to the realization that we are a part of the body of our Lord Jesus that we are of the household of Faith, and that in God is sight we are brothers and sisters. It is therefore our duty to love each other as such, to love and pray for our Church as our earthly here, and to strive to honor our Lord in all we do, say, or act, bearing in mind that we are epistles of Christ, known and read men.

\*Advisory Board until Deacons elected.

SECTION 3 Because our Church depends upon the tithes and offerings of our members, we assert our conviction that proportionate giving is a distinct and positive command in the Scriptures (Malachi 3: 8-11) and pledge ourselves to a systematic contribution for the support of the Church of such a portion of our income as we believe God requires of us according to the principle laid down in I Corinthians 16: 2.

## **ARTICLE 8 WITHDRAWAL FROM MEMBERSHIP**

SECTION 1 Membership in this church shall terminate as follows: (a) by granting letters of dismissal to unite with other evangelical churches. (b) By erasure. Members who are known to be deceased, or who have joined some other church and those who request that their names be dropped from the membership may be erased from the roll by action of the Church with the exception of those under church discipline. (c) By expulsion for disorderly walk by two-thirds vote of the members present.

SECTION 2 Dismissal by letter shall be subject to the following rules: (a) Requests must be filed in writing or in person to the Church and the name of the church with which the members wish to unite must be designated. (b) Applications shall be acted on by the Church, provided the member is in good standing. If any objections are raised, then the matter shall be referred to the Board of Deacons\* who shall present in writing a report upon the standing of the applicant, stating their recommendation in the matter. (c) All letters shall be sent to the Pastor or Clerk of the church designated in the application. Membership shall terminate upon the granting of letters.

## **ARTICLE 9 OFFICERS OF THIS CHURCH**

SECTION 1 The officers of the Church shall be as follows: Pastors, Clerk, Treasurer, Superintendent of the Sunday School, Board of Deacons\*. All officers of the Church and teachers shall: (1) Be faithful to all public services of the Church; (2) Be loyal to the Church-approved programs; (3) Be separate from worldliness and live Godly lives according to the scriptures; (4) We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all officers selected by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to the Statement on Marriage and Sexuality (located in Statement of Faith) and conduct themselves accordingly.

## **ARTICLE 10 DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

SECTION 1 The Pastor shall be the moderator of the Church; he may call the Deacons\* or the Church together for special meetings to transact the business of the Church; he shall devote his time and energies to the welfare of the church; he shall receive such compensation as the Church may decide, and he shall affirm the Statement of Faith each year. \*In the absence of Senior Pastor the pastoral staff will assume these responsibilities.

SECTION 2 The Clerk shall keep a complete record of all the official acts of the church. They shall keep a complete and accurate registry of the active, inactive, and erased membership.

SECTION 3 It shall be a duty of the Treasurer to receive all receipt of deposit from the Deacons. They shall keep an accurate account of all such receipts received and shall disburse money only by the approval of the Church. They shall make a monthly written report of the treasury available to all members, all of which shall be kept on file. No designated funds shall be diverted from their purpose, except by vote of the Church. \* In Case of absence of treasurer deacons shall assume all responsibilities of the office of treasurer until a new treasurer is selected.

SECTION 4 It shall be the duty of the Deacons to receive all offering, to count the money together, to keep a record of the same, and to deposit the same to the account of the Church.

SECTION 5 The Senior Pastor and Pastoral Staff, Sunday School Superintendent shall have direction of all the Sunday School activities.

SECTION 6 The records of all the officers, boards, and committees shall be delivered to the properly elected successor of each office.

## **ARTICLE 11 DUTIES OF DEACONS**

SECTION 1 It shall be a duty of the Deacons to meet once each month. They shall select a chairman and a secretary from among their own number. The Secretary shall keep a record of the minutes and proceedings of all meetings. The Chairman of the Board shall act as Moderator of the Church in the absence or removal of the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor and the Board of Deacons shall constitute a standing committee for the purpose of examining questionable applications for membership and to which all matters of discipline shall be referred. They shall have general supervision of all the departments. It shall be a duty of the Deacons to seek out such members of the Church who need financial assistance and

to use the funds of the Church for their relief, to visit the sick, to prepare and distribute the elements of the Lord's Supper, to have general supervision of the spiritual interests of the Church, to provide for the Service of Worship, and to cooperate with and assist the Pastor in the performance of his duties. It shall have charge of the sale and distribution of all literature or other articles. The Deacons shall commend the Pastor's remuneration and all items of Missionary payments to the Church. The Deacons shall act in an advisory capacity concerning all matters of Church Business, and in the employing and dismissing of Staff Members.

SECTION 2 The Board of Trustees shall be composed of the Deacon Board. This board shall act in an advisory capacity in all matters concerning legal transactions and Church properties. The Chairman of the Deacons will act as Chairman of the Board of Trustees and a member of Pastoral staff shall be the President of the Corporation. Other officers of the Deacon Board will serve as officers of the corporation.

## **ARTICLE 12 TERM OF OFFICE**

SECTION 1 The Pastor shall be elected for an indefinite term which shall terminate upon thirty days written notice by either the Pastor or the Church. The pastorate shall terminate immediately upon the Pastor's refusal to affirm the Statement of Faith as herein set forth.

SECTION 2 Members of the Board of Deacons shall serve a regular term of 3 years with one year off. In the case a Deacon resigns or is removed the alternate will complete their term and will be eligible to serve a full term of three years.

## **ARTICLE 13 MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS**

SECTION 1 Meetings:

- (a) Sunday Meetings: The church shall meet regularly every Lord's Day for public worship of Almighty God.
- (b) Mid-week Meetings: The Church shall meet at least once during each week.
- (c) Lord's Supper Service: The Church shall observe the ordinance of our Lord's Supper each month on the first Sunday Evening, first Wednesday evening or as the church deems proper.
- (d) Business Meetings: As needed. Yearly mandatory budget approval.

(e) Special Meetings: Special meetings may be called by the Moderator or the Clerk shall call such a meeting on written request signed by not less than fifty active members. Notice of such special meetings shall be given from the pulpit on the preceding Lord's Day.

(f) The Church shall be given proper notice at least one Sunday before action can be taken on any project which involves the expenditure of more than \$5000, whenever such expenditure is not clearly provided for in the churches budget.

(g) Such notice as outlined above shall be given by a unanimous decision of the Deacons before the election or dismissal of a pastor.

SECTION 2 Quorum. To transact business at any meeting a quorum of fifty active members must be present.

SECTION 3 Voting:

(a) Only active members of the Church having reached the age of 18 years are eligible to vote on any Church matter.

(b) A voice, rising, or show-of-hands vote is binding, except where otherwise provided for, whenever it is apparent that two-thirds of the members present are voting; if more than one-third of the members present do not signify their vote, then a ballot vote shall be taken. A majority vote shall decide all matters except the expulsion of members (as outlined in Article 8, Section 1), the election of a pastor (which shall be decided by a three-fourths ballot vote of the members present), and the vote to amend the Constitution (which shall be as outlined under Article 14, Section 1).

SECTION 4 Elections:

(a) The annual election of officers and Deacons shall be held before the first of May. Only active members of this Church are eligible to vote. The election shall be by ballot and those receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. The Deacons shall count the votes and shall report the results to the Church. In case of a tie, the Deacons shall immediately order a new election by ballot for the office in which the tie shall have occurred on the following week.

(b) The Senior Pastor shall be elected as provided for in Article 12, Section 1. Upon removal or departure of a Senior Pastor, the Deacons shall without any unnecessary

delay confer with possible candidates for the office, and from the candidates so conferred with, the Deacons shall make their recommendations to the Church. No election or dismissal of a Senior Pastor shall take place except at a meeting called for that purpose of which public notice has been given by the Deacons or fifty active members as defined (Article 13, Section 2) at least two previous Sundays. A three-fourths vote by ballot of the members present shall be necessary to an election of a Senior Pastor and a majority vote of the members present for his removal, due notice having been given on the previous Sundays.

## **ARTICLE 14 DEPARTMENTS OF THE CHURCH**

SECTION 1 Any departments which are authorized by the Church shall be subordinate to the pastoral staff and Deacons.

SECTION 2 Any materials not supplied by the church must be approved by a member of the pastoral staff for department use.

## **ARTICLE 15 ORDER OF BUSINESS**

SECTION 1 The Senior Pastor of the Church, or in his absence, Chairman of the Deacons (See Article 11. Section 1) shall act as moderator in all meetings for the transaction of business.

SECTION 2 It shall be the duty of the moderator to keep order, state and explain propositions.

SECTION 3 He shall cause the meeting to be opened and closed with prayer.

SECTION 4 He shall call for the business of the Church.

SECTION 5 All business proceedings of the Church shall be governed by "Roberts Rules of Order" when necessary.

## **ARTICLE 16 AMENDMENTS**

SECTION 1 This Constitution may be amended at any regular business meeting by a two-thirds vote, provided four weeks notice has been given the Church, except the Statement of Faith, which shall be irrevocable.

SECTION 2 Dissolution Clause

Upon the dissolution of the corporation, the Board of Trustees shall, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all of the liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all the assets of the corporation exclusively for the purposes of the corporation in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Board of Trustees shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

(Wednesday, December 4, 1983; Motion by Ray Holland, Seconded by Wilfred Frank, Carried)