

*By-Laws
of
Harvest Plains Church
Casselton, North Dakota
Amended Effective as of 7/21/2020*

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of
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Casselton, North Dakota**

We, the Board of *Harvest Plains Church*, in Casselton, North Dakota, having searched the Word of God and sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and acting in accordance with the requirements of the North Dakota Century Code Chapter 10-33, do adopt the following By-Laws as the Church's amended articles of governance effective as of 7/21/2020.

1. Name, Organization, and Affiliation

1.1. *Name.* The name of the Church is Harvest Plains Church.

1.2. *Organization.*

1.2.1. *Date of Organization.* The Church was organized on *02/01/2019*.

1.2.2. *Basis of Organization.* The Church was organized under the North Dakota Century Code Chapter 10-33.

1.2.3. *Affiliation.* The Church is affiliated with Converge Heartland and Converge Worldwide.

2. Statement of Purpose

Purpose. The purpose of the Church is to be a religious entity in accord with the North Dakota General Not-For-Profit Act of 2007 (the "Act") and § 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 2017 (the "Code"), or the corresponding provisions of any future North Dakota not-for-profit corporation law or United States internal revenue law. More specifically, to help others learn about God, love Him and others, and live for His glory.

3. Statement of Faith

The Word of God. We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31, 32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32

The Trinity. We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption. Genesis 1:1, 26; John 1:1, 3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19, 20; Ephesians 4:5

God the Father. We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He infallibly foreknows all that shall

come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. Luke 10:21, 22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; 1 Timothy 1:1, 2 & 2:5, 6; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6

Jesus Christ. We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth. Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 1:26–38; John 1:1, 20:28; Romans 9:5, 8:32; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21–23; John 20:30, 31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6–8 & 6:9, 10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Timothy 3:16

The Holy Spirit. We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. John 14:16, 17, 26 & 15:26, 27; John 16:9–14; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19; Galatians 5:22–26

Regeneration. We believe that man was created by God in His own image; that he sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners by choice and therefore under condemnation. We believe that those who repent and forsake sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures, delivered from condemnation and receive eternal life. Genesis 1:26, 5:2; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17, 3:19; Ecclesiastes 2:11; John 3:14, 5:24; John 5:30, 7:13, 8:12, 10:26; Romans 9:22; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 19:3, 20, 20:10, 14 & 15, 21:18; Psalm 51:7; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14; Romans 3:19, 5:19; Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9; John 3:16, John 1:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1

The Ordinances. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local Church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Church. We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. Ephesians 2:19–22; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:19–21; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23–25

Christian Conduct. We believe that Christians should live for the glory of God and the well-being of others; that their conduct should be blameless before the world; that they should be faithful stewards of their possessions; and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:31; Romans

12:1–3; Hebrews 12:1–2; John 14:15, 23-24; 1 John 2:3-6; 2 Corinthians 9:6–9; 1 Corinthians 4:2; Colossians 1:9–10

The Last Things. We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked. Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 2 Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10; Revelation 20:4–6, 11–15

4. Membership Covenant

Having been brought by God's sovereign grace to repent and believe in the good news of Jesus Christ and his saving work, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, we do now, relying on His grace, solemnly and joyfully affirm our covenant with each other.

We will pray and labor to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, devoted to the glory of God, resting in the gospel of his Son, and dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit.
To that end,

We will not forsake assembling together, but will faithfully attend our corporate worship, treasuring our church's weekly opportunity to sing, pray, and receive the whole counsel of God's Word. We will defend and maintain a gospel-centered ministry by upholding and attending to biblical preaching, the administration of the ordinances, and the exercise of church discipline.

We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a local church: we will pray for and serve one another, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other, and reject all opportunities to speak or hear gossip or slander. We will instead seek to encourage one another and build each other up in the faith.

We will rejoice with those who rejoice and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.

We will seek to proclaim and adorn the gospel of Christ before our family, friends, and neighbors and faithfully transfer the gospel to future generations.

We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of our local church, to the care of our members, and to the spread of the gospel locally and to all nations.

We will, if we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the teaching of God's Word.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

5. Limitations on Corporate Authority

- 5.1. *Distributions to Exempt Organizations.*** The Church, being organized exclusively for religious purposes, may make distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under § 501(c)(3) of the Code.
- 5.2. *No Distributions to Private Persons.*** No part of the net earnings of the Church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its Members, Elders, Deacons, Assistant Deacons, Staff, or any other private person, except that the Church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article Two.
- 5.3. *Prohibited Activities.*** Notwithstanding any other provisions of these By-Laws, the Church shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by: (a) a corporate entity exempt from federal income tax under § 501(c)(3) of the Code; or (b) a corporate entity, contributions to which are deductible under § 170(c)(2) of the Code.

6. Membership

- 6.1. *Eligibility Criteria for Members.*** Any person who confesses faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as his/her personal Savior, has been baptized after regeneration in connection with the preaching of the gospel, gives evidence of a change of heart, and indicates acceptance of the faith and practice held by this church may be received into membership by church vote. All prospective members must complete the new members class and be recommended for membership by the Elders following an in-person interview with an Elder(s) before joining the church. Letters of recommendation are encouraged by individuals who have previously been members of churches of like faith but will not constitute automatic church membership. All new members are admitted into membership by a majority-voice vote of the church membership present.
- 6.2. *Responsibilities of Members.*** Each member shall be expected to support this church by prayer, attendance and participation in its services; by exercising spiritual giftedness through serving in its various ministries; and by generous stewardship in support of its expenses and endeavors.
- 6.3. *Privileges of Membership.*** As a rule, only members will be able to serve in positions of teaching, coordinating, and administration. But Elders may make rare exceptions. Members may reserve and use church facilities and/or property with elder and/or deacon approval. Faithful members will be the primary recipients of the churches benevolence fund. Lastly, members are Christ's sheep who the

elders are called to shepherd, and thus will benefit from the privileges of pastoral care.

6.4. *Termination of Membership.* The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership: (a) following his or her death; (b) following his or her voluntary resignation with intent to transfer membership to another gospel-preaching church in writing; (c) as an act of church discipline as described in section 6.5. The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership for the purpose of avoiding the process of church discipline or to protect that member from following false teaching.

6.5. *Restoration and Discipline of Members.*

6.5.1. *The Process for Biblical Confrontation.* If a member of the Church is sinned against by another member, or if a member becomes aware that another member is living a life inconsistent with God's Word, the steps given in Matthew 18:15-17 shall be followed to bring resolution to the matter. These steps shall be followed in the order listed for the purpose of biblical restoration. The offending member's response will determine the number of steps that must be taken.

6.5.1.1. The member shall approach the offending member privately.

6.5.1.2. The member shall approach the offending member again with a group of two or three.

6.5.1.3. The matter shall be brought to the Elders for consideration and possible presentation to the Church.

6.5.2. *The Elder's Responsibilities.* Duties of the Elders when considering a matter include, but are not limited to, the following:

6.5.2.1. If, after inquiry, it appears the matter requires it, conduct a thorough investigation, including, when possible, asking the offending individual(s) to meet with them. All potential discipline issues must be substantiated and violate clear teachings of Scripture (be black & white).

6.5.3. *The Church's Responsibilities.* If, after inquiry, investigation, and attempted admonishment by the Elder Board, it is determined that the offending individual(s) will not repent, the Elders shall present the matter to the church for the purpose of calling the sinning member to repentance.

6.5.3.1. If the sinning member still refuses to repent, they shall be removed from church membership by a majority-voice vote of

the membership present.

7. Church Governance

7.1. Elders

7.1.1. *Responsibilities of Elders.* The Elders shall lead the Members. The Elders shall oversee the ministries and resources of the Church. The Elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and the guiding of the activities of the Church.

7.1.2. *Eligibility Criteria for Elders.* To be eligible to be an Elder, a person must be a Member of the Church, a man, and someone who meets the standards for being an Elder set forth set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, and I Peter 5:2-3.

7.1.3. *Appointment of Elders.* A biblically qualified man shall become an elder, when he is nominated by the elders and affirmed by a two-thirds vote of the Members.

7.1.4. *Terms of Elders.*

7.1.4.1. *The Pastor/Teacher.* The Pastor/Teacher shall be recognized as an Elder on the date that he is called by the church to serve as Pastor/Teacher. A Pastor/Teacher shall cease to be an Elder upon the effective date of the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between the Church and the Pastor/Teacher.

7.1.4.2. *Other Elders.* A man other than the Pastor/Teacher shall serve as an Elder for a term of four years. Each term begins when such a person is affirmed by the Members. There is no limit to the number of terms he can serve.

7.1.5. *Removal of Elders.* If an Elder is accused of violating any of the biblical requirements of the office, the remaining elders will follow the principles outlined in 1 Timothy 5:19-22. If he is found guilty and remains unrepentant he shall be dismissed of all duties by the recommendation of the remaining elders and a majority-voice vote of the congregation.

7.1.6. *Resignation of Elders.* If an Elder desires to resign from his position as an elder of the church, he may do so in writing and in concurrence with discussions with the current Elders.

7.2. Deacons

- 7.2.1. Responsibilities of Deacons.** Deacons shall be responsible for serving the Members, administrating ministry, and protecting the unity of the church in the love of Christ. Elders shall oversee Deacon ministries and help determine Deacon ministries.
- 7.2.2. Eligibility Criteria for Deacons.** To be eligible to be a Deacon a person must be a Member of the Church, and must meet the standards for being a deacon set forth in the New Testament, including the standards set forth in Acts 6:1-7 and I Timothy 3:8-12. A deacon may be a man or woman.
- 7.2.3. Appointment of Deacons.** A biblically qualified church Member shall become a Deacon, when he/she is nominated by the elders and affirmed by a two-thirds vote of the Members.
- 7.2.4. Terms of Deacon Offices.** A person shall serve as a Deacon for a term of four years. Each term begins when such a person is affirmed by the Members. There is no limit to the number of terms he/she can serve.
- 7.2.5. Removal of Deacons.** If a Deacon is accused of violating any of the biblical requirements of the office, the remaining elders will follow the principles outlined in 1 Timothy 5:19-22. If he/she is found guilty and remains unrepentant he/she shall be dismissed of all duties by the recommendation of the remaining elders and a majority vote of the congregation.

7.3. Church Staff

- 7.3.1. Pastor/Teacher.** The Church may employ a Pastor/Teacher as the Elders may determine to be appropriate. The Pastor/Teacher must meet the eligibility requirements for becoming a Member and an Elder. The Pastor/Teacher, along with the Elders, shall be responsible for overseeing the ministries and resources of the Church. The Pastor/Teacher shall guide the activities of the Church and its Members, and shall oversee the other members of the Church Staff.
- 7.3.2. Associate Pastors.** The Church may employ an Associate Pastor as the Elders may determine to be appropriate. The Associate Pastor must meet the eligibility requirements for becoming a Member and an Elder, but may not initially become an Elder. An Associate Pastor shall assist the Pastor/Teacher in teaching and leading the church.
- 7.3.3. Other Staff.** The Elders are responsible to employ or discharge all staff members as need and budget would allow: ministerial residents, secretaries, custodians, etc.

7.3.4. Salaries. These vocational elders and various other staff, will receive financial compensation for their work. Determination of salaries will be under the supervision of non-vocational elders.

7.4. Church Members

7.4.1. Amendment of the By-Laws or Doctrinal Statement. The Elders must present the Members with any amendment at least two-weeks prior to adopting said amendment. The By-Laws or Doctrinal Statement, may be amended at any regular meeting of the Church by a two-thirds vote.

7.4.2. Relationship with the Pastor/Teacher. Hiring and termination of the Pastor/Teacher shall require a recommendation from the Elders and a two-thirds vote.

7.4.3. Financial Matters. Upon the recommendation of the Elders the Members shall adopt or amend an annual operating budget for the Church. The annual budget must be presented to the church membership two weeks prior to the vote of affirmation. The Members also shall authorize the purchase, sale, or conveyance of any real property, or any interest therein. All financial matters shall be determined by a two-thirds vote.

7.4.4. Nomination, Affirmation, and Removal of Elders. Elders are responsible for nominating prospective elder candidates by whatever means they deem appropriate. Members are responsible for affirming or rejecting Elder candidates by a two-thirds vote.

7.4.5. Mergers and Affiliations. Any mergers or changes in affiliation, including a religious denomination, must receive the approval of the Members by a two-thirds vote. Any recommended mergers or changes in affiliation must be announced to the church membership two months prior to a vote.

7.4.6. Dissolution. Any dissolution of the Church shall require a two-thirds vote. A recommended dissolution must be announced to the church membership two months prior to a vote.

7.5. Meetings of Members

7.5.1. Worship Meetings. The Elders shall schedule the weekly worship service to be held at such place and at such time on the Lord's Day, as the Elders determine.

7.5.2. Members Meetings.

7.5.2.1. Types of Members Meetings.

7.5.2.1.1. *Annual Members Meeting.* The Elders shall schedule an Annual Members Meeting to be held in October or November. The Elders shall determine the place, the date, and the time for such a meeting and announce it at least 2 weeks prior. The Elders shall establish the agenda for the meeting. Such an agenda shall include the following matters: (a) a budget report; (b) the affirmation of Elders and Deacons whose terms shall commence upon the end of the meeting; and (c) any matter that the Elders determine to include in the agenda. Members are encouraged to speak to an Elder prior to this meeting if they have suggested agenda items.

7.5.2.1.2. *Special Members Meeting.* The Elders may schedule a Special Members Meeting and determine the place, the date, and the time for such a meeting and announce the meeting at least one week prior. The Elders shall establish the agenda for the meeting.

7.5.2.2. *Quorum at Member Meetings.* The Elders may conduct a business meeting if thirty (30) percent or more of the Members of the Church are present at the meeting. The Elders may not conduct a business meeting if fewer than thirty (30) percent of the Members of the Church are present at the meeting.

7.5.2.3. *Voting at Member Meetings.* No proxy or absentee voting is permitted. Unless otherwise stated, every matter brought before the congregation will require a majority-voice vote. Votes requiring a two-thirds vote will be cast by an anonymous ballot.

7.5.2.4. *Virtual Participation.* Church members may take part in a business meeting virtually, through the use of any electronic means which allows for simultaneous two-way communication. Members participating in a meeting by this means are deemed to be present at the meeting.

7.5.2.5. *Action by Written Ballot.* Any action that may be taken at any annual or special meeting of church members may be taken without a meeting if the church physically or electronically delivers a written ballot to every member. The written ballot

shall set forth each proposed action and provide an opportunity to vote for or against each proposed action. Approval by written ballot shall be valid only when the number of votes cast by ballot equals or exceeds the quorum and the affirmative vote equals or exceeds the required two-thirds or majority of the votes cast.

8. Books and Records

- 8.1. **Books and Records.** The Church shall keep correct and complete books and records of accounts. The Church also shall keep minutes of the proceedings of its Members, and shall keep a record giving the names and addresses of the Members of the Church. Upon a written request made by a Member to inspect the books and records of the Church for a proper purpose, the Member shall have the right to inspect all of the books and records of the Church at any reasonable time.
- 8.2. **Church Clerk.** The Church Clerk shall keep the books and records and attend all meetings in order to take notes on the proceedings. This position shall be determined annually and remain a member in good standing.

9. Fiscal Year

- 9.1. **Fiscal Year.** The Fiscal Year of the Church shall be July to June.

10. Dissolution

- 10.1. **Disposition to the Converge Heartland.** If the Church dissolves or ceases to function as a Church, then, after the satisfaction of all obligations, debts, and liabilities of the Church, all of the assets of the Church, including its personal and real property, appurtenances, and effects, shall inure to the benefit of, and become the property of, the Converge Heartland if the Converge Heartland, at that time, exists and is willing and able to accept the assets of the Church under the conditions of § 501(c)(3) of the Code.
- 10.2. **Disposition to the Converge Worldwide.** If the Church dissolves or ceases to function as a Church, and if the Converge Heartland has dissolved or is unwilling or unable to accept the assets of the Church under the conditions of § 501(c)(3) of the Code, then, after the satisfaction of all obligations, debts, and liabilities of the Church, all of the assets of the Church, including its personal and real property, appurtenances, and effects, shall inure to the benefit of, and become the property of, the Converge Worldwide, if the Converge Worldwide, at that time, exists and is willing and able to accept the assets of the Church under the conditions of § 501(c)(3) of the Code.