

HLBC Church Covenant
Date Presented To Church Council: 1-20-2015

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive Jesus Christ as the Lord, Savior, and supreme Treasure of our lives, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit,

to walk together in Christian love,

to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and peace;

to promote its spirituality and fruitfulness;

to support its worship, ordinances, ministries and discipline;

to welcome instruction from the Scriptures by the Pastors of the church;

to align ourselves with the 2000 edition of the Baptist Faith and Message which is in complete accordance with the Holy Scriptures, God's Word, as we seek to grow toward biblical unity in Spirit and Truth;

to prayerfully, regularly and cheerfully contribute financially to the support of the ministry, and expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel beginning in our neighborhood and through all nations.

We also engage:

to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith;

to seek the salvation of our family and acquaintances;

[Chiefly that we walk circumspectly, (carefully and guardedly), in the world, that we may win their souls; remembering that God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind; that we are the light of the world and the salt of the earth, and that a city set on a hill cannot be hid. (Matthew chapter 5).

Eph. 5:15-17 reminds us that the days are short and the Lord's return is near. Therefore, each believer must guard how he lives and works in the world so as not to bring shame or reproach on Christ and His church. Such righteous living will lead one to opportunities to share the gospel with the lost in order to "win their souls." While righteous living does not,

in itself, guarantee fruitful soul-winning, it may certainly make others more receptive to the Gospel by removing personal and human hindrances. Righteous living, however, is no substitute for sharing the gospel verbally, openly and clearly, even if it leads to ridicule or persecution by the world.

To this end, the believer must remember that fear is not of the Lord (2 Tim. 1:7), who gives us the power of His Spirit to speak boldly (Acts 4:31), the ability to love the unlovable and to demonstrate the nature of divine love (2 Cor. 5:14-15), and the words to say when called upon to testify for Him (Mark 13:11; cf. Matt. 10:19-20).

If you are faithful to testify for Christ, He will make you fruitful in the winning of souls. But even if not, you have served as salt and light as our Savior instructed (Matt. 5:11-16), and will not be ashamed in the Day of Judgment.]

to live a Godly life before the world;

to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment,

to avoid all tattling, gossiping backbiting and excessive anger;

to seek God's help in abstaining from all drugs, intoxicating drink, and practices that bring unwarranted harm to the body of Christ or jeopardize our own or another's faith.

We further engage:

to watch over one another in brotherly love;

to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress;

to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech;

to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the command of our Savior to secure it without delay. (Matthew 18:15-17)

[The reference to Matthew 18 reminds us that we are each subject to one another (1 Pet. 5:5, "...all of you be submissive to one another and clothed with humility..") and to the church, who ultimately disciplines those who refuse to walk according to the Scriptures by removing them from the fellowship (Titus 3:10), handing them over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, in the hopes that they will learn repentance and be saved in the last day (1 Cor. 5:5; cf. 1 Tim 1:20).

Such warning and discipline should be done only after much prayer and in humility, remembering our own propensity for sin (Gal. 6:1), and we must possess a willingness to forgive and to restore to fellowship, those who repent and seek mercy (2 Cor. 2:5-11) at any stage of the discipline process. If they refuse to repent, the painful task must be carried out

and the church must be faithful to her Lord by removing the offending member from our church membership rolls, (1 Cor. 5:2).

These warnings remind us that we have been born again into Christ's family and are to reflect our resurrection life (Col. 3:1-14) by walking in that new life after the pattern of Christ, Whose dying and rising again is reflected in our baptism (Rom. 6:1-7).)

We, moreover, engage that when we remove from this place, we will, if possible, unite with a likeminded church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant.

We acknowledge that implicit within this covenant is the consent to be governed by the HLBC Constitution & By-Laws that have been officially adopted by the church and that also address peacemaking and reconciliation, accountability and church discipline, counseling and confidentiality, and the protection of our children.

HLBC resolution regarding sexuality:

We recognize that God's gift of sexuality is like a deep and swiftly moving river, beautiful, mysterious, and powerful. The boundaries of Scripture must be built into our lives in order for this immense power to be a source of blessing rather than destruction.

Therefore, we call upon pastors, church members, and Christian families to forsake silence about sexuality and to declare God's truth about the beauty and potential of sexuality and to warn and counsel with compassion when it is misused.

In the local church, we encourage ministries to appropriately address these needs:

- * to teach children, teens, and adults the biblical basis for the Christian standard of morality.
- * to prepare people for marriage and enrich marriages.
- * to affirm the gift of singleness and welcome singles into the full life of the congregation.
- * to oppose the proliferation of pornography and prostitution.
- * to care for persons involved in sexual sins such as adultery, homosexual behavior and promiscuity, compassionately recognizing the potential of these sins to take the form of addiction.
- * to teach the dangers and harm of spousal abuse, sexual abuse and sexual harassment, seeking to prevent these sins in Christian homes and lives.
- * to compassionately care for the victims of sexual sins of all kinds.

Be it also known that because of the strong societal acceptance of same sex marriages in today's culture, we resolve to hold high the biblical principle regarding sexuality in refusing to allow same sex marriages to be performed in Harbour Lake Baptist Church.