

The Constitution of Hillview Baptist Church

ARTICLE 1 – NAME

The name of the church shall be Hillview Baptist Church

ARTICLE II – AIM

The aim of this church is to promote the worship of God through the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ at home and abroad, trusting that as a result sinners shall be saved and believers edified.

ARTICLE III – DOCTRINE

The following is a very concise statement of the doctrinal position of Hillview Baptist Church. It is not intended to be a comprehensive presentation of any of the doctrines, nor a defense of these biblical truths.

1. **Bible:** We believe the Bible comprises the sixty –six books of the Old and New Testaments (Genesis to Revelation). The entire Bible is inspired by God and is inerrant and completely trustworthy. The Bible is our guide for worship, faith and living. 11 Tim. 3:15-17; 11 Pet. 1:21; Prov. 30: 5 – 6.
2. **God:** We believe there is one God eternally existing in three coequal persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Isa. 43: 10-11; Matt. 3:16-17; John 1:1; Acts 5: 3-4
 - A. God the Father is the absolute Sovereign ruler and Sustainer of the world
 - B. God the Son is the incarnate God-man and Saviour of mankind
 - C. God the Holy Spirit indwells the believer and equips and enables him to serve God effectively in the body.
3. **Creation:** We believe that by a direct act of His will and through His spoken word, God created the entire universe (visible and invisible) out of nothing in six literal twenty-four hour days. Genesis Chapter 1 & 2.
4. **Man:** We believe God created man as a sinless being in His own image, but by a conscious act of his own will, man chose to disobey God and plunged the entire human race into sin. Any person who does not repent of his/her sin will be cast into the Lake of Fire for eternity. Gen. 1:26-27 & 31; Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12; Rev 20: 11-20
5. **Sin:** we believe sin is any act, attitude or thought that is in opposition to the will of God. 1 John 3:4; 5:17
6. **Salvation:** We believe a person is saved when he/she turns from his/her sin and places their faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation is solely a gift of God’s grace. Eph. 2:8-10; Rom. 10:9-10
7. **Church:** We believe a church is an organized body of baptized believers, meeting regularly for fellowship, edification and evangelism. Acts 2:41; Matt 10:9-10
8. **Satan & Demons:** We believe Satan and demons are spirit beings who rebelled against God and were consequently cast out of Heaven. They now actively seek to oppose the work of God in the earth. Isaiah 14: 12-15; Ezek. 28: 11-19; Jude v6

9. Last Things: We believe our Lord will return in the air to catch away His saints (both dead and living) before the period of great tribulation. Christ will eventually return bodily to earth, rule for one thousand years and, then having subdued all things unto Himself, establish the eternal state of bliss for the saved. 1 Thess.4:13-18; Rev. 5-22

10. Separation: We believe the child of God must separate himself/herself from persons, practices and institutions that undermine the testimony and program of God. The church also needs to keep herself pure from any such alliance or influence. 11 Cor. 6:14-17; 11 John; Rom. 16:17-18

ARTICLE IV – ASSOCIATIONS

Because a New Testament Church cannot “join: anything outside of itself, but only “fellowship” with others, this church declares itself to be in fellowship with The Association of Independent Churches in Jamaica, and the International Council of Christian Churches.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP

Part 1: Present Membership

All whose names appear on the rolls of this church are members, but only those upon the “Active List” are considered in “good regular standing”. Those whose names appear on the “Inactive List” lose the privileges usually granted to members in good regular standing. Members who have not reached their sixteenth birthday shall not have the right to vote.

Part 2: Receiving of Members

A: Anyone professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, giving evidence of a change of heart, and declaring himself (or herself) in accord with the rules, practice and the doctrines of this church may become a candidate for church membership.

B: Candidates may become members of the church in one of four ways:

1. By Baptism
2. By letter of transfer from his former church of like faith and practice (having been in good and regular standing)
3. By statement of Christian Experience (having been previously baptized)
4. By Restoration

C: Candidates for church membership shall appear personally before the Pastor and deacons, after a period of instruction. They shall be questioned on their lessons and personal Christian life, and passed according to their qualification. The pastor and deacons may prescribe any restrictions they see fit for the best interests of the church.

Having been recommended by the deacons the name shall then be brought before the church for acceptance or rejections. Five objecting votes means refusal of membership. Any member rejecting shall be required to present the reasons for his objections before the deacons and pastor at their earliest meeting. A two-thirds vote of the deacons shall over-rule the objection and the name shall be submitted once more to the church.

Part 3: Dismissal of Members

A: Church Letters

Letters of dismissal may be granted to any member in good and regular standing. Such letters must be addressed to some particular church of the same faith and practice as this, and sent by the secretary to the Pastor or secretary of the church to which the member is dismissed. Such letters shall be good for only six (6) months from date and the member dismissed shall remain subject to the authority of this church until notification has

been received of the acceptance by the church addressed. No letter shall be granted except to a designated church of like faith and practice.

B: Discipline of Members

The matter of discipline of the membership shall be in the hands of the deacons assisted by the Pastor, but in case of “Suspension” and “Dismissal” from membership, final action must be taken by the church.

Suspension – (Out of Fellowship)

1. Members who fail to support the Church by their attendance for a period of six months, without a reasonable excuse, (such “support” and ‘excuse’ to be defined by the deacons). These shall be suspended and put on the ‘inactive list’ and will not have the privileges of an active member in good standing.

Dismissal – (Out of Membership)

The following category of persons shall have their names removed from the church membership roll:

1. Names continuing under discipline on the ‘inactive list’ for more than a year
2. Members whose lives are a poor testimony in the district and are hindering the work
3. Members who fall into open sin.

No member shall be dismissed until every effort has been made, including, if physically possible, personal visits to reclaim him (or her) for Christ and the Church.

ARTICLE VI – ORDINANCES

Part 1: Baptism

Those professing saving faith in Jesus Christ as personal Saviour shall be immersed in water in accordance with Scriptural teaching by the pastor or some person authorized by the church. Immersion must come before church membership. Acts 2:41

Part 2: Lord’s Supper

The Lord’s Supper (Communion) shall normally be served to the assembled church by the pastor (or some person designated by the church) and the deacons. It shall be served to members in good and regular standing at a time set by the church leadership. The pastor shall state the Scriptural order, which places baptism before Communion, and shall explain the meaning of the ordinances.

ARTICLE VII – THE PASTOR

Part 1

The pastor shall be chosen for an indeterminate term. Notice of the suggested choice of pastor shall be given from the pulpit for two successive Sundays before the church votes. Voting shall be by ballot and two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the votes cast shall be required before a call is extended.

Part 2

The pastor shall give the church two months’ notice in writing of his intention to discontinue as pastor. The church may by a two third ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote at a regularly called meeting (see ARTICLE XI, Part 2) declare the pulpit vacant, and 2 months’ notice must be given to the pastor asking him to resign.

Part 3

The pastor (or his designated representative) shall be the chairman of all church business meetings and a [ex officio] member of all committees.

ARTICLE VIII – OFFICERS AND CHURCH WORKERS

Officers

Deacons, trustees, the treasurer, the secretary and Sunday School Superintendent shall be considered the officers of the church. Each one shall have been a member of this church for a period of at least 2 years before being placed in nomination; and their terms of service shall begin on the first of the month following the Annual Meeting. Retiring Officers shall continue their duties until the terms of the newly elected officers begin. Other offices may be given from time to time as are found necessary. No person shall hold more than two positions at one time and on the “inactive list” is eligible to be an officer of the church. In the case of a newly organized church, the officers will serve on probation for a period of 2 years during which time they may be removed if found unsatisfactory.

Part 1: Deacons

A: The church shall elect from its membership at its Annual Business Meeting a man or men to serve as deacons. The term shall be for three (3) years and arrange to rotate. A person elected to serve as a deacon for the first time will have the first year considered as a time of training. During that year or at the end of it the person may be asked to discontinue if the pastor and other deacons are dissatisfied with the performance of the individual. At the end of the year of training, the official term of three (3) years will begin. No deacon may serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms, but must take a break for at least one year. He then becomes eligible to be elected to serve again by the church.

B: The qualifications for deacon shall be found in the New Testament (Acts 6:3; 1Timothy 3:8-13).

C: It shall be the duty of the deacons to assist the pastor

1. In the serving of the Lord’s Supper
2. At baptism
3. In the scriptural supervision of the church
4. In carefully examining all candidates for church membership, recommending to the church such as they consider fit for membership
5. In all matters of discipline of members
6. In visitation
7. In preaching

Church Workers

Part 2: Trustees

A: The deacons shall serve as Trustees. The trustees shall elect from their number a Chairman and Secretary. The Chairman shall preside at their meetings, and have general oversight of their work. The Secretary shall keep a faithful record of any important business done by the Trustees; and make a faithful report. The trustees shall make a full report of their activities to the church at each Annual Meeting or as requested by the church. Meetings shall be held at the call of or as requested by the church. Meetings shall be held at the call of the chairman, or pastor or ($\frac{2}{3}$) two-thirds of the full number of Trustees. A majority of the full number of Trustees make a quorum. The trustees are at all times subject to the action of the entire membership.

B: It shall be the duties of the trustees to

1. Care for the property of the church
2. Repair and preserve the same
3. Hire and supervise the caretaker

4. Superintend any improvements that are not entrusted to a special committee
5. Perform such business concerns of the church as assigned to them by the church

C: The Trustees shall not have authority to

1. Sell
2. Lease
3. Give away
4. Dispose of
5. Mortgage
6. Create debts on the church property in any manner, except as the church shall order the same by action of the entire membership

Part 3: Treasurer

At each Annual Meeting the church will elect from its membership a treasurer. He/she shall

1. Receive all moneys of the church
2. Apply the same as directed by the church
3. Keep a true record of the accounts
4. Mail a full report to the church at each Annual Meeting

Part 4: Secretary

The church shall elect from its membership at each Annual Meeting a Secretary for the following year. He/she shall

1. Keep a fair and complete record of all business of the church
2. Have charge of all records
3. Announce the office to be filled at the Annual Meeting and
4. Perform other particular duties as may be prescribed by the church

At the Annual Meeting it shall be considered wise to elect an Acting Secretary for the meeting who would have the privilege of voting. It shall be considered wise to select the Secretary from among deacons or deaconesses.

Part 5: Sunday School Superintendent

The church shall elect from its membership a Sunday School Superintendent. He shall be in charge of the administration and promotion of the Sunday School, and shall work in close co-operation with the pastor. It shall be considered wise to select the Sunday School Superintendent from among deacons or deaconesses.

ARTICLE IX – FINANCES

The financial year shall be on January 1st, and end on the following December 31st.

ARTICLE X - MISSIONS

The policy of this church is to support only missions engaged principally in evangelism. They shall be known by a hearty agreement with our Statement of Faith, both in doctrine and practice and be Baptist in policy.

ARTICLE XI – OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Part 1

The Sunday School is the whole church, adults and children, studying the Bible. It shall be under the general supervision and control of the church.

Part 2

There shall be such other organizations as may be beneficial to the spiritual growth of the church membership. Such organization shall be self-governing but subject to the control of the church through its constitution and voted church policy. These organizations shall not be started without the express consent of the church.

Part 3

All officers of such organizations and all regular teachers in the Sunday School must be members of the church in good and regular standing. If necessary an exception to the rule may be made in the Young Peoples Organization.

ARTICLE XII – BUSINESS MEETINGS

Part 1: Annual Meeting

There shall be an Annual Meeting of the church in the month of January to elect the officers of the church and transact any other business.

Part 2:

There shall be a quarterly business meeting of the church on the third Wednesday of the month immediately following the quarter at which time current business will be transacted.

Part 3:

Special business meetings may be called at any time, provided public notice be given of the same on the Lord's Day preceding, except that those for calling or dismissing a pastor shall be given public announcement for two (2) preceding Sundays. At such meetings, a majority of the active members shall constitute a quorum. However, routine business may be done, when necessary, at any stated meeting of the church without regard to the above requirements.

Part 4:

A suggested Order of Business for the Annual Meeting follows:

1. Reading and approval of minutes of previous Annual Meeting
2. Secretary's report
3. Treasurer's report
4. Report of deacons
5. Report of trustees
6. Report of Sunday school superintendent
7. Reports of church organizations
8. Reports of special committee
9. Elections of officers of the church
10. Unfinished business
11. New business
12. Adjournment

ARTICLE XIII – PRACTICES

Marital Clause against Same-sex Marriages

We as a church (the body of Jesus Christ) hold and adhere to the Biblical mandate of marriage according to Genesis 2:24 and Mark 10:6-8. Therefore, it is on this premise that we will only conduct matrimonial unions (such as weddings, vow renewals or otherwise) solely between a natural born male and a natural born female.

We refuse to concede, condone or conduct any marital union between persons: of same sex orientation, who have had reconstructive surgery to change their sexual identity or live in an identity confused state (such as cross-dressers); as it is in clear violation of our beliefs and the explicit teachings of the Bible and God's perfect design for such a holy ordained union.

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the members present at any business meeting, providing that notice of proposed amendment shall be given from the pulpit for the two Sundays before the meeting at which action is desired.