



HARVEST
CHURCH

The Heart of Harvest

&

Church Policy Manual

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The Heart of Harvest

Welcome to Harvest Community Church of Freeport, Indiana, Kittanning, and Petroleum Valley! We are one church in multiple locations that seeks to glorify God by growing the health and size of His church everywhere.

Please join us regularly in worshipping our Lord Jesus, as we strive to:

- Live God’s Word daily.
- Glorify Him in everything we do.
- Help others grow in their relationships with God.

This booklet gives a bird’s-eye view of our basic beliefs so that you understand our position on the most important issues. If you are interested, there are in-depth studies to help you understand the finer details of each of these areas.

Our staff is available to assist you in your spiritual growth. They are happy to direct you to resources including community groups and classroom studies and ways you can serve. However, remember that your effort is the key to your growth and development. The sanctification process is ongoing for each of us and will only be complete at the time of our presence with the Lord.

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Truths That Guide Us

As we try to define our practice of faith at Harvest, we see three primary sections.

Absolutes

These are the unchanging foundations and fundamentals of Christian faith. To deny these absolute truths is to deny the essence of Christianity. You will find that they are non-negotiable terms of Christian faith and theology. We have codified these Absolutes in our Constitution, and we refer to them as our Statement of Faith (see next page).

Convictions

These are based on our interpretation of the Bible in areas other than the Absolutes. We would take the stand that Bible-believing Christians can disagree on these issues without causing a question of salvation or commitment to the Absolutes.

Traditions & Preferences

You will find that a lot of what has been instilled in all of us over time fits into this category. Because we were raised with certain traditions, we tend to make them synonymous with the truth. We do them because we are used to doing them. While the individual may value these issues, we are not bound by them. You may find that many things that cause people to disagree fit into this category. We use the scripture as the guide to consider each of these sections.

At Harvest, each believer is expected to study the scriptures and form an understanding of matters of Christian faith. We will, at times, use traditions and preferences in our activities. They are valuable when they promote or advance the gospel and the well-being of God's church. But at Harvest, we are willing to set aside traditions and preferences any time they stop edifying the church.

Here at Harvest, we are determined to keep the main thing, the main thing. We must put Christ's preaching and teaching, his crucifixion, and resurrection in front of all other things. We seek to live in unity in the midst of diversity. Our Absolutes are absolute; our Convictions are shared and considered in love; and our Traditions and Preferences are viewed with grace, openness and acceptance.

Absolutes

Statement of Faith

God's Word

We believe the Old and New Testament scriptures are the inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original writings, the infallible and perfect Word of God, complete as the revelation of God's will for salvation, and the supreme and final authority in all matters to which they speak. (Deuteronomy 4:2; Psalm 119:160; Matthew 5:18; John 10:35; 1 Corinthians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians. 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; Revelation 22:18-22)

The Trinity

We believe in one God, Creator and Sustainer of all things, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe that they are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption. (Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 48:16; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-2; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

God the Father

We believe in God, the Father, an infinite personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, justice, righteousness, and love. He is transcendent and not of the same essence as His creation. We believe He concerns Himself mercifully in men's affairs, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (Matthew 6:26; John 4:24; 17:1-3; 1 Timothy 6:15-16; James 1:17)

Jesus Christ

We believe Jesus Christ is God's eternal Son and has precisely the same nature and attributes as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit:

- He is not only true God, but true man, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary,
- In His sinless life, His substitutionary atonement, His death, burial, and bodily resurrection, His ascension into heaven, and His priestly intercession and mediation on behalf of His people, and
- He is seated at the right hand of God and will return soon to judge the living and the dead and establish His kingdom, a kingdom that will endure forever. (Matthew 1:18-25; 26:38; John 1:14; 8:40; 8:42; 11:33; Hebrews 2:14, 2:15; 1 Timothy 2:5)

Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, His personality, and His work in regeneration, sanctification, and the preservation of the saints. He reveals the Son and convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. His ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and implement Christ's work of redeeming the lost and empowering the believer for godly living and service. (Psalm 139:7; Isaiah. 40:13-14; John 3:5-7; 14:16-17; 16:8; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; 12:13; Ephesians 1:13; Titus 3:5)

Man/Marriage

We believe God created man, the first male and female, in His image and that He gave them authority over all the earth. Adam and Eve were joined in marriage from the start to reflect the future union of Christ and the Church. Man and woman, joined in marriage, reflect the image of God in a unique manner. Marriage between man and man or woman and woman is not possible and therefore an abomination to God. Man sinned and consequently experienced not only physical death but also spiritual death (which is separation from God). The consequences of this sin affect the entire human race. All human beings are born with a sinful nature resulting in acts of sin in word, thought, and deed. And while they are able to do good works in the eyes of other humans, yet as to their spiritual standing before God, all are lost apart from the atoning work of Christ. Although man is a sinner, being created in God's image means he is more valued than all other life forms on earth. (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:17; 3:6; 9; Mark 7:20-23; John 2:24-25; Romans 5:12-19; Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:18)

Satan

We believe Satan exists, is a created being who accuses the brethren and opposes God. He is still working in the world to destroy men's souls. He, all his angels, and all humans who do not receive Christ as their Savior will eternally perish in the lake of fire. (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:9; 19:20; 20:10, 14-15)

Resurrection

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all mankind. Believers are resurrected to enjoy eternal life with God. The wicked are resurrected for eternal judgement in the lake of fire. (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:46; John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 20:4-6; 20:12-15; 21:1-8)

Salvation

We believe:

- in salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved,"
- that this salvation is based upon God's sovereign grace, was purchased by Christ's shed blood on the cross, and is received by man through faith, apart from any human merit, work or ritual, and

- salvation results in repentance from sin and obedience to Christ's commands to love God and love your neighbor. (John 1:12; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:28; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 2:11; 3:5; 1 John 1:17)

The Church

We believe that the church in its invisible form is universal, the true body of Christ. The Holy Church is the one institution specifically ordained by God to function in furthering the Kingdom until Christ comes again. It consists of all those regenerated by the Spirit of God, in spiritual union and communion with Christ, the head of the Body, and with fellow believers. Each church member is gifted by God to build up the collective body and to be Christ's ambassador. The church is Christ's Bride and will be presented by Him holy and spotless before His Father in heaven. The church will not be conquered by even hell itself. We believe the ordinances of the local church are believers baptism and the Lord's Supper. (Matthew 16:18; 28:19; Acts 1:5; 11:15-16; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 15:51-53; Colossians 1:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; Titus 2:13)

Christian Life

God commands the believer to be Spirit-filled. The Holy Spirit helps the believer to understand the scripture and have victory over temptation and sin. The Holy Spirit also leads the believer in prayer, worship, fellowship, and service. We believe that all true believers are kept by God, have the Holy Spirit's indwelling and sealing, and have Christ's intercession. We do not believe perfection is attainable in this life; however, all believers are, by God's grace and the Holy Spirit's power, to make progressive steps of growth toward spiritual maturity and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. (Isaiah. 45:22; 49:6; Matthew 28:18-20; John 10:28-30; 14:16-17; 17:18-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 1:12-15; 5:12-19; 6:1-11; 8:11-13, 38-39; 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Galatians 6:1-2; Ephesians 2:1-3, 10; 4:11-16, 30; Philippians 2:12-13; 3:12-16; Colossians 1:28; 1 Timothy 3:1-12; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 1:3; 1 John 2:1)

Convictions

We believe in the Church of Jesus Christ. The Church of Jesus Christ is NOT a building, but a body of believers. The church is created by God. It is the people of God. Jesus Christ is its Lord and Head; the Holy Spirit is its life and power. It is divine and human, heavenly and earthly, and ideal and imperfect. It exists to fulfill the purposes of God in Christ. Christ loved the church and gave himself so it should be holy and without blemish. He promised to build the church and that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by divinely called men and that the ordinances are given according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world.

There are some issues on which Christians may disagree. When it comes to living with others with different opinions, the true issue is Christian love. Can we hold to different convictions and hold them strongly, and still love and commit to one another? We believe that is what God requires of us. We delight in the challenge that God has given us at Harvest to love within a diversity of convictions.

Worship in Song

We are committed to worship that is genuine, balanced, and honoring to the Lord. Our worship services are a mix of contemporary and traditional music, with varying styles. We want your worship at Harvest to be sincere, stimulating, and Spirit filled. We don't believe that one style of music is superior to another. Our goal is to use music that is enjoyable and well performed to make it easy for the congregation to sing along and worship our God.

We encourage freedom in worship. Some like to raise their hands and be expressive. We want to foster an environment where people feel safe focusing on God and enjoying Him in song, while still respecting fellow worshippers. Feel free to worship loudly, quietly, standing, sitting, or even kneeling.

Missions

At the heart of the gospel is the mandate to "go and make disciples of all nations." God is a missionary God. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is a record of God's efforts to rescue mankind and restore him to relationship with God.

We believe that God has called Harvest to raise up "world Christians" with a heart to take the whole gospel to the whole world. We believe the fields are already white for harvest, but the laborers are few.

We believe that from Pennsylvania there is no place in the world we cannot reach by the power of Christ. With this in mind we, as a church, are committed strongly to the following activities:

- giving generously to missions throughout the world,
- investing in local evangelism,
- partnering with people throughout the world to plant healthy churches,
- prioritizing our efforts to reach the least-reached peoples of the world with the gospel,
- raising and training men and women to go into service bringing the gospel to the world,

- regularly organizing short-term mission trips that encourage our missions' partners and expose our people to a world vision, and
- planting indigenous-led churches that rapidly grow and multiply among Bengali Muslims.

We are committed to having every member of our church being involved in some form of ministry. Harvest Community Church is a place to serve, not observe!

Local Outreach and Evangelism

We are committed to reaching our communities with Jesus' love. The best way to tell others about Christ is to do what Christ would do — be a servant to them and show love. At times we organize outreaches, creative acts of service, and/or advertising — all designed to let people know we are here so that they can join us and hear the gospel. We encourage people to invite their friends and families to church to hear the gospel. We design almost all of our events and services with unbelievers in mind. We want to be a church filled with people who invite their lost friends and loved ones to special occasions, where they will have a good time and hear the gospel. We also want to be a church where our Sunday services, though to God and focused on the believer, are very hospitable and understandable to the guests who visit.

Biblical Stewardship

Everything belongs to God. We believe that human beings will either worship the Giver of all things or will make idols of His gifts. The first human beings were taught by God to give the first portion of the gifts He gave them from the earth. This giving of the first fruits quickly became the giving of the tithe by Abraham's time, before the Law of Moses. We believe that God's people should joyfully give back the first 10 percent of their income to God as worship. We believe that this worship should be done in their local church, where God is feeding and caring for them.

Although this gift is an act of worship to God for the giver, it supports the financial needs of the local church. We also believe that after the tithe, the people of Harvest should generously support the work of God according to how He has blessed them. We also believe that all of us have a responsibility to seek to live balanced lives so that we have something extra to give those in need.

As a church, we are committed to giving the first fruits of all that is given in worship to the mission effort of planting churches throughout the world. For this reason, a set percentage of all money received by Harvest is first given to missions and to local outreach. This percentage varies according to our financial capabilities, but it has historically always been substantially more than 10 percent. It is our hope that this portion of our giving will always increase.

Beyond that, we believe that the Lord's money should be spent according to His priorities. This can be difficult to discern, and good Christians can certainly disagree. We seek to staff our church to minister well and be frugal, keep minimal savings, and get the most use possible out of all assets owned by the church. In all things, it is our desire to use earthly wealth to increase the population of heaven.

Discipleship Education

Christians are to grow in the knowledge of the Word of God throughout life. This learning is not so that the Christian can become proud of his knowledge, but so that he can know and enjoy God better, and thereby be more like Jesus. If we are more like Jesus, we are truly His disciples.

In addition to your Sunday morning experience, Harvest schedules various learning opportunities through small groups, Bible studies, special series, and training events. They are designed to help you grow deeper in your walk with the Lord.

Prayer

God wants us to grow in reliance on Him. One of the main ways we do this is through prayer. In prayer, we can focus on God, bring our worries and requests to Him, adore Him, confess to Him, and consider how wonderful He is in all ways. We value prayer as a component of every endeavor and ministry.

Eternal Security

This subject has divided many believers throughout many centuries. In seeking to unite believers rather than divide, Harvest allows for the disagreements of individual Christians on this issue. We encourage a strong conviction in this area. We encourage all Christians to seek to determine how God saves and how salvation continues throughout our earthly lives. We encourage all believers to hold to the Bible's teaching on this area. We allow for disagreement because we understand that many in our area have come from churches that take very different stances on the issue. We allow for strong conviction on this very important matter but without disunity. Therefore, the issue of a person's stance on eternal security will not become a litmus test for membership.

Speaking in Tongues

Speaking in tongues is speaking a language different from one's native language. "Tongues" is used in two different ways in scripture: speaking the wonders of God to man and speaking to God. It is one of the most widely debated topics within the Christian community. While we may discuss it, it is not an issue we debate.

- Because it is listed as one of the Spirit's gifts, we have no reason to believe it has ceased to exist.
- Paul states that if the church member is speaking in tongues, those who don't understand will think him mad or strange.

Since Harvest Community Church exists to evangelize the lost, we believe those who have the gift of tongues should use that gift to speak to God in private, and not during our service, to avoid distracting unbelievers. A person's position on tongues and the charismatic gifts will not be used as a litmus test for membership.

Healing

Healing was an important ministry of our Lord. Jesus healed to show God's power and draw the hearts of men to Him. Scripture clearly records God's power to heal sin, the brokenhearted, sickness, disease, and our land. Because the Bible testifies that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, we have no reason to believe that God has retired or stopped performing miracles and healings. God is able to heal today.

God often uses people to heal, but healing results from God's supernatural intervention in our lives. It is through His name that we are healed. While God uses physicians to treat, the Great Physician heals. The Bible lays out guidelines for those who seek healing:

- confess our sins that we may be healed,
- pray,
- exercise faith,
- call on the church's spiritual leaders,
- lay hands on the individual seeking healing, and
- anoint that person with oil as a symbol of God's grace at work in the life of that individual.

There are many factors and mysteries as to why one is healed, while another is not. While we cannot always answer every question, we can know four things for certain.

- Man suffers while on earth and dies.
- We will not experience total and complete healing until our bodies are glorified.
- When the grace to be healed is not given, the grace to endure is promised.
- We can continue to trust God knowing that He works all things for His good for those who love Him.

Modes of Baptism

Jesus practiced baptism and proclaimed the need for it. The early church performed it. We believe baptism is a rite to be performed on every Christian.

- Baptism signifies entrance into the household of faith.
- It is a symbol of identifying with Christ in His death and resurrection. It represents the new birth in Christ Jesus and marks Christian commitment.
- Baptism marks believers as part of God's family.

Most Christian traditions of all times are united in support of the practice of baptism. However, what most Christian traditions are not united on is the mode, meaning, and timing of baptism. We have chosen, as far as it depends on us, not to allow baptism to divide Harvest Community Church. We believe in baptism, but also that the means of baptism is not as important as the meaning of baptism. The conviction of Harvest Community Church is to practice believers baptism and infant dedication. Our primary means of baptism is through immersion. However, if a Christian has been baptized in a different tradition (perhaps sprinkling, pouring, or thrice dunked) and they feel strong conviction that their baptism is sufficient, then they can still be a member of Harvest Community Church.

Traditions and Preferences

Dress Code

At Harvest, the dress code is specifically de-emphasized. We are free in Christ with things like hair length, music preferences and forms of worship, provided we avoid sin. This is not meant to be disrespectful to those who prefer a more uniform and formal practice in dress. Rather, it recognizes that, at times, dress is an unnecessary barrier for unbelievers. They may focus more on how well others are dressed than on the Lord. Historically, there is no evidence in the scripture that the apostles, Jesus, or those gathered to worship with them dressed in anything other than their everyday clothing. We want clothing to become less important and Jesus to become more important.

On the other hand, we would hope that people dress in a way that is respectful of his neighbor as far as cleanliness and propriety are concerned. We should not be seeking to dress for pride or drawing undue attention to ourselves. Also, we desire that those who prefer to dress in nicer clothes feel free to do so and not be judged for their actions.

We do not judge other congregations where the pastor and people dress formally for church worship. Clothing is an area of freedom in worship. Let us freely receive one another with joy and understanding that each one is different.

Bible Translations

Harvest does not have a Bible of choice. We leave the choice to the individual. We recommend a translation that is readable for your level of understanding and reliable from the original languages. That said, we have chosen the English Standard Version (ESV) to be the Bible translation we give away to guests and preach from. We do this because:

- it is a translation that is in plain language,
- it is very reliable to the original languages, and
- it allows for uniformity when reading along during services.

There are translations that are excellent, poor, and some in between. If you would like input on specific versions, please speak to one of the pastors.

Advertising

We are committed to becoming well known in the community and to make Jesus Christ known. Our prayer is that through recognizing our name and attending Harvest, the lost will receive salvation in His name. Our people are our best form of advertisement because excitement and enthusiasm are contagious. When those who attend Harvest are excited about the Lord and their church, others will be drawn to the Lord and into the church.

Significant and radical transformation in people's lives can take place through the power of the Holy Spirit. God can make a difference in people's lives, and in turn, they can make a difference in others' lives.

We want the name of Harvest Community Church to be known so that people know where to come to find our Lord, Jesus Christ. It is not our name that matters, but His. We are open to advertising the name of the church for the purpose of evangelism in any way that is ethical.

Church Growth

We are committed to growing the church. For our church to grow, our people must grow in their own relationships with the Lord. We seek to assist each person in that spiritual growth. We worry about the “depth” of our spiritual growth and let the Lord worry about the “width.” Consequently, as Christians grow in depth, they will learn of their need to reach their communities with the good news of Jesus. Because of this we will happily, and with great perseverance, invest in efforts to grow our church. There is no “ideal” size. Whomever God brings, we want to accommodate. We never want to say, “Well, we’re big enough.” Until the Lord comes, there is always room for more. However, we will not become discouraged either if God determines to bless our efforts at growth in a smaller manner than we desire. He is the Lord. We are to be faithful and allow Him to give the increase.

Spiritual Gifts

We are committed to seeing people use their spiritual gifts in ministry. We want to be a church that utilizes everyone's gifts, talents, and abilities. Every person in the body has spiritual gifts, and each are needed to fulfill the mission of the church. Harvest is not a place where you have to be asked to act on a need. We encourage our people to see a need and to work with others to meet the need. Every child of God is also a co-worker of God.

If you have an interest in any area of ministry, speak to one of the pastors regarding that interest or calling. We remain open regarding direction for new ministries. However, all ministries under Harvest Community Church need to be approved through the elders. We are very interested in developing new leaders as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission. Our integrity in the community is important as we seek to do the right things in the right manner.

Creativity

We are committed to doing things God’s way, even if it's not what we are accustomed to from our past church experience. We want to hear from God, experience God, and follow Him. Risk and failure are always possibilities as we try different ways to bring the gospel to the world. God requires a return on His investment in us, and we view reaching out, taking chances, being creative, and risking setbacks as parts of the path of success in bringing Him that return.

We continually evaluate ministry and programs to maintain effectiveness in reaching our community for Christ. We want to be a church that effectively implements change and thrives during the process. We will be required to make changes and adjustments to things we do.

Unity

We are committed to unity during diversity. We may differ in opinion without causing division in the body of Christ. This is an ongoing value of Harvest. We invite you to join us on this adventure in loving.

We extend God's grace to people. We forgive as we have been forgiven.

Hospitality

Our goal is to treat every person who walks through the doors of Harvest with the same attention, affection, affirmation, and acceptance that Jesus would give those individuals. We want to demonstrate that we are Jesus' disciples by the way we serve and love one another. Rich or poor, young or old, black or white, Hispanic, or Asian, dirty or clean, believer or unbeliever — all people are equally important to our God and worthy of our love and accommodation.

Mission & Principles

Our Mission Rationale

From the beginning, Harvest has focused on reaching the world for Christ locally, nationally, and internationally.

Locally, we believe we are to invest in people and invite them to join us at one of our campuses to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Nationally, we are to help plant churches and aid various ministries.

Internationally, we plant churches and aid Christ's cause with money, people, and God's Word. As we continue to adapt our methods and actions to best accomplish Jesus' mission in the world, we need to define an unchanging mission, lest we lose our focus. With this in mind, we hold the following foundational principles:

- We exist to increase the health and size of God's church everywhere.
- We are a community church with a world-wide vision.
- We are church builders, by making and being disciples.
- Our Biblical mandate is summarized in, "To know Him and to make Him known."
- By knowing Him we become like Him and learn to love one another in true community.
- We know Him by offering our lives as worship.
- We make Him known by:
 - declaring His excellencies to a lost world,
 - loving the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and loving our neighbors as ourselves. (Mark 12:30-31)
 - planting indigenous-led churches that rapidly grow and multiply among Bengali Muslims.

Our Guiding Texts for Mission

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35) (John 15:8-14; Matthew 7:12; Romans 13:8-10; 1 John 3:10)

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth ... For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw — each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple." (1

Corinthians 3:6-17) See also Matthew 16:18; 1 Peter 2:4-5; 1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 3:10, 20-21; Ephesians 5:22-32.

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”(Matthew 28:18-20) (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:45-48; Acts 1:8; John 9:4; Ephesians 2:10)

Our Mission & Principles

Harvest Community Church exists to glorify and love God by:

- seeking to grow a healthy church of disciples who know God and make Him known in our community, and
- establishing various campuses while also working toward planting churches anywhere in the world that do the same.

Harvest Community Church’s guiding principles are:

- We trust the Word of God and believe that in its clear proclamation, faith is born and much good is done in the hearts of people. (Romans 10:17; Matthew 4:4; 5:18; 2 Corinthians 4:2)
- We trust the Spirit of God to guide all of our efforts. All good works of the church must be based on prayer; therefore, all endeavors are to be begin, and end, in prayer. We seek to foster prayer as individuals, at the family level, and as a church community. (James 5:15-16; John 16:24)
- We see the cross as central to all we do and proclaim. Therefore, we commit to declare the death of Jesus Christ for sins and His resurrection repeatedly and give the cross the priority in our songs, sermons, funerals, weddings, and all other events where proclamation is possible. (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 2:2)
- We believe God is sufficient for all things in our church and lives. Therefore, faith plays an essential role in our function. All plans and ministries are based on the idea that God is good to us and great enough to do through us all that we ask or think according to his will. (Hebrews 11:6)
- We honor Jesus as the head of the church, our Captain, our Savior, our Lord, our Commander, our Keeper, our Guide. No man is head of the church, but Jesus alone. We seek Him in all things and work and live with hope surrounding us, knowing our labor is not in vain and that He is with us, guiding us, and returning soon. (Ephesians 1:22)

- We pursue mission work with our planned financial investment and human involvement of all kinds. This means we will remember to give regularly to mission work from our offerings; likewise, we will send our people, both in short- and long-term missions. Church planting anywhere in the world is our responsibility, as the Lord leads us. This must remain a priority of each elder and a responsibility of all members of the body. (Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Timothy 6:17-18)
- We seek to promote communication with the body, knowing that each member of Harvest has a right to know what their leaders are planning and have the opportunity to be persuaded that the Lord is indeed leading in each ministry activity. Communication is hard work among fallen man, and we are committed to diligence and constant improvement in this area. (Romans 12:10; 2 Timothy 4:2)
- We are theologically rigorous, yet flexible on non-essentials that divide churches. Our Statement of Faith outlines The Essentials. Let each individual be subject to the Word of God, reason, and his conscience as regards issues that are non-essential. (Romans 14:1-5)
- To make decisions, we value common sense, especially when the Bible does not mandate a definite course of action. (James 3:17; Acts 15:22; Acts 15:24-25; Titus 2:2; Titus 1:8; Titus 2:5; Titus 2:6)
- Church government is as lean as possible, flexible, and conforming to the items the Bible outlines. (Titus 1:5)
- We use technology as a tool for the gospel and strive to remain innovative in all we do. We believe that nothing is unclean of itself. Therefore non-traditional methods of church ministry are measured by how they might help in furthering Harvest's mission. Creativity, art, advertising, and new ways of doing things are always options, as the Lord leads. (1 Corinthians 9:22)
- We seek opportunities for Jesus. We are committed to risking in faith and taking chances for the gospel. Along with that comes a commitment to change quickly as ministry opportunities present themselves. (Colossians 4:5; Galatians 6:10; Luke 19:11-27)
- We seek to do all things well, constantly improving on our ministry efforts. (Ephesians 6:5-8; Ecclesiastes 9:10)
- Ministry is messy and does not always go according to plan. When this happens, we are committed to grace, focusing on improving behavior and performance, not on castigating the person. (James 2:13; Ephesians 4:32; Proverbs 14:4)
- We value biblical teaching and view regular Bible classes as means to an end and not an end in themselves. Our teaching ministries exist to help meet the church's mission and not well-attended programs. We are free to reschedule, cancel, or begin new classes and new formats for education as best fits the situation. (Matthew 9:17)

- We aim to have orderly and vibrant worship of God through song. We are flexible in our styles and invite all in our church family to participate. God must be glorified among us in song, and we must do all in our power to encourage focused and enthusiastic worship among God's family. (Psalm 150; Hebrews 13:15)
- We promote a Christian worldview, engaging the culture, responding to current concerns and philosophies, and bringing Christ's unchanging and eternal perspective to bear so that we may teach Christians to understand their times and be wise. (Romans 12:2)
- As Jesus instructed the first believers to reach their local area (Jerusalem), their nearby neighbors (Judea), their more distant neighbors (Samaria), and people in all places no matter how far (even to the end of the earth), we believe that we can reach Western Pennsylvania and the ends of the world from Harvest Community Church. (Acts 1:8)
- We are mindful to honor the Lord's command to be devoted to one another in brotherly love. We are a family in Christ. We emphasize hospitality, sharing meals, and the fellowship of believers in organized and casual meetings. Also, we are committed to meeting the basic needs of the saints, bearing one another's physical and emotional burdens, and sharing in one another's joys. (Acts 2:44-47)
- We are committed to crossing cultural boundaries to achieve the unity Jesus desires for His Church. This means that we will continually reach out across racial, generational, ethnic, and economic barriers that divide our world. (Ephesians 2:14; Galatians 3:28-29)
- We value individual discipleship as the sure path to increased Christ-likeness. Spiritual maturity for each believer is God's desire and necessary to fulfill His goal of building the church — His bride. As Jesus commanded us to "make disciples," so we must train each believer in the basic doctrines and disciplines taught by the Bible. (2 Timothy 2:2; Colossians 1:28-29)
- We take seriously our responsibility to minister compassionately to those with emotional needs. There are those who come to Christ with deep hurts and in great need of loving attention and godly healing. When hurting people want to be a part of Harvest we seek to bring them to a point of victory in Christ so that they can serve Him with peace and joy. (1 Corinthians 12:23-24; Galatians 6:2)
- We see our congregation as a part of the worldwide body of Christ. Other believing congregations are not competitors, but members of our family. We seek to strengthen those engaged in the same work as us. We must pray for other congregations and support their ministries as we are able. (Mark 9:40; 1 Corinthians 10:24)
- We believe that many Christians are refugees from unhealthy churches. We want to reach out and intentionally minister to these people, giving them a place to rest, heal, and re-enter the local church of our Lord. (Galatians 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:14)

- God intends for healthy churches to raise up leaders. These leaders can work within Harvest's expanding ministry field or pursue the Kingdom of God in other places. Nevertheless, we are committed to identifying, mentoring, and training leaders from within Harvest's ranks. We believe that it is our job to train the called and not simply call the trained. (Matthew 9:38; 2 Timothy 2:2)
- All believers are called by God to do good works. We want to enable every member of Christ's body to complete that work. (Ephesians 4:11-12; Ephesians 2:10)
- We value the family as a God-ordained institution and the basic unit of society. We are deeply committed to building and supporting godly marriages, promoting biblical parenting, and family worship. We encourage the family to be the primary vehicle for training children to be followers of Jesus. Along these lines, the primary role of our ministry with children will be to enable parents and caregivers to be the primary pastors of their own children. (Genesis 2:24; Psalm 78:5; Malachi 2:16; Ephesians 5:22-33)
- We value marriage and seek to put first importance on the health of the marriages of all our people, especially our leaders. (1 Timothy 3:2; Ephesians 5:22-33)
- As the church — the family of God — we seek to minister in the areas where families lack. It is the church's responsibility to love and minister to children without Christian parents, widows and widowers without family, single parents, divorcees, and others living with family structural loss, to fill the gap. (James 1:27)
- We seek to glorify God in all things. We seek to increase our worship for Him in all ways according to His great holiness and power. He is the Founder and focus of all that we do. We rob God if we will not worship Him with all of our strength, increasing His glory in the earth. (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)
- Above all, our rule is love. When all else fails, we ask, "What does it mean to love God?" and "What does it mean to love one another?" in every situation. (Romans 13:8-10)

Leadership Structure

The Elders

Harvest is governed by the Lord Jesus Christ's leadership. He is the head of the Church. The elders are the church's pastors, responsible for teaching and overseeing Harvest's ministries. Harvest has both vocational (paid) and non-vocational (volunteer) elders.

The Executive Elder Team's primary responsibility is to manage Harvest's property, business, and affairs. It is made up of vocational and non-vocational elders. It consists of the:

- lead pastor,
- executive pastor, and
- at least three elders who are non-vocational and independent (not related in any way to another elder or to any other employee of the church). These elders are appointed at the annual meeting of the Elder Team for a one-year term.

At Harvest, we believe the terms "elder" and "pastor" are interchangeable and that their fundamental duty is spiritual oversight. The Bible, prayer, and the power of the Holy Spirit are the primary tools for this task. Both vocational and non-vocational elders are responsible to prayerfully lead the church to grow the health and size of God's church everywhere. Each member of the Elder Team is, therefore, equal in authority.

Our elders have regularly scheduled meetings. Our vocational elders and staff meet weekly to discuss and coordinate Harvest's ministry events, and pray for each prayer request communicated to the church that week. The campus elders meet regularly with their campus pastors, and the Executive Elder Team meets monthly to conduct the church's business.

Office Manager/Support Staff

Our office staff supports the church operations and its ministries through many administrative functions on a weekly basis. The office manager coordinates this effort and assists our pastors, elders, and leaders in many ways. We find the operational backbone of our efforts in this support group.

Deacons

In addition to elders, Harvest has deacons. The elders select these men and women who must complete a biblical leadership study to serve for a period with Harvest's ministries.

God's people are to be involved in various ministry efforts. Our deacons and deaconesses lead many of these ministry efforts and help coordinate and align God's people to function efficiently. If you have

questions on any of Harvest's ministries your deacons and elders are a great place to start seeking what you need.

Ministry Teams

Ministry teams are small groups of people, just like you, who carry out the day-to-day work of God's Church. Some examples of these teams are our Prayer Team, Visitation Team, Jail Ministry Team, Women's Ministry Team, Men's Ministry Team, Media Team, MOMS4MOMS, Hospitality Team, Harvest Kidz and CRAVE. Find out how you can serve by visiting our website at www.harvestpa.org.

Conflict Resolution

When facing potential problems within the church, we are committed to dealing with people rather than dictating impersonal policies that attempt to deal with future problems. Our goal is always restoration. The pastors and Elder Team care enough to confront potential problems so that peace may be maintained in the body of Christ. (Matthew 18)

Membership

There are at least three reasons for having formal church membership.

1. Membership benefits the individual. It is an important step that moves each of us out of the vague clouds of good intentions into the clear light of committed participation. Each Christian should be an active part of a local church and under the spiritual care and protection that brings. We invite Christians to join us in our ministry, binding our lives and ministries together and committing to love one another in Christian community.
2. Membership is biblical. A member is a part of the body of Christ, the local church.
3. Formal membership is valuable to church leaders as they seek to fulfill their God-given task of shepherding. It is important to identify the core that can be counted on to build and sustain the church's ministries.

Please take the time needed for you to decide that Harvest is the church of which you want to be a part. For membership information, stop by the church office or visit www.harvestpa.org.

Facilities & Other Information

Church Informational Meetings

What, in many churches, is called a “business meeting,” we sometimes call “family meetings” where we worship, have fellowship, take the Lord’s Supper together, and disseminate information from the church leaders. These meetings are scheduled to keep all Harvest up to date on our ministries’ progress.

Our Facilities

Our Kittanning Campus (KIT) sits on seven acres of ground in East Franklin Township, Armstrong County. Founded in 1998, Harvest built this sanctuary in 2000 and added the Education Section in 2002 and the balcony in 2007. God has blessed the Harvest Family over its short life, and we continue to seek His direction and leadership in our facilities’ use.

In the spring of 2009, God gave Harvest the opportunity to expand our ministry into Fairview, Butler County. This lively and loving congregation at our Petroleum Valley Campus (PVC) campus ministers to people of all ages and backgrounds throughout the Petroleum Valley and surrounding areas.

After seeing God’s hand hard at work in Indiana, Pennsylvania, we launched a third campus near Indiana University of Pennsylvania in March 2013 (IND). We meet regularly on Sunday mornings in a newly renovated facility in downtown Indiana. This campus is actively involved in outreach opportunities aimed at college students and community residents.

In August of 2015, we welcomed a local community church into our Harvest family and officially opened our Freeport Campus (FCC). Its location in Freeport, Pennsylvania opens the door to spread the gospel in three Western Pennsylvania counties.

Ministry is the primary purpose of all of our facilities. When they are not in use, we do, from time to time, permit their use for other activities. Anyone seeking information related to such an event should contact the church office and complete an application of request at least sixty days in advance of the event.

Other

Harvest is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation governed by Amended Bylaws and Articles dated October 1, 2014. You may obtain copies of these documents by contacting the church office.

We have been members of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) since January 2012. ECFA provides accreditation to leading Christian nonprofit organizations that faithfully demonstrate compliance with established standards for financial accountability, fundraising, and board governance. You may visit their website at www.ecfa.org to view our latest audited fiscal reports. Our fiscal year is from July 1 to June 30.

Communication & Social Media

Our Website

Our website provides valuable information including events, service times and locations, who we are, ministries, missions, and how to donate. Visit today at www.harvestpa.org.

Church Center



Church Center is an online church management system that serves as a phone/photo directory, events calendar, and database **to help you interact with other Harvest church folk**. It incorporates many communication and management features that allows the staff and group leaders to more effectively work with their respective ministry groups. My Harvest is powered by Planning Center Online (PCO).

You can sign up today by downloading the Church Center app on your mobile device, or by visiting churchcenter.com on your PC and following the steps from there. We encourage everyone to log in, explore the features, and begin to use Church Center to help you fully serve and minister. Please update your personal and family information and photos regularly.

The Harvest App



The **Harvest App** provides **quick access to many of our website's key features**. You can use it to view upcoming events, listen or watch past sermons, download and use Message Application Points (MAPs), give online, and more. It is available for both IOS (Apple) and Android devices (Google Play). It's easy to find; just type "Harvest Church PA" in your app store's search area.

Harvest Directory

Pastors

| | | | |
|----------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Mike Greiner | Lead Pastor | mikegreiner@harvestpa.org | 724.859.4192 |
| Fred Neal, Jr. | Executive Pastor | bigfredneal@harvestpa.org | 724.664.9962 |
| Dave Furst | KIT Campus Pastor | davefurst@harvestpa.org | 724.548.5643 x227 |
| Andy Sommers | ANC Campus Pastor | andysommers@harvestpa.org | 724.548.5643 |
| Joe Killeen | IND Campus Pastor | joekilleen@harvestpa.org | 724-548.5643 |
| Michael Harvey | PVC Campus Pastor | mikeharvey@harvestpa.org | 724.548.5643 |
| Rodney Miller | Community Care Pastor | rodneymiller@harvestpa.org | 724.548.5643 x226 |
| Chris Clinch | Creative Arts Pastor | chrisclinch@harvestpa.org | 724.548.5643 x238 |
| Matt Cooper | Worship Pastor | mattcooper@harvestpa.org | 724.548.5643 x231 |
| Nate Adams | Student Ministries Pastor | nateadams@harvestpa.org | 724.548.5643 x235 |

Elders

| | | |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Jack Bowser | Exec. Elder Team | jdbowser6@gmail.com |
| George Kolesar | Exec. Elder Team | geokolesar@gmail.com |
| John Strate | Exec. Elder Team | johnstrate295@gmail.com |
| Russ Baptiste | KIT Elder | russbaptiste@harvestpa.org |
| Hugh Adams | KIT Elder | herc7306@gmail.com |
| Gordon Frack | KIT Elder | gordonfrack@harvestpa.org |
| Justin Reiter | KIT Elder | jcryder02@yahoo.com |
| Tom Tarr | KIT Elder | tomtarr88@gmail.com |
| Sean Walker | KIT Elder | fourthewalkers@icloud.com |
| Shaun Brumbaugh | KIT Elder | sllkbrum@consolidated.net |
| Isaac John | KIT Elder | isaacjohn.14@gmail.com |
| Louis Rondinelli | PVC Elder | louisrondinelli@harvestpa.org |
| Bill Baker | ANC Elder | bakerbill321@gmail.com |
| Jim Steininger | ANC Elder | j.steininger@gmail.com |
| Scott Vought | Exec. Elder Team | scottvought@comcast.net |

Worship Leaders

| | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Nathan Denny | ANC Worship Leader | nthndenny@yahoo.com |
| Brielle Killeen | IND Worship Leader | briellekilleen@harvestpa.org |
| Matt Cooper | KIT Worship Leader | mattcooper@harvestpa.org |
| Nicole Dufford | PVC Worship Leader | nicoledufford@harvestpa.org |

Ministry Staff

| | | | |
|------------------|--|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Megan Caporali | Children's Ministry Director | megancaporali@harvestpa.org | 724.548.5643 |
| Elizabeth Harvey | A Brighter Day Learning Center Director | elizabethharvey@harvestpa.org | 724.548.5643 x239 |
| Drew Killeen | Tech Lead | drewkilleen@harvestpa.org | 724.548.5643 |
| Josiah Edwards | Video Lead | Josiahtheeditor@gmail.com | 724.548.5643 |
| Dale Dufford | Production Team Lead | dufford.dale@gmail.com | 724.548.5643 |
| Chuck Knox | Stewardship Coach | chuck.knox@zoominternet.net | 724.422.1559 |
| Gail Frack | Global Children's Ministry Coordinator | gailfrack@harvestpa.org | |

Support Staff

| | | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Carrie Markel | Office Manager | carriemarkel@harvestpa.org | 724.548.5643 x 240 |
| Tammy Rondinelli | Admin. Asst. | tammyrondinelli@harvestpa.org | 724.548.5643 x228 |
| Janette Scherf | Admin. Asst. | janettescherf@harvestpa.org | 724.548.5643 x221 |
| Debbie Baptiste | Admin. Asst. | debbiebaptiste@harvestpa.org | 724.548.5643 x243 |
| Marion Seavers | Admin. Asst. | marionseavers@harvestpa.org | 724.548.5643 x223 |
| Deb Beswarick | HR Director/ XP Admin. Asst. | debbiebeswarick@harvestpa.org | 724.548.5643 x244 |
| Jerelene Wolfe | Receptionist | jerelenewolfe@harvestpa.org | 724.548.5643 |

Custodial Staff

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Cathy Bruno | Lead Custodian | cathybruno@harvestpa.org | |
| Linda Martinec | ANC Custodian | mamalin@consolidated.net | |
| Jamie Killeen | IND Custodian | killeenj@gmail.com | |
| Steven Troutman | KIT Custodian | troutman.efx00@yahoo.com | |
| Valerie Franks | KIT Custodian | lynnsummer16.vf@gmail.com | |
| Nicole Dufford | PVC Custodian | nicoledufford@harvestpa.org | |

Deacons & Deaconesses

| | | | |
|----------------------|-----|--------------------------------|--|
| Terry Durst | ANC | kwiltah@zoominternet.net | ASL/Comfort Shawl Ministries |
| Linda Martinec | ANC | mamalin@consolidated.net | Facilities & Hospitality |
| Kendall Umholtz | IND | kendall.umholtz@gmail.com | Int'l Students/Children's Ministry |
| Emily Miller | IND | emilyanne317@gmail.com | First Impressions/Welcoming Team |
| Dan Barker | KIT | dbarker369@comcast.net | Van & Media Ministries |
| David Brown | KIT | ddbrown1@comcast.net | Van Ministries |
| David Burton | KIT | davidburton@harvestpa.org | CRAVE Projects |
| Jim Crabtree | KIT | jimcrabtree@harvestpa.org | Jail Ministries |
| Rich Cramer | KIT | cramero2windstream.net | Outdoors Ministry |
| Jarron Gass | KIT | jarrongass@gmail.com | Media Ministry |
| Deanna Henry | KIT | djean3837@gmail.com | CRAVE/Single Women Disc. |
| Bryan Hodil | KIT | bmhodil@gmail.com | Stewardship |
| Pina Ledonne Edwards | KIT | jle011862@gmail.com | Crosstalking |
| Joshua Meyer | KIT | meyj81@gmail.com | Worship Ministry |
| Jamie Wach | KIT | jamieenicholson@yahoo.com | CRAVE/ Worship Ministry |
| Zach Reedy | KIT | znreedy77@hotmail.com | Special Projects |
| Jennifer Richardson | KIT | missmom98@gmail.com | Special/Seasonal Projects/ PRISM |
| Matt Richardson | KIT | mrichardson1295@gmail.com | General Support |
| Janette Scherf | KIT | janettescherf@harvestpa.org | Women's Ministry/Special Projects/General Support |
| Todd Shotts | KIT | tshotts@windstream.net | IT |
| Eric Steele | KIT | anthony-supholstery1@gmail.com | CRAVE Discipleship |
| Kory Tack | KIT | korytack@gmail.com | CRAVE Discipleship |
| John Thomas | KIT | john_c_thomas_jr@hotmail.com | Care/Helping Ministry |
| Joe Wiley | KIT | jdwiley1@comcast.net | Maintenance/General Support |
| Stan Bailey | PVC | stanbailey@harvestpa.org | Stewardship |
| Rich Crawford | PVC | crawfords_4@hotmail.com | Safety Team |
| Nicole Dufford | PVC | nicoledufford@harvestpa.org | Worship/Building & Grounds |
| Katy Wayne | PVC | wayne.katy@gmail.com | General |

Harvest Policy Manual

Path to License and Ordination

Harvest Community Church recognizes the value of considering the call upon a man to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ as we seek to build the Church of Jesus Christ in our fallen world. By maintaining a relationship of accountability with those commissioned by Harvest Community Church, we demonstrate the elders' diligence to embrace the men serving in this role. This policy signifies to all that our elders have prayerfully examined and found evidence that the man has the ability to carry out these duties with humble submission to the work of the Holy Spirit as he publicly serves our Lord. All men considered for such commissioning will be qualified under the scriptures including 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Harvest Community Church reserves the authority and obligation to license or ordain qualified men as follows.

Licensed Minister

This designation is assigned to men who have undergone the process described herein and permit men not employed by Harvest Community Church to exercise the legal authority within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to conduct marriages and funeral services. It also signifies the official examination and endorsement of an individual's call to preach God's Word in sermons. This category will most frequently be conveyed to men employed outside of full-time ministry.

Requirements: To receive a license, the man must:

- be a member in good standing of Harvest Community Church,
- be recognized as a man qualified by scripture to serve in such capacity,
- be invited by a campus pastor or an Executive Elder Team member to apply for such designation,
- demonstrate, in writing and orally, an understanding of the scriptures as set forth in this process and theologically aligned with the teaching of Harvest,
- complete such process as outlined by the lead pastor or his designee.

The process:

- The man must be proposed for such license at an Executive Elder Team meeting of record. This will trigger a committed prayer effort on the part of our Elder Team for the next thirty days.
- After the prayer period, the candidate will undergo an oral examination by a team of Harvest elders which may include pastors and elders from other churches in our community. They shall decide by majority of all those present to:
 - extend the candidate's training, or

- recommend the candidate as qualified to the Executive Elder Team at the next meeting of record.
- After a “qualified” recommendation, Executive Elder Team will vote on the candidate’s licensing. If approved, the church will be notified of such in a manner as decided at that time.

Once licensed, the elders will require the candidate to submit to an accountability process as recommended by the lead pastor to maintain this designation.

Ordained Minister

This designation is assigned to men who have undergone the process described below who will serve at Harvest Community Church in full-time, vocational ministry. By fulfilling our ordination requirements, the candidate also fully complies with the legal requirements for authorization to sign marriage and funeral certificates. Our candidates also meet the legal requirements to be designated as Clergy by the United States Government and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This designation will be utilized by men employed by Harvest Community Church as full-time pastor.

Note: The Executive Elder Team may choose to support another like-minded church by serving in the ordination process of such a church by a majority vote of the elders. In such case, all procedures will be followed, but the requirement of Harvest Community Church membership will be waived. The accountability process of men ordained in this manner, or men who have been ordained while employed by Harvest Community Church, will be transferred to the church in which the ordained minister then serves.

Candidate Ordination Requirements

To be ordained, the candidate must:

- be a Harvest Community Church member in good standing,
- be recognized as a man qualified by scripture to serve in such capacity,
- demonstrate, in writing and orally, an understanding of the scriptures as set forth in this process and theologically aligned with the teaching of Harvest Community Church,
- complete the discipleship process as outlined by the lead pastor or his designee, and
- be proposed for such ordination at an Executive Elder Team meeting of record which will trigger a committed prayer effort on the part of our Elder Team for the next thirty days.

After the period of prayer, the candidate will undergo an oral and written examination by a team of Harvest elders which may include pastors and elders from other churches in our community. They shall decide by majority of those present to:

- extend the training of the candidate, or

- recommend the candidate as “qualified” to the Executive Elder Team at the next meeting of record.

After receiving a “qualified” recommendation, the Executive Elder Team will vote on the candidate’s ordination at a meeting of record. If approved, the church will be notified and introduced to the pastor at a worship service or informational meeting.

Accountability

Harvest Community Church may revoke a man’s the license or ordination at any time if the Executive Elders determine that he has given cause to reconsider the calling of our Lord for public ministry. This will include, but not be limited to, conduct or sin specifically addressed in the scriptures, or if the man remains inactive over a period of time. This process may be changed by the Executive Elder Team of Harvest Community Church at any time, if deemed necessary.

Ordination Paper Format

(This will serve as a standing format of ordination papers that the lead pastor may alter during the ordination preparation as the Executive Elder Team determines appropriate.) As a candidate, you must submit a document and scriptural references to support your views that includes:

1. a description of your conversion to believer and current relationship with Jesus Christ,
2. a statement of your beliefs including God’s theology and attributes; the nature of the Trinity; Jesus including His humanity, divinity, and work upon the earth (Christology); the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology); and the nature of man (Anthropology),
3. an explanation of :
 - a) “what is sin?” (Harartiology),
 - b) angels and demons,
 - c) salvation (Soteriology) including the role of faith, repentance, regeneration, sanctification, and glorification,
 - d) the Church (Ecclesiology) including definition, purpose, function, offices, ordinances,
 - e) the end times/last things (Eschatology),
 - f) your position on Missiology of a believer,
 - g) the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit,
 - h) women as elders or pastors,
 - i) Open Theism, atonement, salvation apart from the gospel, and
 - j) other convictions you hold.

Path to Non-Vocational Eldership

All elders should be on the lookout for men within our membership who have demonstrated a willingness to provide leadership in our efforts to serve the Lord at Harvest Community Church. They must be willing to continuously go above and beyond that which may be asked of others. (John 13: 3-17) We want to consider men already serving in leadership roles at Harvest, but this is not be a mandatory requirement. This process includes steps appropriate for any man being considered. The individual's testing is included in this process no matter what roles the individual may have served.

1. Once the campus pastor identifies a potential candidate, he should engage the Lord in prayer regarding this individual's potential. After a time, and if led by the Holy Spirit, he should bring his name to the Executive Elder Team's attention. (Acts 20:28)
2. The potential candidate's name will be recorded in the Executive Elder Team meeting minutes, indicating all elders include this individual in prayer for the Lord's leading. At least one Executive Elder Team meeting will elapse before moving beyond this step.
3. After that time, the (so led) campus pastor will ask for the Executive Elder Team's approval for approaching the individual to consider the call in his prayers.
4. After the individual's prayerfully considered response and a willingness to proceed, the lead pastor will assign one elder as a mentor to enter into the twelve-week biblical eldership bible study with the man and provide a copy of the Biblical Eldership Book by Alexander Strauch. Before moving to the next step, the candidate must complete the bible study and the read the book.
5. After completion of step 4, the mentoring elder will report to the Executive Elder Team at a regular meeting that the candidate has successfully fulfilled that step. All elders should increase their prayerful consideration of this individual. At this time the Executive Elder Team will interview the candidate about the potential call. The Executive Elder Team will provide an interview report to all elders. A vote may be taken at a meeting to determine whether to extend an invitation to become an elder candidate. Once all elders approve the candidate, he should attend all campus elder activities and meetings for the next ninety days and invited to give input. However, he will lack a vote in any matter.
6. During this ninety-day period, the Elder Team will interview the candidate test him for spiritual qualifications and commitment, and evaluate him for a practical fit with the Elder Team. (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3). A meeting will be arranged with the candidate's wife. This will provide the campus pastor and campus elders opportunity to evaluate her support concerning her husband's potential obligations and information related to his family life and character. The campus elders will seek information from the congregation and community to confirm the candidate's reputation.

7. At the completion of this ninety-day period, the Executive Elder Team will vote on offering an official call to the candidate. By a majority vote, this ninety-day testing period may be extended for any reason. The final approval requires a unanimous vote of the Elder Team. At any point, the elders may determine that the candidate is inappropriate to serve in this capacity. If so, they will meet with the candidate and explain the reason for such decision and arrange for any appropriate discipleship.
8. Once approved, the candidate will be introduced as an elder to the congregation at the next weekly service. This will include the laying on of hands by the Elder Team members.

Church Discipline

Each member of the Body of Christ has an individual responsibility to live righteously and encourage righteous behavior in other believers. Interpersonal accountability is a Christian obligation that extends beyond local church membership. As Galatians 6:1-5 instructs, this process begins with self-examination and a spirit of humility sensitive to one's own faults. Believers must be aware of their own sins, be penitent, and quick to seek reconciliation with offended individuals (Matthew 5:23-25; 7:1-5). Harvest Community Church members have a special relationship to each other. They also have the privilege of experiencing the full expression of love and care for the local body as outlined in scripture.

Church discipline is regarded as a serious and clear directive in scripture. It is intended to restore an erring member (2 Corinthians 2:5-8), purify the church (1 Corinthians 5:6-8), warn other members about the dangers of sinful behavior or teaching (Deuteronomy 19:20; Acts 5:11; 2 Corinthians 7:11), and demonstrate the reality of righteous living to the unsaved world (Ephesians 4:22-24). Discipline is exercised with compassion for the erring member and a sincere desire to seek that person's repentance, reconciliation, and if necessary, restoration to the fellowship of the local church. (Matthew 18:12-14)

Discipline does not entitle the elders to abuse their authority over church members (1 Peter 5:1-3). Specific guidelines are followed that identify the grounds for church discipline and the discipline process.

Harvest Community Church members belong to a spiritual body of local believers who identify with a common purpose and mission. Each member is accountable to one another for encouraging and provoking holy living. (Hebrews 10:23-25) Church discipline begins with individual accountability that is a responsibility of every member. Members are encouraged to take this responsibility seriously.

Scripture is clear that the individual's or the elder's motives in dealing with the erring member must be pure before our Savior, His Church, and the world.

1. They are to avoid vengeance and arrogant presumption. (Galatians 6:1)
2. They are to be motivated by a loving concern for the erring member and not hostility or anger. (2 Thessalonians 3:15)
3. They are to approach the erring member with heart-felt sorrow and sincere concern. (1 Corinthians 5:2; 2 Corinthians 2:4)
4. They are to be ready to grant restoration to the erring member when repentance occurs. (Luke 17:1-10; 2 Corinthians 2:5-8)

Offenses Applicable to Church Discipline

Individual accountability is an on-going expectation of believers and is always the first step in dealing with an erring member. No member is above or immune from accountability. (1 Timothy 5:19-22) Church discipline is not God's method for making the church sinless. Scripture defines certain deviations from the truth as grounds for formal disciplinary action. Sin that damages the church, weakens its testimony, or promotes disunity constitutes an offense that requires formal disciplinary action. These sins can be understood in the following categories:

1. False teaching constitutes a deliberate, persistent program of teaching that intentionally rejects the foundational doctrines of scripture. (Titus 3:10; Revelation 2:14)
2. Apostasy constitutes a public denial of the essential truths of God's Word (a belief in the inspired scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the final authority for belief and behavior). These beliefs include:
 - a) the Trinity,
 - b) Christ's complete humanity and deity,
 - c) humanity's utter sinfulness,
 - d) Christ's virgin conception,
 - e) Christ's incarnation as the eternal Son of God,
 - f) Christ's substitutionary atonement as the only way of salvation,
 - g) Christ's bodily resurrection and return, salvation by God's grace alone through faith in Christ alone, and
 - h) the last's eternal damnation and the saved's eternal glorification.

These essential truths are reflected in the Doctrinal Statement of the Church Constitution. (Galatians 2:11-14; 1 John 2:19)

3. Divisiveness is behavior that undermines unity between Harvest Community Church members or God's established authority in the church. (Philippians 4:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:14)
4. Immorality is defined scripturally as behavior that is deemed immoral and brings shame on Christ's testimony and the local church. (1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:9-11) This category includes sexual immorality and deviancy and includes (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8) adultery, homosexual relations, and every other kind of sexual deviancy or impurity that scripture calls fornication (porneias). (Romans 1:26-27) While sexual behavior may or may not be known publicly, these sins internally pollute the church and disrupt its mission.
5. Any sin which breaks God's commandments including lying and stealing, for which one is without repentance, especially if it is ongoing or habitual.

Membership Accountability Procedures

Church discipline is to be handled prayerfully, carefully, and justly. Below are the steps of accountability and discipline that follow the guidelines given in Matthew 18:15-20.

First Step

Arrange a private meeting with the offender. Humbly confront the person with the nature of the offense. If the person repents, the matter is closed. (Matthew 18:15; Luke 17:3) Scripture does not specify the number of times that an offender should be confronted on an individual basis. Scripture is clear that believers should be long-suffering and have an unrelenting desire for that person's repentance. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a; 1 Peter 4:8) If there is no repentance and the offense is of the nature categorized above as "Offenses Applicable to Church Discipline" then there is a responsibility to move to the next step in the process.

Second Step

Set up another private meeting with one or two other witnesses present. (Matthew 18:16) This step should never be taken in haste, but only after there is prayerful conviction that step one has not availed. If repentance occurs, the offender should seek forgiveness from the circle of offense and no more.

It is important to understand who qualifies as a witness and what his or her function is in the disciplinary process.

Biblically, a witness is a person who bears testimony of another's wrongdoing based on firsthand knowledge. A person is not considered a witness who bears testimony based on hearsay, gossip, or secondhand knowledge. (Deuteronomy 19:15-19) The Bible condemns false witnesses. (Exodus 20:13) Accusations not substantiated by two or three witnesses must be left to the One who knows all things and judges righteously. (Numbers 35:30; Psalm 51:3-4)

The witness's function is to ensure that the offense is clearly and impartially presented, and nothing is left unsaid. The witnesses also keep each others' motivations and actions accountable before God. (Matthew 18:20) Also, a second witness can give feedback to the first, validating or denying the seriousness of the sin in question.

Third Step

If there is no repentance, the circle of knowledge must be broadened at this point to include the campus pastor, and at his discretion, the campus elders, for consideration.

The campus pastor will initiate an investigation to determine what took place, meeting with both the person in question and the one who brought the charge and any witnesses.

If the situation warrants it, they will approach the person in question and give another chance for repentance. They will explain the next step in the process if repentance is not forthcoming.

If there is no repentance, the campus pastor will make a recommendation to the Executive Elder Team for official action; they will vote on the matter and their decision will be recorded in the minutes.

Fourth Step

At this point, the matter may be brought by members of the Executive Elder Team to the Harvest Community Church members. (Matthew 18:17) The entire membership has a responsibility, as opportunity provides, to call the offender to repentance. An equitable period of time will be established by the Executive Elder Team in order to optimize the fullest effect of the witness of the entire membership, to allow for the work of the Lord, and provide more than ample time for repentance.

Should there be repentance, the entire body should be quick to respond with forgiveness, grace, and love. (2 Corinthians 2:5-8) While repentance and forgiveness are instantaneous, restoration to service will be monitored by the campus pastor for the person's benefit and development.

If there is no repentance, the Executive Elder Team will meet to take action on the final step.

Fifth Step

As defined in Matthew 18:17, the unrepentant offender will be considered a "pagan or a tax collector."

This phrase contains two interrelated aspects. First, the offender is likened to a pagan, which signifies that the person is outside the community of God's blessing and grace. Second, the offender is likened to a tax collector, which signifies that the person is untrustworthy and potentially dangerous.

By way of application, this constitutes a removal from church membership and fellowship resulting in a recognition that the unrepentant offender is outside the realm of God's blessings. (1 Corinthians 5:1-13) Common ground for intimate friendship has been removed. The entire congregation has an ongoing responsibility to act in unison, calling the person to repentance with all contact, so as not to undermine the scriptural process or the severe temporal consequences of the person's obstinate behavior. It is sincerely hoped there will be repentance and reconciliation as a result of the consistent and loving application of this heart-wrenching, but biblical, action.

The church's action in discipline matters carries the highest conceivable authority and is both final and binding, as clearly stated in Matthew 18:18-20. There can be no appeal to any court as a result of this action (1 Corinthians 6:1-2), and a member may not resign his/her membership in order to avoid church discipline.

If a person under discipline is not factious, disruptive or a harmful influence, he is welcomed to attend all church meetings that are open to unbelievers, with the exception of small groups that meet for the purpose of fellowship.

If a member seeks to attend another church in order to avoid church discipline, the campus pastor or the Executive Elder Team may inform the elders or pastors of that church so that they may encourage him/her to repent of his/her sin.

Christians who come to Harvest Community Church to escape another church's discipline will not be permitted to become members or fellowship beyond public meetings until repentance comes, or repair of the relationship with the previous church is manifested.

Integrity of Knowledge

In all matters of church discipline, if and when members become aware of the offense and the disciplinary action being brought against the unrepentant member, the members are expected, without exception, to hold the knowledge with integrity, avoiding gossip and the defamation of character. (Ephesians 4:31-32; James 4:11) Church disciplinary matters are internal affairs and must not be paraded before the world.

Marriage, Divorce & Remarriage

Marriage

Marriage is a gift from God. The idea of marriage began with God in the Garden of Eden, before sin. The first human relationship was a marriage, and history will end with a marriage between Jesus Christ and His glorious bride, the Church.

Marriage is a covenant of companionship. God has created marriage to be a covenant for life between a man and a woman, entered into for companionship, sexual unity, procreation and to display the love Christ has for His Church.

Marriage is a precious gift from God, though it should be noted that singleness is a gift as well. Married believers and unmarried believers have equal access to God, for both come through the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ.

1. Marriage is a covenant enacted through vows. The heart of a wedding ceremony is the exchange of vows between bride and groom. These vows initiate a covenant, a solemn pledge before God and witnesses to lovingly live together for life. The marriage covenant is entered into for the purpose of intimacy, mutuality, and permanence, unlike a modern contract, typically entered into for personal protection and convenience and for a limited period of time.
2. Marriage is between a man and a woman for life. Marriage, as intended by God, is between one man and one woman as long as they both shall live. We must reject any variations on this pattern including homosexual marriage, polygamy, and serial monogamy (see below under “divorce”).
3. Marriage is for the purpose of companionship, sexual unity, procreation, and displaying the love between Christ and His church.

The relationship between husband and wife, this covenant of companionship, is at the heart of what God intends marriage to be. The friendship and fellowship which are part of this companionship are to be augmented and enhanced by sexual companionship as well. Though child-bearing is not marriage’s primary purpose, it is an essential one and married couples should normally heed God's command to be fruitful and multiply.

Divorce

1. God's intention is marriage, not divorce.

Divorce is a common and sad fact in our world, though this in no way makes our time in history unique. Many times throughout history, God addressed the topic of divorce making His perspective abundantly clear, that He loves marriage and generally opposes divorce. Nowhere is this more clear than in the many Old Testament passages where Israel is described as God's bride who has been endlessly unfaithful to Him, committing spiritual adultery through her frequent idolatries. God's patience, steadfast love, and grace are an inspiration to every spouse. At the

same time, in the face of Israel's endless sins, He sent her away with a writ of divorce. (Jeremiah 3:8)

2. The Old Testament, Jesus, and Paul all provide for divorce under certain circumstances.

The practice of divorce is regulated and permitted under both the old covenant and new. Any divorce is always the result of sin. However, while every marriage is composed of two sinners, it should be noted that guilt is not equally shared in every divorce. In fact, the situations in which God allows for a divorce typically are the result of one spouse sinning in a way that leaves them bearing the weight of guilt.

3. We believe God permits a believer to seek a divorce when:

- a) A spouse is guilty of sexual immorality.

Sexual immorality includes adultery, but also involves sexual contact with another person.

- b) An unbelieving spouse abandons the marriage.

It is important to note that God permits divorce in these cases, but He does not require it. The church will not encourage a spouse to divorce when he or she has faith in God for the marriage to be restored — even when the situations listed above exist.

For the church to condone divorce in such cases, the spouse must submit the fact of his or her marital situation to the pastors to determine before God in scripture what He would permit. If a spouse who is a member of the church seeks a divorce from another member due to abandonment, he or she must first wait for the church to follow in its practice of church discipline to the end of treating the sinning spouse as an unbeliever before divorce may become an option.

Separated spouses awaiting a pending divorce should consider themselves married until the day a civil court declares the divorce final and legally recognized. They should thus conduct themselves in the church as a married person.

Remarriage

1. A believer whose spouse is deceased is free to remarry. (Romans 7:2-3) However, he or she should first seek to know if God is calling him to “remain as he is” and serve the Lord in an unmarried state.
2. A believer who is divorced for biblically acceptable reasons is free to remarry. Any believer who is divorced under the above conditions, that is their spouse has committed sexual immorality or has abandoned them, is free to remarry. They, too, should heed the counsel to first ask if God is calling them to serve Him in an unmarried state.

3. A believer who is divorced for biblically unacceptable reasons should seek forgiveness from God, the restoration of the marriage, and reconciliation with the ex-spouse. Remarriage is not an option until the ex-spouse remarries or dies.

Divorce for the wrong reasons is a serious, but forgivable sin. Divorce is not an unforgivable sin. It can be washed away through the blood of Jesus Christ. Repentance will involve not only seeking God's forgiveness but seeking to reconcile with the ex-spouse and, if possible, to restore the marriage.

If a divorced person becomes a member of the church, he or she must understand that remarriage will only be condoned by the church when the circumstances prior to the divorce or following the divorce fall under the two conditions listed above. If the circumstances of the divorce do not conform to what scripture deems acceptable, the divorced person should consider, before God and in the counsel of the church, whether to seek reconciliation with the former spouse.

4. If someone has remarried without biblical grounds, even though it was a sin to do so, that marriage has become a legitimate marriage, and the believer must not divorce again but must remain faithful in the new marriage.
5. We understand that not every situation is the same. Some can be very complex. For this reason, we encourage any who are confused on these situations to seek the elders' counsel for their particular case. It is the elders' desire to make the best of even bad situations, bringing healing and peace wherever possible.

General Statement on Gender Issues

The Denver's Statement

Rationale

We have been moved in our purpose by the following contemporary developments which we observe with deep concern:

1. the widespread uncertainty and confusion in our culture regarding the complementary differences between masculinity and femininity,
2. the tragic effects of this confusion in unraveling the fabric of marriage woven by God out of the beautiful and diverse strands of manhood and womanhood,
3. the increasing promotion given to feminist egalitarianism with accompanying distortions or neglect of the glad harmony portrayed in scripture between the loving, humble leadership of redeemed husbands and the intelligent, willing support of that leadership by redeemed wives,
4. the widespread ambivalence regarding the values of motherhood, vocational homemaking, and the many ministries historically performed by women,
5. the growing claims of legitimacy for sexual relationships which have biblically and historically been considered illicit or perverse and the increase in pornographic portrayal of human sexuality,
6. the increase of physical and emotional abuse in the family,
7. the emergence of roles for men and women in church leadership that do not conform to biblical teaching but backfire in the crippling of biblically faithful witness,
8. the increasing prevalence and acceptance of hermeneutical oddities devised to reinterpret apparently plain meanings of biblical texts,
9. the consequent threat to biblical authority as the clarity of scripture is jeopardized and the accessibility of its meaning to ordinary people is withdrawn into the restricted realm of technical ingenuity,
10. and behind all this, the apparent accommodation of some within the church to the spirit of the age at the expense of winsome, radical biblical authenticity which in the power of the Holy Spirit may reform, rather than reflect, our ailing culture.

Affirmations

Based on our understanding of biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood. (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:18)
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order and should find an echo in every human heart. (Genesis 2:18, 21-24; 1 Corinthians 11:7-9; 1 Timothy 2:12-14)
3. God established Adam's headship in marriage before the Fall, and it was not a result of sin. (Genesis 2:16-18, 21-24, 3:1-13; 1 Corinthians 11:7-9)
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women. (Genesis 3:1-7, 12, 16)

In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.

In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.

5. The Old and New Testaments manifest the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women. (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:18; Galatians 3:28) Both testaments affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community. (Genesis 2:18; Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:11-15)
6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.
In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership. (Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Peter 3:1-7)
In the church, Christ's redemption gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation. Nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men. (Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 1 Timothy 2:11-15)
7. In all of life, Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission — domestic, religious, or civil — ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin. (Daniel 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29; 1 Peter 3:1-2)

8. In men and women, a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside biblical criteria for particular ministries. (1 Timothy 2:11-15, 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9) Rather, biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.

9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have never heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness; no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world. (1 Corinthians 12:7-21)
10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.



NASHVILLE

STATEMENT

A COALITION FOR BIBLICAL SEXUALITY

*“Know that the LORD Himself is God;
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves...”
-Psalm 100:3*

Preamble

Evangelical Christians at the dawn of the twenty-first century find themselves living in a period of historic transition. As Western culture has become increasingly post-Christian, it has embarked upon a massive revision of what it means to be a human being. By and large the spirit of our age no longer discerns or delights in the beauty of God’s design for human life. Many deny that God created human beings for his glory, and that his good purposes for us include our personal and physical design as male and female. It is common to think that human identity as male and female is not part of God’s beautiful plan, but is, rather, an expression of an individual’s autonomous preferences. The pathway to full and lasting joy through God’s good design for his creatures is thus replaced by the path of shortsighted alternatives that, sooner or later, ruin human life and dishonor God.

This secular spirit of our age presents a great challenge to the Christian church. Will the church of the Lord Jesus Christ lose her biblical conviction, clarity, and courage, and blend into the spirit of the age? Or will she hold fast to the word of life, draw courage from Jesus, and unashamedly proclaim his way as the way of life? Will she maintain her clear, counter-cultural witness to a world that seems bent on ruin?

We are persuaded that faithfulness in our generation means declaring once again the true story of the world and of our place in it—particularly as male and female. Christian Scripture teaches that there is but one God who alone is Creator and Lord of all. To him alone, every person owes glad-hearted thanksgiving, heart-felt praise, and total allegiance. This is the path not only of glorifying God, but of knowing ourselves. To forget our Creator is to forget who we are, for he made us for himself. And we cannot know ourselves truly without truly knowing him who made us. We did not make ourselves. We are not our own. Our true identity, as male and female persons, is given by God. It is not only foolish, but hopeless, to try to make ourselves what God did not create us to be.

We believe that God’s design for his creation and his way of salvation serve to bring him the greatest glory and bring us the greatest good. God’s good plan provides us with the greatest freedom. Jesus said he came that we might have life and have it in overflowing measure. He is for us and not against us. Therefore, in the hope of serving Christ’s church and witnessing publicly to the good purposes of God for human sexuality revealed in Christian Scripture, we offer the following affirmations and denials.

Article 1

WE AFFIRM that God has designed marriage to be a covenantal, sexual, procreative, lifelong union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife, and is meant to signify the covenant love between Christ and his bride the church.

WE DENY that God has designed marriage to be a homosexual, polygamous, or polyamorous relationship. We also deny that marriage is a mere human contract rather than a covenant made before God.

Article 2

WE AFFIRM that God's revealed will for all people is chastity outside of marriage and fidelity within marriage.

WE DENY that any affections, desires, or commitments ever justify sexual intercourse before or outside marriage; nor do they justify any form of sexual immorality.

Article 3

WE AFFIRM that God created Adam and Eve, the first human beings, in his own image, equal before God as persons, and distinct as male and female.

WE DENY that the divinely ordained differences between male and female render them unequal in dignity or worth.

Article 4

WE AFFIRM that divinely ordained differences between male and female reflect God's original creation design and are meant for human good and human flourishing.

WE DENY that such differences are a result of the Fall or are a tragedy to be overcome.

Article 5

WE AFFIRM that the differences between male and female reproductive structures are integral to God's design for self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that physical anomalies or psychological conditions nullify the God-appointed link between biological sex and self-conception as male or female.

Article 6

WE AFFIRM that those born with a physical disorder of sex development are created in the image of God and have dignity and worth equal to all other image-bearers. They are acknowledged by our Lord Jesus in his words about "eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb." With all others they are welcome as faithful followers of Jesus Christ and should embrace their biological sex insofar as it may be known.

WE DENY that ambiguities related to a person's biological sex render one incapable of living a fruitful life in joyful obedience to Christ.

Article 7

WE AFFIRM that self-conception as male or female should be defined by God's holy purposes in creation and redemption as revealed in Scripture.

WE DENY that adopting a homosexual or transgender self-conception is consistent with God's holy purposes in creation and redemption.

Article 8

WE AFFIRM that people who experience sexual attraction for the same sex may live a rich and fruitful life pleasing to God through faith in Jesus Christ, as they, like all Christians, walk in purity of life.

WE DENY that sexual attraction for the same sex is part of the natural goodness of God's original creation, or that it puts a person outside the hope of the gospel.

Article 9

WE AFFIRM that sin distorts sexual desires by directing them away from the marriage covenant and toward sexual immorality— a distortion that includes both heterosexual and homosexual immorality.

WE DENY that an enduring pattern of desire for sexual immorality justifies sexually immoral behavior.

Article 10

WE AFFIRM that it is sinful to approve of homosexual immorality or transgenderism and that such approval constitutes an essential departure from Christian faithfulness and witness.

WE DENY that the approval of homosexual immorality or transgenderism is a matter of moral indifference about which otherwise faithful Christians should agree to disagree.

Article 11

WE AFFIRM our duty to speak the truth in love at all times, including when we speak to or about one another as male or female.

WE DENY any obligation to speak in such ways that dishonor God's design of his image-bearers as male and female.

Article 12

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ gives both merciful pardon and transforming power, and that this pardon and power enable a follower of Jesus to put to death sinful desires and to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ is insufficient to forgive all sexual sins and to give power for holiness to every believer who feels drawn into sexual sin.

Article 13

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ enables sinners to forsake transgender self-conceptions and by divine forbearance to accept the God-ordained link between one's biological sex and one's self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ sanctions self-conceptions that are at odds with God's revealed will.

Article 14

WE AFFIRM that Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners and that through Christ's death and resurrection forgiveness of sins and eternal life are available to every person who repents of sin and trusts in Christ alone as Savior, Lord, and supreme treasure.

WE DENY that the Lord's arm is too short to save or that any sinner is beyond his reach.

Scripture References*

Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-24; Ex. 20:14; 20:17; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Dt. 5:18, 21; 22:5; Jdg. 19:22; 2 Sam. 11:1-12:15; Job 31:1; Ps. 51:1-19; Prov. 5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:1-27; Isa. 59:1; Mal. 2:14; Matt. 5:27-30; 19:4-6, 8-9, 12; Acts 15:20, 29; Rom. 1:26-27; 1:32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 18-20; 7:1-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 5:24; Eph. 4:15, 20-24; 5:31-32; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; 1 Tim. 1:9-10, 15; 2 Tim. 2:22; Titus 2:11-12; Heb. 13:4; Jas. 1:14-15; 1 Pet. 2:11; Jude 7

** Scripture texts are not a part of the original document but have been added subsequently for reference*

