

**CONSTITUTION OF
HERITAGE BAPTIST CHURCH
MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

PREAMBLE

Reposing our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, accepting the entire Scriptures as our sole and perfect rule of faith and practice, and believing in the historic practices of the Baptists, we therefore band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ and adopt for our government and plan of worship and service the following Constitution and rescind all previous action contrary thereto.

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization as incorporated under the laws of New Hampshire, shall be Heritage Baptist Church, Manchester, New Hampshire.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purpose of this local church shall be:

- a. The worship of Almighty God
- b. To promote the glory of God by means of the preaching and teaching of the Word of God
- c. To seek to win the lost to Christ in obedience to the Great Commission of Christ, Matthew 28:19-20.
- d. The teaching and instruction of the believers and the development in them of a consistent Christian character.
- e. The administration of the ordinances of the New Testament, baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- f. The promotion of missionary enterprises and establishing New Testament Baptist churches at home and abroad.
- g. The encouragement of Christian fellowship.
- h. Means of Promoting the Purposes: In order to fulfill these purposes, this church shall engage in activities, radio and television programs, a day school, a Sunday school, a bus ministry, missionary activities, nursing homes, a Bible institute, college, and/or Seminary.

ARTICLE III: COVENANT

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

We purpose, 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 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 secret devotions;

- To educate our children in the things of Christ;
- To seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances;
- To live in such a manner worthy of Christ;
- To be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and be an example in all that we do;
- To avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger;
- To abstain from, all forms of activity which dishonor our Lord Jesus Christ, To be zealous in our efforts to advance the cause of Christ, our Savior, and to give Him preeminence in all things.

We further purpose to encourage one another in the blessed hope of our Lord's return;

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

We moreover purpose that when we remove from this place we will as soon as possible unite with some other church of like faith where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word. In the event there is no such church, we shall seek, with the Lord's help, to establish one.

ARTICLE IV: DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

WE BELIEVE THAT GOD'S WORD TEACHES . . .

1. The Verbal Inspiration of the Bible

We believe the Holy Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, to be verbally inspired of God in the original documents, infallible and God-breathed, a perfect standard of faith and practice. *II Timothy 3:16-17, I Corinthians 2:13, II Peter 1:16-21*

2. The Trinity

We believe in the Holy Trinity; that there are three distinct persons in one Godhead. The Trinity of God in His tri -personal existence as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. *Matthew 28:19, Matthew 3:13-17*

3. God the Father

We believe that God is an eternal person, having no beginning and no ending, and that He is Creator of all, infinite and infallible. *John 4:24, Luke 3:22, Genesis 1:1*

4. God the Son

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and God the Son. We believe that:

- He is the only Savior of mankind; *Acts 4:12*
- He is God incarnate in human flesh; *Romans. 8:3*
- He created and sustains all things; *Colossians 1:16-17*
- He is the mediator between God and men; *I Timothy 2:5*

- We believe in His virgin birth, His holy sinless life, His vicarious death, and bodily resurrection. *John 3:16, John 1:14, Hebrews 4:15 Colossians 1:15-19, Luke 1:34-38*

5. God the Holy Spirit

We believe in the Deity and personality of the Holy Spirit; Acts 5: 3-4; that He baptizes all believers into the body of Christ, I Corinthians 12: 13; that He indwells all believers, Romans 8:9; that He produces spiritual fruit in the believer's life, Galatians 5:22-23; He is the believer's guide into the truth, John 16:7-15; and that He furnishes the gifts of the Spirit for the edifying of the body of Christ. We believe the Sign Gifts, Matthew 10:8, Mark 16:17-18, and the Revelatory Gifts, I Corinthians 13:8-10, were temporary and are no longer given by the Holy Spirit.

6. Man

We believe that man was created in the likeness and image of God, Genesis 1: 27. Through the sin of Adam, man fell from his sinless state, Romans 5:12, Isaiah 53:6, Romans 3:23.

7. Salvation

We believe that man is justified by faith in the shed blood of Christ, Romans 5:1-19, Hebrews 9:22, I John 1:7, and that he is born again by grace through faith apart from works. Ephesians 2:8-9, Galatians 2:16

8. A Personal Devil

We believe that Satan is a person, that he is a fallen angel, Luke 10:18, that he is the deceiver of mankind, and that some day God will cast him into the Lake of Fire. Revelation 20:10, Revelation 12:9-10, Matthew 25:41

9. Heaven and Hell

We believe that Heaven is a place prepared for all born-again believers, John 14:1-5 We believe also that Hell is a place prepared for the devil and his angels, Matthew 25: 41, and those who die in unbelief, Luke 16:19-31, Revelation 21:8.

10. Eternal Security

We believe that once a person is born again, he cannot lose his salvation, that he is eternally secure in the Lord Jesus Christ. John 10:27-29, Romans 8:28-29, Colossians 3:3, Ephesians 4:30

11. The Church

We believe in the universal church, the body of Christ, which is composed of all born-again believers of this age and that Christ is the only head of that church. Colossians 1:18, I Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 1:22-23 We believe local churches are organized manifestations of the universal Church. Galatians 1:2, I Corinthians 1:2

12. Baptism and Communion

We believe that baptism by immersion is the only scriptural mode. We believe that baptism does not save. It is an act of obedience to the command of Christ and is a testimony to the world of the believer's faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Romans 6:1-5, Matthew 28:19-20.

We believe communion to be a time of remembrance of Christ's death for us. We believe that this ordinance does not gain favor with God for the recipient and does not change the spiritual position of those who partake in it. Our communion is open to those of like-precious faith who are walking with the Lord in a life characterized by obedience. I Corinthians 11:20-30.

13. Second Coming of Christ

We believe in the second coming of Christ; that His return from Heaven will be personal, visible, and glorious, the time being unrevealed but always imminent; that when He comes He will remove from the earth His Church, then pour out the righteous judgements of God upon the unbelieving world, afterwards descend with His Church and establish His glorious and literal kingdom over all the nations for a thousand years. John 14:3, Acts 1:11, I Thessalonians 4:16-17, Revelation 20

14. Resurrection

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust. John 5:28-29, I Thessalonians 4:13-18, Revelation 20:11-15, Job 19:25-27

15. Separation of Church and State.

We believe in the separation of Church and State. We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, and that governors of states and nations should be obeyed when the laws they seek to enforce are not in conflict with the Bible. Romans 13:1-7, Matthew 22:21, Acts 4:19-20

ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. GENERAL STATEMENT. We believe that the concept of membership in the local church is inferred in the Scriptures (Act 2:41-47,6:1-6, I Corinthians 5, I Timothy 5:9, Revelation 1-3). Therefore, Heritage Baptist Church maintains membership rolls consisting of those who voluntarily join and actively support the purpose and ministries of this church.

Section 2. ELIGIBILITY. The membership of this church shall consist of persons who have received the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, who have been baptized by immersion, who subscribe to the covenant and the doctrinal statement of this church.

Section 3. APPLICATION. All applications for membership shall be made to the Pastor. All applications will be reviewed by the Pastor and Deacons. Each applicant upon approval of their application will attend four Membership Classes, taught by the Pastor or one of the Deacons. Upon completion of the classes, a recommendation from the Deacons and Pastor will be given to the membership.

Section 4. ADMISSION. When a favorable recommendation has been made, the church shall vote upon the applications. Members may be received into the church at any regular or business meeting of the church by receiving a majority vote of those present. Actual membership in the church shall begin with the official Right Hand of Fellowship.

Section 5. DUTIES.

- a. Members shall strive to keep their covenant obligations. They should honor and esteem their Pastor, pray for him daily, and assist him in carrying out the program of the church. They will endeavor to preserve the unity of the church and, if at any time they find themselves opposed to the fundamental doctrines of this church (as described by the Doctrinal Statement), they will not seek to disrupt its fellowship, but will quietly withdraw from its membership.
- b. Every member of the church is expected to attend its meetings, to work for its growth and welfare, to guard its good name in the community, and to keep the clerk informed as to their residence.
- c. Every member is expected to contribute to the financial program of this church with tithes and offerings.

Section 6. REMOVAL FROM MEMBERSHIP

- a. Removal by Letter of Transfer. Any member in good standing may be removed by letter of transfer to the fellowship of another Baptist Church of like faith and practice upon the written request of a Baptist Church.
- b. Removal by Letter of Christian Character. A member in good standing who withdraws from this church to unite with some other denomination may, upon that church's request, be granted a letter of Christian character. Their name shall be removed from the membership roll.
- c. Removal by Discipline
 - 1. Any member who fails to attend at least one regular service of the church and does not contribute financially to the support of the church for a period of six months will have his name removed from the roll of the church after review by the Deacons. Removing a member's name in such cases shall be done only after the Pastor and Deacons have attempted to communicate with the member and ascertain the reasons for non-attendance and have made reasonable effort to restore such a member to active interest in the church. Any member removed from the roll will be notified by the Deacons.
 - 2. A member shall be subject to discipline and removal from the roll when they have failed to adhere to the doctrinal statement or covenant of the church. In such cases, the Pastor or Deacons shall attempt to deal with the member according to Galatians 6:1, II Timothy 4:2 and Ephesians 4:32. Every effort shall be made to restore such a member upon their repentance.
 - 3. Any appeals in such cases shall be made to the Pastor and Deacons.
- d. Removal of members shall be at the discretion of the Pastor and Deacons. The membership of the church shall be informed of all removals from the membership.

Section 6. RIGHTS. All regular members who are sixteen (16) years of age may vote in any business meeting.

Section 7. WATCHCARE MEMBERSHIP Names appearing on this roll are those who might be students or other individuals who are not planning to be permanent residents of the community and who do not wish for regular membership, but who are members in good and regular standing in churches of like faith and practice. Anyone establishing residence in the community is urged to seek regular membership. Watchcare members will be those who subscribe to the Constitution of this church and who agree to submit to the watchcare and discipline of the church. Such members must meet the same prerequisites and admission procedures as any other member. Watchcare members may not hold any elected office and may not vote on any matter of church business.

However, they may be appointed to any other position or function considered appropriate by the Pastor and Deacons. Watchcare membership will automatically cease upon permanent removal of the member from the community and church.

ARTICLE VI: PASTORS

Section 1. QUALIFICATIONS. The qualifications for the office of pastor will be those prescribed by the New Testament I Timothy 3: 1- 7, Titus I: 5-9 . These qualifications must be presently true and manifested in the candidate at the time of his consideration. No man will be called as pastor who is not in substantial agreement with the Constitution of this church. Any areas where the candidate might be in disagreement will be made known to the congregation prior to its decision as to whether or not to issue a call to the candidate.

Section 2. PASTORAL CALL AND DISMISSAL. The pastoral office shall be regarded as a divine appointment and it should not be lightly formed nor rudely severed.

- a. The Pulpit Committee, which shall consist of the Deacon Board, shall be responsible for recommending a prospective Pastor to the membership who meet the above stated qualifications. Before the pastoral candidate can be recommended to the membership, the pastoral candidate must receive at least a ninety (90) percent vote by the Deacon Board. It shall be the policy of the church to consider only one pastoral candidate at a time.
- b. A Pastor shall be selected by the membership in a business session for which announcement has been made by a public reading of a notice at two preceding Sunday morning services, or each member shall be notified by mail at least seven days prior to the business meeting. The recommendation of the Deacons must be accepted by at least two-thirds of the ' qualified members present and voting, before a call can be extended. Thirty (30%) of the qualified voters shall constitute a quorum at this meeting.
- c. The Pastor shall give verbal and written notice of his intention to terminate his ministry at least thirty (30) days in advance. Formal notice may not exceed sixty (60) days.
- d. The church's relationship with its Pastor may be terminated in two ways:

1. The Pastor shall be treated with the same respect as other members of the church. If the Deacon Board has some issues with the Pastor which are not of moral or doctrinal nature, the Deacons shall endeavor to reconcile the situation by prayerfully confronting the Pastor with the issues. If the Pastor refuses the counsel of the Deacons, the Deacon Board shall recommend to the membership the termination of the Pastor. The Deacons shall give a thirty (30) day notice to the Pastor with one (1) month dismissal pay.
2. Should the issues be of a serious error in conduct or doctrine, the Deacon Board may vote to terminate the Pastor's ministry immediately with a seventy-five (75%) vote of the Deacon Board. The Deacons then shall bring the recommendation before the membership by announcing a special business meeting. In the case of doctrinal issues one (1) month dismissal pay will be given. Should the issue be one of immorality dismissal pay will be at the discretion of the church. In the event of either kind of error, whether conduct or doctrinal, the Deacons shall attempt to correct the Pastor Galatians 6:1.

Section 3. MEETINGS. The Pastor shall conduct regular weekly meetings for the purpose of review, coordination, mutual planning and administration, prayer, and edification.

Section 4. DUTIES.

- a. The Pastor's duties are according to the Scriptures, the giving of himself to prayer, the ministry of the Word, the observance of the ordinances, the pastoral oversight of the flock, the administration and the spiritual welfare of the church.
- b. In addition to his usual pastoral duties, the Pastor shall be moderator of all business meetings of the church and of the Deacons. He shall be an ex officio member of all organized groups, commissions, and committees connected with the church. He shall have the privilege of requesting that meetings of the Deacons or other groups shall be called when so needed.

ARTICLE VII: OFFICERS

Section 1. DEACONS

- a. Qualifications and Eligibility.
 1. Biblical qualifications of Deacons are found in Acts 6:1-6 and I Timothy 3:8-13.
 2. All Deacons must subscribe to and believe in the Constitution of this church which is to be reaffirmed annually at the recognition service.
 3. All Deacons must be 21 years of age or over.
- b. Nomination of Deacons
 1. The membership may submit any suggested nominees to the Pastor or Deacons at least thirty (30) days prior to the annual election. The Pastor and Deacons shall then

- consider the qualifications, secure consent from nominees, and prepare a slate of candidates, consisting of at least two (2) candidates for each position when possible.
2. The Deacons shall post a list and cause to be published in the church bulletin the names of the nominees at least two weeks prior to the election of officers meeting.
 - c. Election of Deacons. Deacons shall be elected by the membership at the third quarterly business meeting for a term of three (3) years. The size of the Deacon Board may vary depending upon the needs of the congregation and the availability of qualified men. Under optimum conditions the board will consist of twelve or more members.
 - d. Recognition Service. A recognition service for all Deacons shall take place in January of each year
 - e. Discipline of Deacons. Any Deacon whose conduct is such that it might bring reproach upon the Name of Christ or the church or who fails to administer his office in a reasonable manner (I Timothy 3:8-13 and Titus 1:7-9) shall be removed from office by majority vote of the Pastor and the Deacon Board. The Deacons then will notify the membership of the church.
 - f. Vacancies. Deacon vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term by appointment of the Pastor and Deacons and approved by the membership at the next quarterly business meeting or at a special business meeting.
 - g. Duties of Deacons. The Deacons shall assist the Pastor in the administration and spiritual welfare of the church, subject to the final authority of the members. The Deacons shall act as trustees for the purpose of legal matters and incorporation.
 - h. Meetings of the Deacons.
 1. The Deacons shall conduct monthly meetings for the purpose of prayer, considering the welfare of the church and for the discussion of any business which shall come before them.
 2. A majority of the Deacons shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2. OFFICERS OTHER THAN DEACONS

Appointment, approval, terms, and duties of officers other than deacons. The following officers shall be appointed by the Deacons and approved by the membership at the third quarterly business meeting:

1. CHURCH CLERK. For a term of one (1) year. The Clerk shall keep an accurate and permanent record of all the business meetings of the church, keep records of baptisms and maintain a membership register in which shall be noted such changes as occur. The Clerk shall be prepared to read the minutes of all business meetings.

2. **TREASURER.** For a term of one (1) year. The Treasurer shall keep a clear, accurate and permanent record of all regular receipts and disbursements except those handled by the Financial Secretary.

He shall disburse only when authorized and by check only. He shall present quarterly and annual reports to the church. The Treasurer of the church shall be bonded when possible.

3. **FINANCIAL SECRETARY.** For a term of one (1) year. The Financial Secretary shall maintain an accurate record of all monies, keep a confidential record of tithes and offerings and issue annual receipts to donors. He shall report to the Treasurer the amount of offerings. The Financial Secretary shall be bonded when possible.

4. **DISCIPLINE OF OFFICERS OTHER THAN DEACONS.** Any officer other than a Deacon whose conduct is such that it might bring reproach upon the church or who fails to administer his office in a reasonable manner (I Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:7-9), shall be removed from office by the Deacons.

5. **VACANCIES AND ADDITIONAL OFFICERS.** Vacancies of any office other than Deacons shall be filled for the unexpired term by appointment of the Deacons and approved by the membership at the regular quarterly business meeting or at a special business meeting. Additional officers may be added to the church as deemed necessary for the efficient function of the church body. Recommendations for such officers will be submitted to the membership for vote at any quarterly business meeting or special business meeting.

ARTICLE VIII: ORGANIZATION

We believe in the general biblical principle of congregational government. Consequently, the membership of Heritage Baptist Church owns and maintains the ultimate authority in all matters pertaining to it. This authority is exercised primarily in the selection and calling of the pastor, the annual election of the official board (Board of Deacons), and by approving the annual budget and expenditures for the programs developed to achieve the purpose of the church.

Section 1. **COMMISSIONS.** The actual functions and priorities of the church will be carried out by means of commissions. These commissions will oversee the various areas and ministries of the church. A Deacon shall be the chairman of the various commissions. The number of commissions will be determined by the need and function of the church.

Section 2. **COMMITTEES.** These organizations shall be by nature a temporary entity. Their purpose is directed by the commission by which they were originated. The members of the committee will be appointed by the originating commission. All such committees will cease in existence when their function is complete.

ARTICLE IX: PROCEDURE

Section 1. Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary manual of the church. If any part of Robert's Rules of Order shall be found to be inconsistent with or contradictory to the constitution of the church, the constitution of the church shall govern.

Section 2. Ten percent (10%) of the church membership of voting age shall comprise a quorum.

Section 3. BUSINESS MEETINGS

- a. An annual business meeting shall be held the fourth Wednesday in January - or
- b. At such other date determined by the Pastor and Deacons.
- c. Three quarterly meetings shall be held, the fourth Wednesday of April, the fourth Wednesday of July, the fourth Wednesday of October, or at such other dates as determined by the Pastor and the Deacons.
- d. A meeting shall be held in December to adopt the annual budget.
- e. Special business meetings may be called at any time by the Pastor or Deacons. Notice of the purpose and time of the special meetings shall be read at the services on the 2nd consecutive Sundays or written notice given at least seven (7) days prior.

Section 4. FISCAL YEAR. The business year shall be the calendar year beginning January 1 through December 31.

ARTICLE X: LEGAL

The membership shall vote on major expenditures of the church. This includes the purchasing of buildings, property, etc. Those expenditures that are within the church budget or considered as emergency shall be spent without previous membership voting action. Notification shall be made to the membership of all such expenditures.

ARTICLE XI: AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

No organizations shall be formed or considered a part of the church before its sponsors have submitted their plans to the Pastor and Deacons for sanction, and approval has been granted.

Officers of all organizations, including organized classes and regular Sunday School teachers, and sponsors of children's activities shall be members.

ARTICLE XII: POLICY GUIDELINES

Section 1. FINANCIAL. The financial needs of the church shall be met by voluntary offerings and contributions of its members and friends.

Section 2. MISSIONS. In the extending of its local ministry throughout the world it shall be the practice of the church to encourage giving to Baptist missionary causes. This will not be interpreted as meaning that no other evangelical enterprises can be supported by the church. The church will not receive nor disburse funds to any missionary or mission board or agency where there is reason to question the evangelical nature of the work.

Section 3. ASSOCIATIONAL. As a sovereign New Testament body of believers, this church, by majority vote of its members, may declare itself in association with sister churches on a local, state, national, or international level.

No property rights to real estate and improvements thereon will be conveyed to any outside organization as a result of these associations.

Section 4. DISSOLUTION. In the event of the dissolution of this corporation, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be distributed to or divided among the members or other individuals, but will be irrevocably designated by corporate vote prior to dissolution to such other not-for-profit religious organizations as are in essential agreement with the constitution of this church, and in conformity with the requirements of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1954 Section 501 (c) (3).

ARTICLE XIII: AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended or revised at any regular business meeting of the church by a two-thirds majority vote of a quorum. Public notice must be given at least two (2) Sundays in advance.