

Hilltop Bible Fellowship, Inc.

PREAMBLE

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of **Hilltop Bible Fellowship, Inc.** (the "Church") and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of like faith and order, we do declare and establish these Bylaws.

ARTICLE I - NAME AND PURPOSE

SECTION 1: NAME

The name of the church shall be Hilltop Bible Fellowship and located in Ashdown, Arkansas.

SECTION 2: PURPOSE

The Church is formed to support public worship and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ through such ministries as may be determined by the Church. Specific purposes include:

- (1) to call unbelievers to repentance in Jesus;
- (2) to call believers to a commitment to holiness and evangelism;
- (3) to teach the fundamentals of the Bible in a clear, concise manner by accepting the Bible as literally meaning what it says; and to stand for righteousness.

ARTICLE II - CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1: GOVERNMENT

This sovereign, nondenominational, evangelical Christian Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ retains unto itself the exclusive right to temporal life of this Church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this Church and the condition of such membership. This Church is a democracy, its authority vested in the members. Every active member has the right to a voice in the Church's government, plans, and discipline. The Church is not subject to the control of any other ecclesiastical body, but enjoys mutual counsel and cooperation with other churches of like faith and order.

SECTION 2: CANDIDACY

Each new candidate for membership will be given a copy of the Constitution and the Bylaws. If the candidate is in agreement with guidelines as specified in the Constitution and the Bylaws, he or she may come for membership before the Church. All such candidates shall be presented to the Church at any regular Church service for membership in any of the following ways:

- (1) By baptism, according to the policies of this Church, upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior
- (2) By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Church of like faith and order
- (3) By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Church of like faith and order where no letter is obtainable.
- (4) By statement of faith and prior baptism by submersion after review by the members.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, a three-fourths vote of those Church members present shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

SECTION 3: CLASSES OF MEMBERS

There shall be two classes of members of the Church:

(1) The first class of members shall be referred to as the "Active Members", and shall consist of all initial members of the Church as of the date of these Bylaws, and all members admitted hereafter from time to time. To remain an Active Member status, the member must be "actively involved" in the Church. This includes but is not limited to: regularly attending Church services unless hindered by work or health issues; giving financial support to the Church as blessed by God; supporting and participating in the various programs of the Church; supporting the missions and goals of the Church; being in unity with the membership of the Church; being in harmony with the membership; fully supporting and agreeing with the doctrine of the Church as specified in the Constitution, specifically Article III; and exhibit a willingness to use the spiritual gift God has given you for the edifying of the Church.

(2) The second class of members shall be referred to as the "Inactive Members", and shall consist of members who are "no longer actively involved" in the Church. To clarify, these Inactive Members, when not prevented by work, school, or health issues, did not attend Church services at least three times in the last six months, nor do they give to the financial support of the Church as blessed by God. Any other expression of discontent or disagreement with the total membership or doctrine or statement of basic beliefs; or unwillingness to serve others disqualifies a member as an Active Member.

In January and July, the Pastor, Directors/Elders, and Shepherds will review the church membership roll and classify each member based on the criteria in #1 and #2 above. Classifying a member as Inactive is based on a recommendation by the Pastor and a majority vote of the Directors/Elders and Shepherds. The Shepherds' list of people to contact will be limited primarily to Active Members. An Inactive Member can be reclassified as Active by merely being actively involved as specified in #1 above at any time.

SECTION 4: RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

The following are the rights of Active Members of our Church:

(1) Every member of the Church who is on the Active Membership roll is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the Church in conference, provided the member is present. Under special circumstances, as long as it is approved in advance by the membership, absentee balloting shall be permitted. Members of the Church on the Inactive Membership roll are not entitled to vote. Cumulative voting shall not be allowed on any matter.

(2) Every member of the Church on the Active Membership roll is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the Church.

(3) All Church Positions must be filled by Active Members only, with the exception of our musicians.

SECTION 5: TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

(1) death of the member

(2) dismissal to another church of like faith and order

(3) exclusion by action of this Church

(4) erasure upon request or proof of membership in a church with a contradictory doctrine

SECTION 6: EXCLUSION OF A MEMBER

Should a member become an offense to the Church by: reason of immoral or unchristian conduct; disagreeing with the fundamental doctrines of the Church; creating disunity within the Church; disrupting the harmony of the Church; or creating confusion and strife within the Church body. The Trustees, Directors/Elders, and Shepherds shall be the responsibility of the membership to take steps to resolve the offense in accordance with Matthew 18:15-20. If the Trustees, Directors/Elders, and Shepherds feel that member is not repentant, after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance, membership may be withdrawn upon a unanimous vote of the Trustees, Directors/Elders, and Shepherds present. The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and after the excluded person has met with the Pastor and indicated such person's

repentance. It shall be the practice of this Church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.

ARTICLE III - CHURCH OFFICERS, STAFF AND COMMITTEES

All who serve as officers and staff of the Church shall be members of this Church.

SECTION 1: CHURCH OFFICERS and OFFICES

The officers and offices of the Church shall be: Pastor, Associate Pastor, Ministerial Staff, Directors/Elders, Trustees, Clerk, Treasurer, Shepherds, and Deacons. These positions shall only be filled by Active Members of HTBF. Anyone, prior to filling any of these positions, must complete the HTBF Application, which is an attachment to and part of the ByLaws of HTBF, and the HTBF Application must be reviewed and approved by the Directors/Elders and Pastor. All officers and offices of the Church, listed in Article III, are subject to the HTBF Organization Chart, which is an attachment to and part of the ByLaws of HTBF. Qualifications for these positions are in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

(1) Pastor

The Pastor is responsible for leading the Church to function as a New Testament church and will lead the congregation, the organization, and the Church staff to perform their tasks. The Pastor provides spiritual leadership to the membership. His duties include preparing weekly sermons, preaching and conducting worship services. He has full responsibility over all services held in the Church or its facilities, with his primarily responsible being to insure the spiritual welfare and spiritual integrity of the Church are maintained above all influences whether internal or external.

The Pastor is leader of pastoral ministries in the Church. As such he works to:

- (1) lead the Church in the achievement of its missions
- (2) proclaim the Gospel to believers and unbelievers
- (3) provide counseling to Church's members
- (4) serves as administer of Church services
- (5) perform baptisms, weddings, and funerals of Church members
- (6) serve as Moderator, presiding over Church business meetings
- (7) assist in the preparation of Quarterly Financial Reports from the check and deposit logs prepared by the Treasurer and work with the Treasurer in developing the year's budget
- (8) ensure the filing of all necessary annual and quarterly reports required of the Church
- (9) ensure all church facilities are performing properly

The Pastor shall meet with the Trustees and Directors/Elders regularly or as needed to discuss church matters.

The process to elect a Pastor shall begin with the church electing a Search Committee of 5 from its active members at a Sunday morning service. The Search Committee shall elect a Chairman and shall meet as needed. The Search Committee shall screen and question each candidate carefully after the HTBF Application is completed and reviewed by all members of the Search Committee and the Directors/Elders. After the candidate's Application is unanimously approved by the Search Committee and the Directors/Elders, the information supplied on the HTBF Application must be verified by the Directors/Elders and the Chairman of the Search Committee. The Search Committee and the Directors/Elders shall meet with the candidate to review his application. Once satisfied the candidate is suitable for HTBF, the Search Committee and the Director/Elders will approve the candidate to preach at a Sunday morning service; and after the service, there will be an open Question and Answer Session by members of the congregation. After preaching a minimum of 3 messages and a final open Question and Answer Session, the Search Committee Chairman will lead the church in a business meeting to discuss whether or not the candidate should be voted by the Active Members on the following Sunday. Election of the Pastor shall be by written ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those Active Members in

attendance plus absentee votes is necessary for approval. All Active Members unable to be in attendance can vote absentee by giving their written vote in person or by mail or email to the Search Committee Chairman prior to Sunday of the church vote. A record of all Active Members voting, ballots, and count sheets will be kept in the church office. Once elected, the Pastor and his family shall seek membership in HTBF. The Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the Church's request provided a vote of 51% of the Active Membership list is obtained. Active Member will be required to give a signed written vote, mailed letter, or email to the Chairman of the Directors/Elders. The Pastor or Directors/Elders can request for a vote of confidence at any time provided a week's notice is given to all Active Members.

(2) Associate Pastor

The Associate Pastor is the primary support person for the Pastor. This includes supporting the overall vision for the Church and the church's teachings; and functioning as a back-up speaker to the Pastor when needed.

(3) Ministerial Staff

The ministerial staff, including the Director of Music, shall be called and employed as the Church determines the need for such offices. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present is necessary to add a new staff position and requires a minimum of one week's notice before the vote. A staff member shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the Church's request provided a vote of the majority of members is obtained.

(4) Directors/Elders

Hilltop Bible Fellowship, Inc. is an Arkansas non-profit corporation and these three directors serve as overseers of the corporate affairs and legal affairs of the corporation to keep the church in compliance with the State of Arkansas and the United States of America and to insure that all federal and state reports are filed correctly and timely.

Directors/Elders will be elected annually and shall serve until a successor is elected. At the first meeting of the year, they will elect a Chairman of the Directors/Elders. Directors/ Elders are also responsible for the primary leadership and oversight of the church. They are servants of the church; care for the church and its members; able to teach the Word of God; and model the character of Christ to those around them that he is growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ. The Directors/Elders oversee the church and care for the people spiritually. They are accountable for the overall health and effectiveness of the church by seeking Jesus Christ's direction in overseeing, guiding and caring for the church. The Directors/Elders shall meet with the Pastor regularly or as needed to discuss church matters. The Directors/Elders are free to meet at any time they deem it necessary with or without the Pastor. In summary, their primary responsibilities are to insure that the church does not deviate from its beliefs as stated in our Constitution and to insure that church operates within the scope of its ByLaws. The Directors/Elders should meet at least quarterly.

(5) Trustees

The Church shall have five trustees. Trustees will be elected annually to act for the Church in safe guarding the assets of the church and its members. Trustees shall serve until successors are elected. A Chairman of Trustees shall be elected at the first meeting of the year each year. The Trustees are basically responsible for all matters related to the following basic three areas:

- (1) the real and personal property owned or leased by the Church
- (2) security and safety matters of the Church and its Members
- (3) the Church's finances

The Trustees shall hold the Church property in the corporate name of the Church. Upon specific vote of the Church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any Church property, but not otherwise. When the signatures of Trustees are required, any three or more shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal

documents related to Church approved matters. In addition to overseeing the land, building and equipment of the Church, which includes repairs, proper insurance coverage, buildings, investments, additions, construction, renovations, etc.

The Trustees shall be security and safety minded and develop a proactive, preventative protection plan for those attending functions at our facilities. There are many threats to church-goers, especially children. The Trustees' plan of action should preserve a peaceful and safe atmosphere while developing a plan to address problems that could possibly arise. The Trustees shall examine the risks and put a plan in place to insure the safety of our people as a top priority. The Trustees shall have the power to close the Church facilities due to weather, health concerns, or any situation that adversely affects the welfare of the Church Members. The Trustees may deny entry to the Church property, or attendance at any Church service or function, to any congregation member, congregational friend, or visitor deemed to be disruptive or harmful to the Church. This behavior includes, but is not limited to the following:

- (1) Threats to the safety of any adult or child.
- (2) The disruption of worship services, church functions, or church activities.

If a congregant, friend, or visitor's behavior warrants immediate action, such action will be taken by a Trustee, a responsible member and/or the Pastor. This may include asking the offending person(s) to leave the property, or suspending the meeting or activity until such time as it can be safely resumed. If further assistance is necessary, the Police Department may be called. If not directly involved, the Trustees and the Pastor must be notified of these actions as soon as possible.

The Trustees are also responsible for counting and verifying weekly receipts, auditing and approving the financial reports. There will be a quarterly meeting on the second or third Sunday of the month, after the end of the quarter, at 5:00 with the Treasurer to review and discuss the Quarterly Financial Reports. All Trustees are expected to attend if possible. These Quarterly Financial Reports are then to be reviewed with the membership on the following Wednesday night service. The Trustees are free to meet at any time they deem it necessary with or without the Pastor. The financial records of the church should be reviewed quarterly and annually by the Trustees or whomever they designate.

(6) Church Clerk

The church shall elect annually a Clerk as its clerical officers, who shall serve until a successor has been elected. The Clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the Church and recording minutes of the Church business meetings. The Clerk or an appointed assistant should the Clerk be absent, must record the results of all matters voted upon at all business meetings. In regular meetings the Clerk shall record information on applicants for Church membership and other decisions. In business meetings, the Clerk shall record all actions voted on by the Church and follow through on all necessary correspondence related to the actions. The Clerk shall be responsible for keeping a register of names of members with dates of admission, dismissal, death, or erasure, the active membership roll and the inactive membership roll, together with a record of Baptisms and applications of new members who respond to the invitations. The Clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the Church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give required notice for all meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated in these Bylaws.

All Church records are Church property and shall be kept in the Church office.

(7) Church Treasurer

The Church shall elect annually a Treasurer as its financial officers, who shall serve until a successor has been elected. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money or things of value paid by or given to the Church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements, which shall be maintained by month in a timely manner. The Pastor shall assist in the preparation of the Quarterly Financial Reports from the check and deposit logs prepared by the Treasurer. Each quarterly, these Quarterly Financial Reports will be distributed to the Trustees first, and then to Active Members who contribute to the Church by the Treasurer. The Treasurer's report and records may be audited annually

by a certified public accountant, at the Trustees' discretion.

The Treasurer and Trustees shall develop and recommend to the Church adequate policies and procedures related to receiving, accounting, disbursing, and reporting Church monies, and to maintain members' records of contributions and provide quarterly and annually reports.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year and its acceptance and approval by the Church, the records shall be delivered to the Church Clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the Church. The quarterly financial reports shall be included in the Church minutes.

(8) Shepherds

The Shepherds serve on a volunteer basis to oversee the Active Membership of the Church. These men normally have 7 – 9 family units and more Shepherds are appointed as needed. The Shepherd or his spouse shall contact their assigned members monthly by phone, card or personal visit. These men serve the function of the Deacon, as described in #9, and meet the major qualifications as required of a Deacon. The Shepherds shall have quarterly meetings, on the first Wednesday of the month after the end of a calendar quarter at 6:00. Each Shepherd will report on their contact with their assigned Active Members and discuss any situations that might require additional church action. All Shepherds are expected to attend if possible. On the first meeting of the new calendar year, the Shepherds shall elect a Chairman of the Shepherds.

(9) Deacons

Deacons of the Church shall be elected to provide spiritual leadership for, and service to, the fellowship of the Church. Typically, the Deacons will be men who have served effectively and been faithful in their service to the Church as Shepherds for at least 3 years. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Active Members present is necessary to determine the number of active Deacons needed.

The Church shall elect Deacons from time to time and a Deacon must meet the scriptural qualifications (Acts 6:1-6 and 1Timothy 3:8-13). Elections shall be by a majority of the Church members present by secret ballot at a regular business meeting. Once elected, Deacons shall serve thereafter as long as they are Active Members and faithful to their duties. An active Deacon may choose to go inactive at any time by notifying the Church.

In accordance with the New Testament, Deacons are to be servants of the Church, who minister to the Active Membership of the Church. The ministry of the Deacon is to serve with the Pastor and shall be to carry out God's work in the Church and community in helping the Church members and others in the community any way they can. There shall be no obligation to recognize a Deacon who comes to this Church from another church.

SECTION 2: NONMINISTERIAL STAFF

The non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the Church determines the need for their services.

SECTION 3: CHURCH COMMITTEES

Committees shall be formed and shall serve at the discretion of the Church as needed in its ministry. The following committees are approved by the church:

Benevolence Committee – The stated purpose of benevolence is to meet peoples' basic needs. These needs are defined as food and medical treatment, including medications and related expenses. Needs that may not be met by benevolence, according to the IRS, include: school expenses, business investments, paying off credit cards, or anything other than food or medical treatment. According to IRS guidelines, a Benevolence Request Form must be presented for consideration to the committee, which is comprised of 3 to 5 active members elected annually. The Benevolence Request Form must be kept with the church's financial records and be approved by all active members. The maximum donation to a specific Member in a rolling 12 months is \$500 and the maximum donation to a Non-Member is \$300 in a

rolling 12 months. Any requests for funds outside the scope of this committee may be referred to the Ashdown Ministerial Alliance.

SECTION 4: COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

After the Committees are elected by the Church, the Committees may elect such other officers of the Committees as they may deem appropriate to function. A majority of each Committee shall constitute a quorum for any meeting, and all actions of a Committee, not otherwise set forth herein, shall be by majority vote of those present including the chairman. Committee meetings shall be called by the chairman or by a majority of the Committee members.

ARTICLE IV - CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

The Church shall initiate and maintain programs of Bible teaching; Church members training, Church leader training, new member orientation; mission education, action and support; and music education, training, and performance; as the Church determines the need.

ARTICLE V - CHURCH ORDINANCES

There are two Church ordinances:

(1) Baptism

This Church may receive for Baptism all persons who have received Jesus Christ as their Savior by personal faith, who profess Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicate a commitment to follow Christ as Lord. Baptism to be valid shall be by immersion in water and must follow receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior. The Pastor, or whomever the Church shall authorize, shall administer Baptism. If negative interest is ascertained on the part of the candidate, he shall be deleted from membership in the Church and from those awaiting Baptism.

(2) Lord's Supper

This Church shall observe the Lord's Supper at least quarterly. The Pastor shall administer the Lord's Supper to all born again, baptized believers who chose to participate in the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE VI - CHURCH MEETINGS

SECTION 1: WORSHIP SERVICES

The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning for the Worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. The Pastor shall direct the services for all Church members and for all others who may choose to attend. Bible Studies and Group Meetings shall be held weekly at the Church taught by the Pastor or mature Active Members of the Church.

SECTION 2: SPECIAL SERVICES

Revival services and any other Church meetings for the advancement of Church's objectives shall be held as recommended by the Pastor and approved by the Church

SECTION 3: REGULAR QUARTERLY BUSINESS MEETINGS

The Church shall hold regular business meetings quarterly. Notice of such meetings shall be announced at one advance worship services.

SECTION 4: SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

The Church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. No business except that for which the meeting was called may be transacted.

SECTION 5: QUORUM

The quorum consists of those members who attend any regular or special Business meeting.

SECTION 6: AUTHORITY

Recently, revised version of Robert’s Rules of Order is the Authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the Church.

ARTICE VII - CHURCH FINANCES

SECTION 1: BUDGET

The Treasurer and Pastor shall prepare and submit to the Trustees for approval an inclusive budget indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all expenses. It is understood that membership in this Church involves financial obligation to support the Church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. This shall be approved in January of the new Church Year by the Trustees.

SECTION 2: ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES

All funds received for any and all purposes shall be counted and verified by the Trustees and given to the Church Treasurer to be properly recorded on the books of the Church. A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer and overseen by the Trustees. The Treasurer shall be authorized to select and designate such depository or depositories for the funds and securities of the Church as they shall deem proper. All checks, notes, and contracts of the Church, and all orders for deposit or withdrawal of securities from the designated depository or depositories shall be signed by the Church Treasurer and one of the designate Trustees shall sign if the Treasurer is unavailable to sign.

SECTION 3: FISCAL YEAR

The Church fiscal year shall begin on January 1st and end December 31st.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

Changes in the Bylaws may be made at any business meeting of the Church provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment shall have been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting or upon request. Amendments to the Bylaws shall be adopted by two-thirds vote of Church members present.

ARTICLE IX - OPERATION AND DISSOLUTION

This Church is organized and operated primarily for the purpose of engaging in religious worship or promoting the spiritual development or well-being of individuals. It is to be operated in a way that does no result in accrual of distributable profits, realization of private gain resulting from payment of compensation in excess of a reasonable allowance for salary or other compensation for services rendered, or realization of any other form of private gain. The Church pledges its assets for use in performing the organization’s religious functions. It directs that on discontinuance of the Church by dissolution or otherwise the assets are to be transferred to a charitable, educational, religious, or other similar organization that is qualified as a charitable organization under Section 501(c)(3), Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.