

Heritage Reformed Baptist Church

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

*150 Lester Road, Fayetteville, GA 30215
Heritagerbc.org*

Sola Scriptura
Authority of The Scriptures Alone



Solus Christus
By Christ's Work Alone
We Are Saved



Sola Gratia
Salvation by Grace Alone



Sola Fide
Justification by Faith Alone



Soli Deo Gloria
To God Alone Be the Glory

These five Solas,
being the summary of the Protestant
Reformation,
are expressions of
the love of God
within the Holy Trinity,
Who being zealous for His own glory,
demonstrated the riches of His love
by sending His only begotten Son into the
world to redeem, reconcile, and adopt
into His family of love
sinners who trust in Christ alone.
There is no greater love
than this in time and eternity.

Table of Contents

Constitution and By-Laws

Preamble	-.....	Page 6
Article I	- Name.....	Page 6
Article II	- Purpose.....	Page 6
Article III	- Articles of Faith.....	Page 7
Article IV	- Government.....	Page 10
Article V	- Membership.....	Page 12
Article VI	- Responsibilities of Members.....	Page 14
Article VII	- Church Officers.....	Page 19
Article VIII	- Board of Elders.....	Page 22
Article IX	- Board of Deacons.....	Page 24
Article X	- Meetings.....	Page 26
Article XI	- Ordination.....	Page 27
Article XII	- Missions.....	Page 28
Article XIII	- Amendments.....	Page 30
Article XIV	- Statements of Position.....	Page 30
Article XV	- Church Discipline.....	Page 31

PREAMBLE

We, the Elders and Members of Heritage Community Church, Inc. of Fayette County, Georgia, do ordain and establish the following Articles to which we voluntarily and cheerfully submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I - Name

The name of this church shall be called Heritage Reformed Baptist Church of Fayette County, Georgia.

ARTICLE II - Purpose

The purpose of Heritage Reformed Baptist Church is found in *Colossians 1:28* of the Holy Scriptures: "...we preach Christ, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." God's Word further elaborates that our chief goal is to glorify Him, the God who has revealed Himself in the Bible and in His Son, Jesus Christ. We exist to worship and glorify Him, to build up His people, the church, unto Christian maturity and to evangelize sinners. To this end we are committed to proclaiming God's perfect Law and His glorious Gospel of Grace in Jesus Christ throughout the world, and to defending the "faith once and for all delivered unto the saints." (*Jude 3*).

ARTICLE III - Articles of Faith

Heritage Reformed Baptist Church (hereafter referred to as HRBC) is hereby constituted as a reformed and baptistic church as formulated by our forefathers of the faith when they composed the London Confession of Faith in 1689. While this confessional statement cannot be changed or amended, we recognize that it is not equal to the Holy Scriptures which are the Word of God. However, positional statements of HRBC may be used to aid in the understanding of the 1689 Confession.

We do hereby adopt, as the fullest expression of our faith, the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 (hereafter referred to as LBCF). *“This ancient document is a most excellent summary of things most surely believed among us. We accept the same, not as an authoritative rule or code of faith, whereby we are to be fettered, but as an assistance to us in controversy, a confirmation in faith, a standard for church officers and a means of instruction in righteousness. In this Confession the members of our church will have a body of divinity in small compass and by means of Scriptural proofs will be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in them. (1 Peter 3:15)”* {Charles Haddon Spurgeon}

As a more concise expression of our faith, we set forth the following Statement of Faith for Membership. This statement is consistent with the LBCF and is the minimum

confession of faith one must have to be a member of HRBC.

Statement of Faith for Membership

1. We believe that the Bible is the Word of God consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. It is verbally inspired of God and inerrant in the original manuscripts. The Bible is the supreme and final authority in all matters of the faith and life.
2. We believe that there is only One Living and True God who eternally exists in three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each person of the Godhead is the same in substance and equal in power and glory.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He is true God and true man, and as such He lived a perfect, sinless life.
4. We believe that man was created in the image of God and after the likeness of God; that man sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death but also the spiritual death which is separation from God. Thus all human beings are born with a sinful

nature which is at enmity with God; this sinful nature expresses itself in sinful thoughts, words, actions, and attitudes.

5. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for the sins of His people as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice. All who believe in Him are justified on the basis of His shed blood and imputed righteousness.
6. We believe in the bodily resurrection of our crucified Lord Jesus Christ and in His ascension into heaven where in the presence of the Father He now lives as our High Priest, Advocate and the only Mediator between God and man.
7. We believe in the personal and bodily return of our Lord in splendor and majesty, that He will bodily raise the just and the unjust. The just will experience everlasting blessedness in the presence of God and the unjust will experience everlasting punishment away from God in hell.
8. We believe that salvation is by grace through faith. All who are born again by the Holy Spirit repent of

their sins and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. As children of God they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

9. We believe that there are two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which are divinely commanded of all Christians.

10. We believe that the Church is the body of Christ. Its mission is to make the gospel of God's grace known to every person and to teach those who become disciples all things Jesus commanded, to the glory of God.

ARTICLE IV - Government

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord of His Church and its only Head. He governs His Church by the Word of God. His government is exercised in particular churches through the leadership of elders who have been set apart by the church to teach the Word of God and to lead the flock. (*1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:9; Hebrews 13:17; Acts 6:4*)

The government of HRBC shall be elder rule with authority invested in the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders, as under-shepherds to the Great Shepherd of the sheep, are to govern according to His Word, by His Spirit and to His glory and for the edification of His people.

Deacons are appointed to care for the administrative and practical affairs of the church (*1 Tim. 3:8-10; Acts 6:1-4*).

If HRBC, through the providence of God comes to have no elders, then the deacons shall assume leadership in order to seek out a confessionally like-minded church with an established plurality of elders. Once this relationship is established, the selected church shall assist HRBC in the selection of elder(s) for HRBC. This relationship between the churches should be maintained until such time as elder(s) are again appointed.

With reference to denominational alliances and entanglements, HRBC shall remain independent. However, when it is thought desirable to have fellowship, consultation and cooperation with other local churches of like faith and order, HRBC may join in an association of churches. Upon recommendation of the Board of Elders, such affiliations may be entered into by a 2/3 majority of the members present and voting. Withdrawal from associations may be effected by the same procedure. Delegates to such associations shall be chosen by the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE V – Membership

Section 1: Requirements of Membership in HRBC

The following are the requirements which a person must meet in order to become a member of HRBC:

1. Profession of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as their only hope for forgiveness of sins and salvation with God.
2. Credible testimony of such a profession given to the elder(s) of HRBC.
3. Adherence to each and every point of the Statement of Faith for [Church] Membership (see pages 8-10).
4. A completed reading of the LBCF (which is the confession of faith for all office holders and teachers of HRBC) informing the elders of any reservations or disagreements with respect to this confession of faith.
5. A completed reading of and a willingness to submit to the Constitution and By-Laws of HRBC
6. Follow the Ordinance of Baptism (or stated intention to undergo such at the first possible

opportunity). Note especially our Statement on Baptism at the end of this document.

The elders of HRBC encourage new or prospective members to complete the New Members/Inquirers class at the first available opportunity or work with the elders to cover the material through other means.

Section 2: Requirements for Transfer of Membership from another church.

Any person desiring to join HRBC shall contact a member of the Board of Elders. If the applicant has been a member of another evangelical church, a letter or phone call of inquiry into his or her standing with that church will be completed before final acceptance is made. A letter of recommendation from the prospective member's former church will be accepted in lieu of a phone call on the elders' part. When the Board of Elders is satisfied that an applicant is a Christian who meets the requirements for membership, the right hand of fellowship will be extended to the new member at a regular worship service.

Section 3: Transfer of Membership from HRBC to another church.

Letters of transfer shall be granted by the Board of Elders to members who apply for them, provided they are

in good standing, not subject to or under church discipline at the time of application. Such letters shall be given only to other evangelical churches.

Section 4: Termination of Membership

Members who are consistently absent without sufficient reason shall be contacted by the elders. If there is no change in their participation in the life of the church, the member shall be removed from the rolls of the church.

ARTICLE VI - Responsibilities of Members

Section 1: Using the Means of Growing in Grace

The worship of God is the Christian's primary responsibility in life. The Christian glorifies God through his active and faithful participation corporately in the life of the local church, and individually through his consistent and disciplined prayer and study of God's Word in order to know Him more. It is through the local church that the Christian works out his own salvation and assists the spiritual growth of the greater body of Christ (*Ephesians 4:11-16*). Membership in a local church has many benefits and privileges, but also many responsibilities. All public and private means of Christian growth such as regular attendance at the services of the church, daily intake of

God's Word, private and family prayers, participation in the Lord's Supper and honoring of the Lord's Day shall be urged upon our members.

Section 2: Government in the Home

The church expects its members to follow God's Word in ordering their homes. Godliness in the home is a high priority for each person. Men are expected to rule their homes with gentleness and firmness. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church (*Eph. 5:25*). Wives are to respect and be subject to their husbands (*Eph. 5:22-24, 33*). Parents should train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (*Eph. 6:4*) by holy example, consistent education in God's Word, and consistent discipline (including corporal punishment). Children must reverently obey their parents (*Eph. 6:1-2; Col. 3:20*). These primary responsibilities, prayerfully carried out, will honor the name of Jesus Christ in the community and strengthen the cause of Christ in generations to come.

Section 3: Responsibilities to One-Another

- (1) Members are to exercise their spiritual gifts for the benefit of the body of Christ. (*Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7, 12-27*)

(2) Members are to be active in all the “one anothers” of Scripture, such as loving one another, serving one another, submitting to one another, edifying one another, exhorting one another, admonishing one another, praying for one another, etc. (*1 Peter 1:22; James 5:16; Ephesians 5:21; Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 3:13; Hebrews 10:24-25; Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; etc.*)

(3) Members are to support the leadership of the church – honoring them, submitting to them, praying for them, and being cautious about bringing a public charge against them. (*1 Timothy 5:17-20 ; Hebrews 13:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Corinthians 9:9-11; Galatians 6:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:1*)

Section 4: Missions and Evangelism

It is the duty of every Christian and of every church to seek to extend the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Zeal for the lost is a natural consequence of a renewed heart (Psalm 51:10-14). “Preach the Gospel” is a frequently repeated command of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to witness by life and word. Personal efforts at witnessing for Christ are expected of every member. Beyond this we are

committed to common efforts for sending the Gospel to the ends of the earth (*Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8*)

Section 5: Principles of Giving

Proportionate giving is a positive principle in Scripture. Christians are to support the work of the Lord by tithes and offerings made to the local church. Hence we commit ourselves to systematic contribution to the support of HRBC with a proportion of our income (*Malachi 3:8-11; 1 Corinthians 16:2; and 2 Corinthians 8-9*).

Section 6: Christian Liberty

We shall require of each other in our daily walk, loyal obedience to all those moral precepts established in the Word of God (*Hebrews 10:24-25*). However, where God has not prohibited certain practices in His Word, the Christian has liberty to participate in them. The term “liberty” is used by some as a cloak for evil self-indulgence, which is sin (*Galatians 5:13; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Timothy 4:4-5; 1 Peter 2:15-16*). The following principles of God’s Word shall be our guide in the exercise of our Christian liberty:

(1) *Fear of God*

As a child of God and a citizen of His kingdom, all actions must be motivated by a holy and reverent fear of the holiness of God, a love for Him in His Gospel of grace, and a desire to bring Him glory in the world. As God’s

people, we are being conformed to the image of His Son, whose delight is in the fear of the Lord. (*Psalm 25:14; Isaiah 11:2-3; Psalm 111:10*)

(2) *Love of the Brethren*

Though no man may dictate to the Christian's conscience, the welfare of fellow Christians must always deeply affect his decisions. In a spirit of serving others, the Christian must do that which he judges will edify others and prevent their stumbling (*Galatians 5:13; 1 Corinthians 10:23; 1 Corinthians 8:9*).

(3) *Compassion for Sinners*

Use of liberty must always be regulated by its effect upon sinners, and that behavior chosen which is likely to win some (*1 Corinthians 9:19-22*).

(4) *Watchfulness over the Heart*

Though free in conscience to use all of God's creation, carefulness is required because of remaining sinful desires. Where the Christian judges himself weak because of indwelling sinful desires, he must abstain in order to persevere in godliness (*1 Corinthians 9:23-27; Romans 13:14*).

ARTICLE VII - Church Officers

Section 1: Church Officers

The officers of HRBC shall consist of elders and deacons. Except for pastor(s), all officers shall have been a member of the church for a period of at least one year before being placed in nomination. The Board of Elders shall submit nominations for all officers to the congregation. The Board of Elders must first approach the potential candidate for office and give him sufficient time to make a prayerful and thoughtful decision. Upon gaining his assent for the responsibility, the Board of Elders shall then present his nomination to the congregation for their evaluation at least three weeks prior to the formal vote of confirmation or denial. This interlude gives the congregation adequate time for giving feedback to the Board of Elders and the candidate. At the appointed time of the congregational meeting, the candidate will be confirmed by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. Confirmation or denial of officers of the church shall be by secret ballot. Only such men qualify who can and will conscientiously affirm and uphold the LBCF, and the Constitution and By-Laws of HRBC. Any exceptions to the LBCF on the part of the prospective office-holder must be limited to Chapter 29 and must be brought before the Board of Elders for thorough examination. Upon the

unanimous approval of the Board of Elders, the exception may be allowed.

The corporate officers of HRBC shall be church officers.

Section 2: Elders

Elders shall be men who meet the qualifications of God's Word as found in *1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1*, who wholeheartedly subscribe to the LBCF, and are able to do the work of the ministry as under-shepherds of Christ. Within the Board of Elders, parity (equality of rank) and mutual respect of each elder's authority will be practiced so that the Board of Elders speaks with unity to the congregation (*1 Peter 5:1-3; Acts 20:28*). There should be mutual subjection among them and they should function together in harmony. Within the plurality of the Board of Elders, the men possess gifts that differ (*Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4*). These gifts will be considered by the Board of Elders in assigning responsibilities.

The pastor or pastors are the ordained elders of HRBC who, in response to God's call, have devoted their lives to the full-time ministry of the Word and prayer in the service of the church of Christ. They shall receive an appropriate monetary remuneration by the congregation as is fitting for those who live by the gospel (*1 Cor. 9:1-12; 1 Tim. 5:17*; see also LBCF chapter 26, paragraph 10). It is the

responsibility of the pastor(s) to give leadership to the Board and to fill the pulpit and feed the flock from God's Word.

An elder may step down from his office due to providential circumstances or be removed due to the discipline of the church.

Elders may be added, according to the confirmation procedure in Section 1, as the Board of Elders sees fit in order to carry on the ministry to HRBC. However, every effort shall be made to maintain a minimum of three men serving on the Board of Elders as long as there are available men both qualified and willing to serve.

Section 3: Deacons

HRBC shall confirm deacons from nominations presented to it by the Board of Elders. Deacons should be men who meet the qualifications given in God's Word in *1 Timothy 3:8-13*, who subscribe wholeheartedly to the LBCF and have a heart to do the work of this ministry. They shall be installed as deacons after their confirmation, as soon as convenient. Additions to the Board of Deacons can be made as the need arises as determined by the Board of Deacons upon approval by the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders shall appoint one of the deacons as Chairman of the Board of Deacons whose responsibility it will be to give leadership to the deacons. As in the case of

the elders, every effort shall be made to maintain a minimum of three deacons as long as there are available men both qualified and willing to serve.

A deacon may step down from his office due to providential circumstances or be removed due to the discipline of the church.

ARTICLE VIII - Board of Elders

Section 1: Board of Elders

The Board of Elders shall consist of all the duly confirmed elders of HRBC.

Section 2: Responsibility of the Board of Elders

The Board of Elders shall have the general oversight of all HRBC affairs. The conduct of all church business and the work of all church organizations shall be subject to its supervision and government.

Section 3: Membership and Discipline

The Board of Elders shall accept applicants for church membership and apply discipline to offending members. The Elders shall watch over the souls of the flock as “those who must give an account” (*Hebrews 13:17*). They must

be persistent in prayer for, visitation of, and instruction of the membership and its families.

Section 4: Church Officials and Teachers

The Board of Elders shall appoint the Superintendent of the Sunday School and leaders of all church ministries. These in turn shall be responsible to present to the Board of Elders for its approval, all proposed teachers and leaders.

Section 5: Pulpit Supply

It shall be the duty of the Board of Elders to supply the pulpit with men whose ministry to HRBC shall be consistent with the LBCF.

Section 6: Grievances or Suggestions

The Board of Elders shall receive, consider and deal with any grievance, suggestion or recommendation by any member or group within HRBC.

ARTICLE IX - Board of Deacons

Section 1: Board of Deacons

The Board of Deacons shall consist of all duly confirmed deacons of HRBC.

Section 2: Ministry of Mercy

The ministry of mercy in our church and community is a special responsibility of the deacons. They shall minister the Word of God, administer the church's benevolence funds, and give counsel to those in need of help. The Board of Deacons shall see that the sick, the sorrowing, the aged, the impaired, widows, and orphans receive spiritual and physical comfort. They shall be on the lookout for opportunities to minister and serve, especially to those who are of the body of Christ.

Section 3: Business Affairs

The Board of Deacons shall have general executive powers to administer the business affairs of HRBC. It shall be the deacons' responsibility to prepare the church budget and submit it to the Board of Elders each year. When the congregation has approved the budget, it will be the deacons' responsibility to administer it. The duty of caring for and maintaining the church's properties shall belong to this Board.

Section 4: Representation at Meetings

The Board of Deacons shall inform the Board of Elders of all their meetings so a representative from the elders may be present, if so desired by the elders.

Section 5: Officers of the Board of Deacons

The two officers of the Board of Deacons are the Chairman, who is appointed from the Board of Deacons by the Board of Elders; and the Clerk who is elected from the deacon board. The Clerk shall be responsible for the minutes at all regular business meetings of the congregation.

Section 6: The Treasurer

The HRBC Treasurer shall be appointed by the deacons with approval by the elders. He shall serve under the authority of the deacon board. It shall be the duty of the HRBC Treasurer to receive, bank and disburse all church funds as authorized by the Board of Deacons; make a report to the congregation at the annual business meeting and additional reports as requested by the Board of Elders; and render the account of the church as called for by the Board of Deacons. He shall be willing to submit his books for auditing each year, and shall turn over to the Board of Deacons, as directed by them or to his successor when

elected, all monies, documents (electronic or paper), and papers belonging to the church.

ARTICLE X – Meetings

Section 1: Annual Business Meeting

The fiscal year of HRBC shall end on the thirty-first day of December each year. The annual business meeting of the church shall be some time during the month of January and shall be announced to the congregation in the manner prescribed for congregational meetings – being announced in the church bulletin and/or from the pulpit during worship services for three weeks prior to the meeting.

Section 2: State of the Church Meetings

At the discretion of the Board of Elders, *State of the Church* meetings may be held consistent with the above notification process in Section 1.

Section 3: Special Meetings

Special meetings of the congregation may be called at any time by the Board of Elders with reasonable notification. In the event that there is not a plurality of elders, the Board of Deacons may call a special meeting of the church. In all congregational meetings, an elder or an appointed substitute approved by the Board of Elders shall lead such meetings.

Section 4: Quorum

A quorum for the transaction of business in all congregational meetings shall consist of twenty percent of the membership who are eligible to vote. (Members eligible to vote are those who are in good standing in the church and have attained an age of 18).

ARTICLE XI - Ordination to the Gospel Ministry

HRBC shall have the authority to ordain duly qualified men to proclaim the Gospel of the Grace of God.

When there is a prospective candidate for ordination to the ministry, the Board of Elders shall guide that person in his studies and preparation. It shall then call a council of elders and brethren to examine the qualifications of the candidate. It shall look into the soundness of his conversion, the godliness of his walk, the degree of his gifts, the extent of his training, and the blessing of God the Holy Spirit upon his labors for Christ.

If the council heartily recommends that the candidate be ordained, the Board of Elders will give the recommended commissioning at a congregational meeting.

The Board of Elders shall have the power, as under-shepherds of Christ, to discipline such a man as ordained by this church, even to the point of revoking this church's ordination.

ARTICLE XII – Missions

Section 1: Goals of Missions

It is the duty of every Christian and of every church of Christ to seek to extend the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Missionary efforts are the natural consequences of regeneration (*Ps. 51:10-14*). It is the duty of every child of God to witness by life and word. Personal efforts at witnessing for Christ are expected of every member. Beyond this, HRBC is committed to common efforts for sending the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Section 2: Requirements of Missionary Support

1. Missionaries should be immersed in the local church. They must be experienced in the life of the church, service to the body, recognizing and using their gifts for the body, submitting to the authority of the church's elders, exercising themselves regularly in evangelism, and cultivating a heart for missions.
2. Missionaries are to be in full subscription to the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689. Any deviations or exceptions to the 1689 must be brought before the Board of Elders for thorough examination. Upon the unanimous approval of the

Board of Elders, the deviation or exception may be allowed.

3. Missionaries who are requesting support for gospel labors in church planting will be given priority consideration by the Board of Elders. Other kinds of missionary labor, such as training of pastors, book translation and distribution, or other helping ministries may also be considered.
4. Missionary support will be considered by the Board of elders for special projects in all associational alliances of HRBC.
5. Missionaries receiving support from HRBC are required to give regular updates to the Board of Elders regarding their ministry work. They must also notify the Board of Elders concerning any changes in their doctrine or practice which are inconsistent with these requirements or the Confession of Faith.

ARTICLE XIII – Amendments

If it does not infringe upon the doctrinal position of HRBC, the Constitution may be changed or amended at a duly announced meeting of the congregation providing the proposed alteration has been announced in the bulletin and/or announced from the pulpit for a period of four consecutive Sundays preceding the said meeting. Amendments must be passed by a two-thirds majority of the members eligible to vote.

ARTICLE XIV – Statements of Position

From time to time, the Board of Elders may find it necessary to issue statements of position for HRBC in relation to issues affecting the body of Christ locally or universally. Such positional statements will be issued after a thorough and prayerful study of the Scriptures and a unanimous vote of the Board of Elders. These statements of position are intended to guide the church as the best understanding the elders of the church possess as to the mind of Christ on the issue in question. The elders will be open to further illumination by the Holy Spirit of the Word of God on these issues.

ARTICLE XV – Church Discipline

Church Discipline is both formative and corrective. Formative discipline is primarily positive through the teaching of God’s Word, the example of Christian living, and the mutual ministry of the several members of the body of Christ. It has as its objective the instruction of disciples, the transformation of their lives, and their edification in love. (*Ephesians 4:11-13; Romans 12:16; 1 Corinthians 12:4-27; Acts 5:29*)

Corrective discipline is applied when any member is consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of any conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, so opposing the welfare of the church. He or she may then be subject to the admonition of the elders and/or the discipline of the gathered church according to the principles of Scripture. (*Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1-5; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; etc.*)

The reasons for church discipline are as follows:

1. To glorify God by obedience to the commands of Scripture. (*Hebrews 12:6; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Matthew 18:17-18; Titus 3:10; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 5:20; 2 Corinthians 2:6*)

2. To promote and guard the honor of Christ and his gospel in the watching world. (*1 Peter 1:14-16; 2:11-18; 3:8-16; 4:1-4; 4:13-19*)

3. To maintain the purity of the church and her worship. (*1 Corinthians 5:6-8; 11:27*)

4. To seek the recovery and reconciliation of the offending brother or sister to Christ and His church. Thus, church discipline is an act of love and the motivation is love. (*Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 12:10-13; James 5:20; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15*)

5. To promote the sanctification and growth in grace of those who seek to retrieve sinning brothers or sisters. (*Matthew 7:1-5; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Galatians 6:1-2*)

6. To protect Christ's church from "wolves in sheep's clothing" and to warn her members of the importance of pursuing holiness in the fear of the Lord. (*1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 Timothy 5:20; Joshua 7; Revelation 2:14-25*)

7. To prevent giving cause for God to set himself against a local church. (Revelation 2:14-25)

8. To provide instruction in righteousness for the good of the body and as an example to them. (*Prov. 13:20; Rom. 15:14; 1 Cor. 5:11; 15:33; Col. 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:14; 1 Tim. 5:20; Titus 1:11; Heb. 10:24-25*)

Statement On Baptism

Heritage Church is constituted as a Reformed and baptistic church. It does, however, recognize that most Christians, historically, have held to and practiced infant (paedo) baptism. For this reason, the following statement is given explaining Heritage Church's attitude toward Christians practicing infant baptism and wishing to fellowship and/or establish membership with our church.

Heritage Church unequivocally avows that the Scriptures teach baptism is to be administered only to "those who actually profess repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (London Confession of Faith of 1689, Chapter 29, Section 2). Therefore, the baptism of believers is the only form of baptism which will be practiced in this church.

However, we recognize that a majority of sincere Christian believers have practiced infant baptism through the history of the Christian Church. Moreover, differences concerning the ordinance of baptism have been a cause of separating multitudes of Christians over the centuries and have been a blemish on the name of Christ and His Church.

Therefore, in order to promote fellowship and serve as a witness before the watching world and in order to glorify Jesus Christ, Heritage Church affirms that genuine Christians who understand and sincerely hold to a Reformed, covenantal paedo-baptist position on baptism are to be held in high esteem and not viewed as "weaker brethren" because of their conviction concerning baptism.

For those maintaining a Reformed and covenantal position of infant baptism and wishing to officially unite in membership with Heritage Church, an exception is made to the "Requirements for Membership in Heritage Church", Item 8, providing the following steps are taken:

1. Give satisfactory explanation of your personal understanding and convictions regarding infant baptism to the Board of Elders.
2. Read a brief selection of material explaining Heritage Church's views of believer's baptism.
3. Agree not to teach formally or informally your personal position on infant baptism while a member of this church.

After having read the information given you by the Board of Elders, and provided that you are able to give a clear account of why you still hold to infant baptism, you will be welcomed into full fellowship and membership of this church, with all the rights and privileges extended to any other member.

(The intent of the above statement is to show a gracious spirit toward genuine Christians holding a paedo-baptist view. We are in no manner apologetic for affirming a believer Baptist view nor implying that the subject of baptism is an arbitrary matter of conscience.)