

BY-LAWS OF THE HERITAGE BAPTIST CHURCH OF JOHNSON CITY, INC., TENNESSEE

Adopted ~~November-XXX~~ 20XX13

Article 1 Name and Purpose

This incorporated church will be known as “Heritage Baptist Church of Johnson City” (herein called “HBC”). This church exists to glorify God through our obedience to Scripture and Christ-centeredness, which may manifest itself through fellowship of believers, outreach to the local community and the world, praise and worship, and the practical demonstration of God’s Word in our corporate and personal lives.

Article 2 Ordinances

Heritage Baptist Church recognizes the following ordinances:

1. Baptism by immersion of believers who have confessed Jesus Christ as their Lord and personal Savior
2. The Lord’s Supper, which shall be administered as deemed appropriate by the elders of HBC to anyone who has confessed Jesus Christ as their Lord and personal Savior

Article 3 Statement of Faith

We at HBC adopt the Southern Baptist Convention’s The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 as our statement of faith. In order to adopt future iterations of the Baptist Faith and Message as our statement of faith, a change in these bylaws shall be required.

Article 4 Membership

Section 1. Definition of Member in Good Standing

The membership of this church shall consist of persons who confess faith on the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who give evidence of regeneration, who have been baptized by immersion, and who have been received into its membership. The elders examine such persons and receive them into membership.

Section 2. Responsibility of Members

Members are expected to wholeheartedly participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of HBC, consistent with God’s leading and with the gifts, time and resources each has received from God. They will accept encouragement, teaching, support and discipline from the elders and other members of this body.

Section 3. Associate Membership

Qualifications are identical as members except that home church membership must be maintained. A letter of commendation will be sought from their home church. Associate members are not afforded voting privileges or eligible to serve as officers. The elders shall notify the pastor or elders of the home church in the event of termination of associate membership.

Section 4. Inactive Membership

Inactive members are people no longer in proximity to HBC or who are otherwise unable to participate regularly in church activities. Members who willfully, without plausible reason, are absent from the services of HBC for a period of one year shall be notified and then, if deemed appropriate by the elder board, removed from membership roll. Inactive members may be recommended for reinstatement by the elder board upon written request.

Section 5. Church Discipline and Restoration:

All church discipline shall be directed ~~carried out~~ by the elder board. This does not preclude the engagement of other officers, such as deacons or other church staff, to assist with any processes necessary for discipline or restoration. The purposes of church discipline are to restore a member engaged in unrepentant sin to a right relationship with the Lord and His church, and to protect the purity of the church in doctrine and practice. It shall be the practice of HBC to pursue every reasonable measure for peace and reconciliation in accordance with Matthew 18: 15 – 17.

Section 6. Termination of Membership

A letter may be granted to any member in good standing not involved in church discipline who chooses to join another church. For this purpose, “involved in church discipline” shall include any initial investigation by the elders and may be applied retroactively to the time the alleged impropriety occurred. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline under the recommendation by the elder board. The elders shall have authority to refuse a member’s voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, including an initial investigation with the timeline applied retroactively to the time of the alleged impropriety, or for any other biblical reason.

ARTICLE 5 CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Section 1. Officers – General

The officers of the church are elders and deacons. Officers shall be affirmed by vote of HBC members in accordance of Sections 2.B and 4.B. All church officers must be members of HBC in good standing.

Section 2. Elders

- A. Qualifications: Elders must meet the scriptural qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:1 – 7 and Titus 1: 6 – 9 and be a member in good standing
- ~~B.~~—Nomination, Examination and Affirmation: Any church member in good standing may nominate prospective elder(s) to the elder board for review at anytime. The elder board shall be responsible for assessing the qualifications of each nominee, making selections, and overseeing the training of those men.
- B. The elders may choose to delegate certain tasks during the vetting process to other officers, such as deacons. Appointment to the office of elder requires a 100% vote by the elder board before the nominee is presented to the congregation for affirmation. All active elders must vote and may submit their vote electronically or by proxy. A reasonable period of time should be provided, after recommendation by the elder board, for members of HBC to bring forward to the elder board any significant reason that would disqualify the nominee from office. After a reasonable period of time,

candidates will then be brought before the congregation for affirmation, defined as at least three-fourths vote in favor from church members present and in good standing during the annual business meeting or specially called meeting.

~~C.~~—An elder may be vocational or non-vocational. A vocational elder is financially supported by the church, in whole or part, in return for their labors. A non-vocational elder is not financially supported by the church in return for their labors. All elders will serve on the elder board.

C.

D. Tenure of office: The call of an elder at Heritage Baptist Church has no term limits. Nothing prohibits the elder board from granting a ~~temporary respite~~sabbatical from duties.

E. Removal: An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by grievance.

- 1) Resignation: An elder may resign his office at any time, upon request, or if he is no longer able to perform the duties of the office. If possible, a sixty-day written notification should be given to the elder board.
- 2) Grievance: Any two or more church members in good standing with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concerns to any member of the elder board. All charges brought to the elder board in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21 will be investigated. Only the elder board has the authority to remove an elder from his office. If the elder board finds any charges valid scripturally disqualifying him and breaching the trust of the congregation, the elder board will meet to determine continued service. Dismissal of an elder requires at least a two-thirds vote in favor of removal by the entire elder board. The elder under investigation will not be allowed to vote. If the elder board finds the charges brought against the elder are not valid, the accusing members from the congregation may be subject to church discipline as determined by the elder board.

Section 3. Elder Board

A. Composition: The number of elders actively serving on the board ideally should~~all~~ not be less than five (5) members. No maximum number will be prescribed. ~~No more than 1/3 of the board members shall be vocational elders.~~The total number will be set by the elders as determined by the needs of the church and most importantly, the availability of qualified men to serve.

B. Responsibility: The elder board at HBC humbly shepherd and exercise oversight for the care of God's people. Duties include:

1) Praying and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4)

1)2) _____ Teaching sound doctrine, judging doctrinal issues and refuting false doctrine (1 Tim 3:2, Acts 15:6, 19 – 29)

2)3) _____ Providing counsel and resolving conflict (Acts 21:18 – 25)

3)4) _____ Administer loving discipline (II Thes 3:6-15)

4)5) _____ Receiving and administering money (Acts 11:29 – 30)

5)6) _____ Helping the needy (Acts 20:35)

6)7) _____ Caring for the sick (James 5:14)

7)8) _____ Modeling unity and living in peace with one another (I Thes 5:13b)

8)9) _____ Providing oversight over church growth and long-term vision planning for all ministries at Heritage Baptist Church (1 Peter 5:1 – 3)

- C. Organization: The elder board will organize itself as it determines best to shepherd the flock and accomplish the mission of the church. The elder board will elect a chairman and secretary from among the elders. Additional positions of oversight may be created such as those responsible for specific ministries, operations, administration and others as deemed necessary. The elder board will appoint elders to oversee those positions according to their gifts and determine the terms or rotation of oversight as necessary. Every elder is expected to actively exercise his gifts by serving in a specific function or position of oversight as established by the elder board.
- D. Authority: All elders shall be equal in authority, but may be specialized in function.
- E. Meetings: The elder board may meet as often as necessary but should meet at least once per month. Nothing prohibits the use of technology in conducting meetings to accommodate members not able to be physically present. A quorum for meeting is defined as participation by a majority of elders. Voting during elder board meetings may be cast in person, electronically, or by proxy.
- F. Operations: All activities of the church, which should be consistent with the purpose in Article 1, will be overseen by the elders but may be delegated to teams or committees as deemed appropriate. The organization of teams and committees shall be dictated by policies and procedures germane to their function and as outlined in Article 7. The elder board should review each policy and procedure at least biannually.

Section 4. Deacons

- A. Qualifications: Deacons must meet the scriptural qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8 – 13 and be a member in good standing
- B. Nomination, Examination and Affirmation: Any church member in good standing may nominate prospective deacon(s) by submitting name(s) to the deacon board for review at anytime. The deacon board will be responsible ~~for~~ assessing the qualifications of each nominee and forwarding their nomination to the elder board. The elder board must approve each nominee unanimously before presentation to the congregation. All active elders must vote and may submit their vote electronically or by proxy. The elders will oversee the affirmation process by the congregation. Members of HBC will have time to bring forward to the deacon and/or elder board any significant reason that would disqualify the nominee from office. Congregational affirmation is at least three-fourths vote in favor from church members in good standing present during annual meeting or specially called meeting.
- C. Tenure of office: Each deacon should agree to serve a minimum 3-year term. There will be no limits on the number of terms an individual may serve in the office of deacon.
- D. Responsibilities: Deacons will assist the elders to serve the church body in ministering to physical and spiritual needs of the congregation under the leadership of the elder board.
- E. Removal: A deacon's term of office may be terminated early by resignation or by grievance. The process is the same as removing an elder in accordance to Sections 2.E.1 and 2.E.2. Likewise, deacons should strive to provide a minimum of 60 days notice prior to resignation.

ARTICLE 6 CHURCH EMPLOYEES

Section 1. Definitions

Throughout the New Testament, the terms “presbuteros”, “episkopos”, and “poimen” are used to describe the office or the duties of the pastors/elders. HBC recognizes that all elders are called upon to fulfill the duty of an overseer or a shepherd, but not all elders will have the same spiritual gifts or talents and therefore may have different duties or responsibilities within the church body. In the New Testament poimen refers to the job of caring for or shepherding the flock. Hence we recognize that the terms “pastor” and “elder” in the English language often are used to refer to different offices, but biblically the office is one and the same. The elder board may use the term pastor to refer to an elder with a specialized role, and typically those given the title of “Pastor” will be in a paid or contractual arrangement with HBC to serve a specific function.

Section ~~2~~4. Senior Pastor

The senior pastor, by definition, shall be a vocational elder. He will serve in the same capacity, as elder, as all other elders. Nomination of the senior pastor shall be ~~done by a committee and~~ overseen by the elder board. The elder board may appoint a committee to assist in the nomination of the senior pastor. The examination and affirmation will be conducted as outlined in Article 5, Section 2.B, except that the candidate is not required to be a current member in good standing. He should be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor, the elders, collectively, will assume responsibility for his duties. Removal of the senior pastor is likewise removal of an elder and shall be done in accordance to Article 5 Sections 2.E.1 and 2.E.2.

Section 3. Other Pastoral Staff

Pastors, whether full-time or part-time, by definition shall be vocational elders and must be qualified to serve in the office of elder as outlined in Article 5, Section 2.A, and similar to the senior pastor, nomination of a pastor will be conducted in accordance with Article 5, Section 2.B, except that the candidate is not required to be a current member in good standing. Pastors may be called by the elders and presented to the church to assist in the day to day oversight of the duties of the elders and the business of the church. Pastors should have a job description that outlines the general duties and responsibilities for their position; however as elders, they may be called upon to fulfill any biblical duty of an elder.

Section 4. Relinquishment of Pastoral Service

Should any pastor, as defined by HBC in Article 6, Section 1, relinquish his position as pastor willingly, the elder board will convene to decide whether or not that individual should remain as a member of the elder board, and the elder (pastor) under consideration will not vote in that matter. A decision for retention must be unanimous and all elders must be allowed an opportunity to vote, whether in person, electronically, or by proxy, otherwise the individual shall also be relieved of his position on the elder board. Should a pastor be asked to resign or is terminated from his position by the elder board, then he will automatically be removed as an elder at the same time.

Section ~~5~~2. Ministry and Support Staff

Ministry and Support staff are employees supported financially by the church in return for their vocational labors. Ministry and Support staff ~~are not necessarily called by the Holy Spirit to become vocational elders,~~ ~~but~~ serve as an assisting partner in the ministry of the church under the oversight of the elder board. Ministry and Support staff shall be recruited, hired, and terminated according to processes set forth by the elder board.

Such hiring shall not exceed the approved budget unless a budget change is approved by the elder board and confirmed by congregational vote at a duly called meeting.

ARTICLE 7 COMMITTEES

Section 1. Committee Members – General

- A. The elder board has the authority to create committees and positions to which it may delegate any aspect of its responsibility. The elder board has the authority to dissolve any committee or position. The elder board has the authority to appoint elders, deacons and/or members to serve on such committees or to act as its agents in such positions. Committee membership shall consist of members of HBC in good standing. Every committee will have a chairman appointed by the elder board who is responsible for the overall operation and charge of the committee.
- B. Committee members may serve consecutive terms as approved by the elder board. All committee members are expected to serve until their successors are installed.
- C. The elder board shall fill vacant, unexpired terms of service that occur on various committees. Committees may recommend qualified members to the elder board for consideration to fill vacancies.
- D. Each committee shall make reports of its activities to the elder board and congregation as needed, but at least annually or at completion of its task(s).
- E. Any committee member no longer fulfilling his/her responsibilities should be removed by the elder board. Committees may recommend such action to the elder board by a majority vote of committee members.
- F. Examples of committees may include, but are not limited to Trustee, Personnel and Missions

ARTICLE 8 MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship Gathering

HBC will meet regularly on the Lord's Day for worship and study of the Word. The elder board shall set times and schedules according to the spiritual needs of the congregation.

Section 2. Annual Business Meeting

The annual business meeting should be held at the beginning of the last month of the fiscal year. The elder board will determine the date and time of the annual business meeting and duly announce it at least two weeks in advance to the congregation. Other specially called meetings may be called as deemed necessary by the elder board as set forth in the by-laws of the church.

Section 3. Special Meetings

The elder board may call for special meetings as deemed necessary. In addition, a written request signed by at least twenty percent of HBC membership, describing the reason for the meeting, shall require the elders to

call a special meeting. Any specially called meeting of the congregation must be announced a minimum of two weeks in advance.

Section 4. Voting

Any member 18 years of age or older and in good standing is entitled to vote (i.e. a voting member) in annual or special business meetings. Members are expected to participate in voting for church officers per Article 5 sections 2.B & 4.B, by-law adoption and amendments per Article 11 sections 1 and 2, annual budget or any substantial changes thereafter approved, property acquisition and associated indebtedness, disposition of all or substantially all of the church's assets, or any other major event or decision as designated by the elder board.

Section 5. Fiscal Year

The Fiscal year runs from January 1st to December 31st.

Section 6. Rules Governing Business Meetings

All business meetings shall be conducted in an orderly fashion and should be moderated by an elder. Seeking the Lord's wisdom and blessing through thankful prayer shall be a part of every meeting.

Section 7. Quorum

Any annual or specially called meeting of the church requires at least ten percent of the voting members in good standing to constitute a quorum. In regards to matters with specifically designated quorums, as stated in this document, the specific quorum and other specifications for voting shall apply.

ARTICLE 9 AUXILIARIES

In all matters of deciding policy, these by-laws shall be the highest authority. In matters not addressed in these by-laws, it is understood that the highest authority is the prayerful consideration and decision making of the elder board.

ARTICLE 10 DISSOLUTION CLAUSE

No part of the net earnings of this corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, member, director, officer of the corporation, or any private individual; and no donor, member, director, officer of the corporation, or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporate assets. Upon dissolution, any assets of the corporation must be distributed as determined by the elders to one or more organizations recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as exclusively organized for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes.

ARTICLE 11 ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT

Section 1. Adoption

These by-laws shall be adopted and put into effect immediately when ~~a) after~~ three-fourths of the voting members present at the annual or specially called meeting vote in the affirmative to adopt them ~~and b) elders are elected into leadership. Until such time the board of directors shall continue to act as the governing body.~~

Section 2. Amendment or Repeal

Any of these articles or sections may be amended, altered or repealed by a vote of three-fourths of the voting members present at the annual or specially called meeting in which voting occurs for the proposed amendment. Any amendment must be tabled at least thirty days after presentation to HBC.

Section 3. Previous Rules

The adoption of these rules shall affect a repeal of all previously adopted rules and/or by-laws.