

Heart of Harvest

Welcome to Harvest Community Church of Kittanning and Petrolia Valley. We are a church that seeks to glorify God by growing the health and size of His church everywhere.

At Harvest, we look forward to worshipping our Lord, Jesus, regularly, and we invite you to join us at any time. We seek to create a hospitable atmosphere at Harvest which puts God's Word into our lives daily. We strive to glorify the Lord in each and every thing that we do. It is our goal to be deliberate in our efforts to help people grow in their maturity and to apply His Word to everyday situations. This process of sanctification is an ongoing process in each and every person, and it will only be completed at the time of our presence with the Lord.

The staff at Harvest Community Church is excited to assist you in this process. They will be glad to point you to various resources and classroom opportunities that may help you. However, you must keep in mind that your effort is the key to any growth and development.

We will divide this booklet into several sections and each section will help you identify the key ingredients at Harvest Community Church. From here on in, we will only provide you with the bird's-eye view of our basic beliefs, and we must point out that we have many in-depth studies to develop the finer details of each of these areas. However, this will give you an appropriate overview of our position on the most important issues.

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The Truths that Guide Us

As we try to define our practice of faith at Harvest, we see three primary sections.

- I. ABSOLUTES.** These are the unchanging foundations and fundamentals of Christian faith, and to deny these absolute truths, is to deny the essence of Christianity. You will find that they are non-negotiable terms of Christian faith and theology. These Absolutes we have codified in our Constitution and we refer to them as our *Statement of Faith*.
- II. CONVICTIONS.** These are based on our interpretation of the Bible in areas other than the absolutes. We would take the stand that Bible-believing Christians can disagree on these issues without causing a question of salvation or commitment to the Absolutes.
- III. TRADITIONS and PREFERENCES.** You will find that a lot of what has been instilled in all of us over time will fit into this category. Because we were raised with certain traditions, we tend to make them synonymous with the truth. They may be carried out simply because we have grown accustomed to them. While these issues may have value with the individual, we are not bound by them. You may initially find that many things that would be a cause for disagreement will actually fit into this category. We use the scripture as the guide to consider each of these sections.

At Harvest, each believer is expected to study the scriptures and form an understanding of matters of Christian faith. We will, at times, use traditions and preferences within the activities at Harvest Community Church. These traditions and preferences should only find value in each of our lives to the degree that they promote or advance the gospel and the well-being of God's church. At Harvest, we are willing to set aside traditions and preferences at any time if they cease to edify the church.

Here at harvest, we are determined to keep the main thing, the main thing. We must put the preaching and teaching about Christ, his crucifixion, and resurrection in front of all other things. We seek to live in unity in the midst of diversity. Our Absolutes are absolute, our Convictions are shared and considered in love, and our Traditions and Preferences are viewed with grace, openness and acceptance.

ABSOLUTES

Statement of Faith

The Word of God

We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original writings, the infallible and perfect Word of God, complete as the revelation of God's will for salvation, and the supreme and final authority in all matters to which they speak. (Duet 4:2; Psalm 119:160; Matt. 5:18; John 10:35; 1 Cor. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; Rev 22:18-22)

The Trinity

We believe in one God, Creator and Sustainer of all things, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that these are equal in every divine perfection and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption. (Gen. 1:26; Deut 6:4; Isa 48:16; Matt 28:19; John 1:1,2; Acts 5:3,4; 2 Cor 13:14)

God the Father

We believe in God, the Father, an infinite personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, justice, righteousness, and love. He is transcendent, and not of the same essence as His creation. We believe 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. (Matt 6:26; John 4:24; John 17:1-3; 1 Tim 6:15-16; James 1:17)

Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God's eternal Son, and has precisely the same nature and attributes as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. We believe further that He is not only true God, but true man, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. We also believe in His sinless life, His substitutionary atonement, His death, burial, and bodily resurrection, His ascension into heaven, and His priestly intercession and mediation on behalf of His people. He is seated at the right hand of God and will return soon to judge the living and the dead and establish His kingdom, a kingdom that will endure forever. (Matt. 1:18-25; Matt 26:38; John 1:14; John 8:40; John 8:42; John 11:33; Heb 2:14, Heb 2:15; 1 Tim 2:5)

Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, His personality, and His work in regeneration, sanctification, and preservation of the Saints. He reveals the Son and convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. His ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and implement Christ's work of redeeming the lost and empowering the believer for godly living and service. (Psalm 139:7; Isa 40:13,14; John 3:5-7; John 14:16,17; John 16:8; Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 2:10-11; 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 1:13; Titus 3:5)

Man

We believe God created man, the first male and female, in His image and that He gave them authority over all the earth. Adam and Eve were joined in marriage from the start to reflect the future union of Christ and the Church. Man and woman, joined in marriage, reflect the image of God in a unique manner. Marriage between man and man or woman and woman is not possible and therefore an abomination to God. But man sinned and consequently experienced not only physical death, but also spiritual death (which is separation from God). The consequences of this sin effect the entire human race. All human beings are born with a sinful nature resulting in acts of sin in word, thought, and deed. And while they are able to do some good works in the eyes of other humans, yet as to their spiritual standing before God, all are lost apart from the atoning work of Christ. Although man is a sinner, being created in the image of God means he is more valued than all other life forms on earth. (Gen 1:26-27; Gen 2:17; Gen 3:6; Gen 9; Mark 7:20-23; John 2:24-25; Romans 5:12-19; Eph 2:1-3; Eph 4:18)

Satan

We believe in the existence of Satan, a created being, who accuses the brethren and opposes God. He is still working in the world to destroy the souls of men; and he, all his angels, and all humans who do not receive Christ as their Savior, will eternally perish in the lake of fire. (Matt25:41; Rev 12:9; Rev 19:20; Rev 20:10, 14, 15)

Resurrection

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all mankind. Believers are resurrected to enjoy eternal life with God. The wicked are resurrected for eternal judgement in the lake of fire. (Dan 12:2; Matt 25:46; John 5:28,29; 1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thes 4:16; Rev 20:4-6; Rev 20:12-15; Rev 21:1-8)

Salvation

We believe in salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ; "and there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." We further believe that this salvation is based upon the sovereign grace of God, was purchased by Christ's shed blood on the cross, and is received by man through faith, apart from any human merit, work or ritual. We further believe that salvation results in repentance from sin and obedience to Christ's commands to love God and love your neighbor. (John 1:12; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:28; Eph 2:8-9; Titus 2:11; Titus 3:5; 1 John 1:17)

The Church

We believe that the Church in its invisible form is universal, the true body of Christ. The Holy Church is the one institution specifically ordained of God to function in the furthering of the Kingdom until Christ comes again. It consists of all those regenerated by the Spirit of God, in spiritual union and communion both with Christ, the head of the Body, and with fellow-believers. Each member of the Church is gifted by God to build up the collective body and to be an ambassador of Christ. The Church is Christ's Bride and will be presented by Him holy and spotless before

His Father in Heaven. The Church will not be conquered by even hell itself. We believe the ordinances of the local church are believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper. (Matt 16:18; Matt 28:19; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:15-16; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Cor 12:13; 1 Cor 15:51-53; Col 1:18; 1 Thes 4:13-17; Titus 2:13)

Christian Life

God commands the believer to be Spirit-filled; the Holy Spirit leads the believer in prayer, understanding of Scriptures, worship, fellowship, service, and enables the believer to have victory over temptation and sin. We believe that all true believers are kept by God, have the indwelling and sealing of the Holy Spirit, and have the intercession of Christ. We do not believe perfection is attainable in this life; however all believers are, by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, to make progressive steps of growth toward spiritual maturity and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. (Isa 45:22; Isa 49:6; Matt 28:18-20; John 10:28-30; John 14:16-17; John 17:18-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 1:12-15; Rom 5:12-19; Rom 6:1-11; Rom 8:11-13; Rom 8:38-39; Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:1-31; 2 Cor 5:18-20; Gal 6:1-2; Eph 2:1-3; Eph 2:10; Eph 4:11-16; Eph 4:30; Phil 2:12-13; Phil 3:12-16; Col 1:28; 1 Tim 3:1-12; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 1:3; 1 John 2:1)

CONVICTIONS

We believe in the Church of Jesus Christ. The Church of Jesus Christ is NOT a building but a body of believers. The church is created by God. It is the people of God. Jesus Christ is its Lord and Head; the Holy Spirit is its life and power. It is divine and human, heavenly and earthly, and ideal and imperfect. It exists to fulfill the purposes of God in Christ. Christ loved the church and gave himself for it that it should be holy and without blemish. He promised to build the church and that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by divinely called men and that the ordinances are given according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the Church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers and the redemption of the world.

Worship in Song

We are committed to Worship that is genuine, balanced, and honoring to the Lord. Our worship services are a mix of both contemporary and traditional music, with varying styles. We desire your worship experience at Harvest to be sincere, stimulating and Spirit filled. We don't believe that one style of music is superior to another. Our goal is to use music that is enjoyable and well performed for the purpose of making it easy for the congregation to sing along and worship our God.

We encourage freedom in worship. Some like to raise their hands and be expressive. We desire to foster an environment where people feel safe focusing on God and enjoying Him in song while still respecting fellow worshippers. Feel free to worship loudly, quietly, standing, sitting, or even kneeling.

Missions

At the heart of the Gospel is the mandate to "Go and make disciples of all nations." God is a missionary God. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is a record of God's efforts to rescue mankind and restore him to relationship with God.

We believe that God has called Harvest Community Church to raise up "World Christians" with a heart to take the whole Gospel to the whole world. We believe the fields are already white for harvest but the laborers are few.

We believe that from Pennsylvania, there is no place in the world we cannot reach by the power of Christ. With this in mind we are committed strongly to the following activities:

- a) Giving generously to missions throughout the world
- b) Investing in local evangelism
- c) Partnering with people throughout the world to plant healthy churches
- d) Prioritizing our efforts to reach the least reached peoples of the world with the Gospel
- e) Raising and training men and women to go into service bringing the Gospel to the world

- f) Regularly organizing short term mission trips that encourage our mission's partners and exposing our people to a vision of the world

Local Outreach and Evangelis

We are committed to reaching our communities with the love of Jesus. The best way to tell others about Christ is to do what Christ would do, be a servant to them and show love. At times we do organized outreaches, creative acts of service, and/or advertising – all designed to let people know we are here so that they can come and join us and hear the Gospel. We encourage people to invite their friends and family to church in order to hear the Gospel. We design almost all of our events and services with unbelievers in mind. We want to be a church that is filled with people who invite their lost friends and loved ones to special occasions where they will have a good time and hear the Gospel. We also want to be a church where our Sunday services, though directed to God and focused on the believer, are very hospitable and understandable to the guest who comes in.

Biblical Stewardship

All things belong to God. We believe that human beings will either worship the Giver of all things or we will make idols of His gifts. The first human beings were taught by God to give of the first portion of the gifts He gave them from the earth. This giving of the first fruits quickly became the giving of the tithe by the time of Abraham, before the Law of Moses. We believe that God's people should joyfully give back the first 10% of their income to God as worship. We believe that this worship should be done in their local church, where God is feeding and caring for them.

Although this gift is an act of worship to God for the giver, it becomes the supply for the financial needs of the local church. We also believe that after the tithe, the people of Harvest should generously support the work of God according to how He has blessed them. We also believe that all of us have a responsibility to seek to live balanced lives so that we have something extra to give those in need.

As a Church, we are committed to giving the first fruits of all that is given in worship to the mission effort of planting churches throughout the world. For this reason, a set percentage of all money received by Harvest is first given to missions and to local outreach. This percentage varies according to our financial capabilities, but it has historically always been substantially more than 10%. It is our hope that this portion of our giving will always increase.

Beyond that, we believe that the Lord's money should be spent according to His priorities. This can be difficult to discern and good Christians can certainly disagree. We seek to staff our church to minister well and also to be frugal, keep minimal savings, and get the most use possible out of all assets owned by the church. In all things, it is our desire to use earthly wealth to increase the population of heaven.

Discipleship Education

Christians are to grow in the knowledge of the Word of God throughout life. This

learning is not so that the Christian can become proud of his knowledge, but so that he can know and enjoy God better, and thereby be more like Jesus. If we are more like Jesus, we are truly His disciples.

In addition to your Sunday morning experience, Harvest schedules various learning opportunities through small groups, Bible studies, special series and training events. These are designed to help you grow deeper in your walk with the Lord.

Prayer

God desires us to grow in reliance on Him. One of the main ways we do this is through prayer. In prayer, we can focus on God, bring our worries to Him, bring our requests to Him, adore Him, confess to Him, and consider how wonderful He is in all ways. We value prayer as a component of every endeavor and every ministry.

Eternal Security

This subject has divided many believers throughout many centuries. In seeking to unite believers rather than divide, Harvest Community Church allows for the disagreements of individual Christians on this issue. This does not mean that we do not encourage a strong conviction in this area. We encourage all Christians to seek to determine how God saves and how the salvation continues throughout our earthly lives. We encourage all believers to hold to the Bible's teaching on this area. The reason we allow for disagreement is because we understand that many in our area have come from churches that take very different stands on the issue. We desire to allow for strong conviction on this very important matter, but without disunity. Therefore, the issue of a person's stance on eternal security will not become a litmus test for membership.

Speaking in Tongues

Speaking in tongues is one of the most widely debated topics within the Christian community today. It is an issue that we cannot avoid discussing since the Bible mentions tongues; however, it is NOT an issue that we choose to debate. Speaking in tongues is speaking in a language that is different from one's native language. Tongues is seen being used in two different ways in Scripture: speaking the wonders of God to man and speaking to God.

The Gift of Tongues was used in Scripture to fulfill God's purposes, and it is still used today. Since it is listed in I Corinthians 12 as one of the gifts of the Spirit, we have no reason to believe that this one gift has ceased to exist. The position of Harvest is that the gift of speaking in tongues should be of private use and not of public use within our worship services. In I Corinthians 14, Paul tells us that tongues are for private or personal edification, and it is of no profit in edifying the body if no one understands what is being said. Paul places a greater emphasis on (1) Understanding and (2) Prophecy than the unknown tongue.

In addition, Paul states in verse 26 to let all things be done for edification when coming together in worship. The only way tongues can be edifying to the body in a worship service is if there is an interpretation. Paul also states that if the church is speaking in

tongues those who don't understand will think you are mad or strange. Since Harvest Community Church exists to evangelize the lost, it is our position that those who have the gift of tongues use that gift to speak between themselves and God, thereby not denying the speaking of tongues while also not causing distraction to the unbelievers.

Paul does give restrictions for speaking in tongues during a worship service. It should be noted, however, that the verse states "if anyone speaks in tongues", which would seem to imply that it is not a necessary part of a worship service. In fact, he states when you come together everything should be done for the strengthening of the church. To enter into this practice during a worship service can and has caused a great deal of confusion (which God is not the author of). When tongues lead to confusion it does not strengthen the church. This is the primary reason Harvest does not promote speaking in tongues in its worship services.

Additionally, we realize that many people come from churches that do not believe that speaking in tongues is a manifestation of the church in our present day. Although Harvest teaches otherwise, we allow freedom to believe otherwise. A person's position on tongues and the charismatic gifts will not be used as a litmus test for membership.

When it comes to living with others with differences on matters like tongues the true issue is Christian love. Can we hold to different convictions, and hold them strongly, and still love and commit to one another? We believe that is what God requires of us. We delight in the challenge that God has given us at Harvest to love within a diversity of convictions.

Healing

Healing was an important ministry of our Lord. Jesus healed as a means of demonstrating the power of God and as a witness to draw the hearts of men to Him. Scripture clearly records God's power to heal sin, the brokenhearted, sickness, disease and our land. Since the Bible testifies that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, we have no reason to believe that God has retired or ceased from performing miracles and healings. We believe that God is able to heal today.

God often uses a person as a vehicle to administrate His gift of healing, but healing is the result of the supernatural intervention of the power of God in our lives. It is through His name that we are healed. Sometimes the vehicle that God chooses to use is medicine and the medical field. We recognize that God uses physicians to treat while the Great Physician heals.

The Bible lays out five basic guidelines for those who seek healing: (1) CONFESS our sins that we may be healed, (2) PRAY, (3) exercise our FAITH, (4) call on the Spiritual leaders of the Church, (5) lay hands on the individual seeking healing and ANOINT with oil as a symbol of God's grace at work in the life of that individual.

There are many factors and mysteries in regard to why one is healed and one is not. While we cannot always answer every question, we can know four things for certain. (1)

It is appointed unto man once, to die, and suffering is a part of life here on earth. (2) We will not experience total and complete healing until our bodies are glorified. (3) When the Grace to be healed is not given, the Grace to endure is promised. (4) We can continue to trust God knowing that He works all things for His good.

Modes of Baptism

Baptism signifies entrance into the household of faith, and it is a symbol of identifying with Christ in His death and resurrection, a representation of the new birth in Christ Jesus, and a mark of Christian commitment. Baptism marks believers as part of God's family. Jesus practiced baptism and proclaimed the necessity of it, and the early Church performed it. We believe that baptism is a rite to be performed upon every Christian.

Most Christian traditions of all times are united in support of the practice of Baptism. However, what most Christian traditions are not united on is the mode, meaning, and timing of baptism. We have chosen, as far as it depends on us, not to allow baptism to divide Harvest Community Church. We believe in Baptism, but also believe the means of Baptism is not as important as the meaning of Baptism. The conviction of Harvest Community Church is to practice Believers' baptism and infant dedication. Our primary means of baptism is through immersion. However, if a Christian has been baptized in a different tradition (perhaps sprinkling, pouring, or thrice dunked) and they feel strong conviction that their baptism is sufficient, then they can still be a member of Harvest Community Church.

TRADITIONS AND PREFERENCES

Dress Code

At Harvest, the dress code is specifically de-emphasized. We are free in Christ with things like hair length, music preferences and forms of worship provided we avoid sin. This is not meant to be disrespectful to those who prefer a more uniform and formal practice in dress. Rather, it is an acknowledgment that, at times, dress is a barrier for unbelievers that is not necessary. Also, dress can become a barrier for believers as they may begin to focus more on how well others are dressed than on the Lord. Historically, there is no evidence in the Scripture that the apostles, nor Jesus, nor the people who gathered together to hear them in homes and to worship with them, dressed in anything except for their every day clothing. We desire that clothing become less important and Jesus become more important.

On the other hand, we would hope that people would dress in a way that is respectful of his neighbor as far as cleanliness and propriety are concerned. We should not be seeking to dress for reasons of pride and drawing undue attention to ourselves. Also, we desire that those who prefer to dress in nicer clothes feel free to do so and not be judged for their actions either.

Also, we have no desire to judge other congregations where the pastor and people dress formally for church worship. We believe that clothing is an area of freedom in worship. Let us freely receive one another with joy and understanding that each one is different.

Bible Translations

Harvest has not mandated a bible translation of choice. We leave the choice to the individual. We do recommend a translation that is readable for your level of understanding and still reliable from the original languages. That said, we have chosen the English Standard Version to be the Bible translation we give away to guests and preach from. We do this because a) it is a translation that is in plain language, b) very reliable to the original languages, and c) allows us uniformity for the purpose of reading along during services. There are some translations that are excellent, some that are poor, and some in between. If you would like input on specific versions, please speak to one of the Pastors.

Advertising

We are committed to becoming well known in the community and to make Jesus Christ known. Our prayer is that through recognizing our name and attending Harvest, the lost would receive salvation in His name. Our people are our best form of advertisement because excitement and enthusiasm are contagious. When those who attend Harvest are excited about the Lord and their church, others will be drawn to the Lord and into the church.

Significant and radical transformation in people's lives can take place through the power of the Holy Spirit. God can make a difference in the lives of people, and in turn, they can make a difference in the lives of others.

We want the name of Harvest Community Church to be known so that people know where to come in order to find our Lord, Jesus Christ. It is not our name that matters, but His. We are open to advertising the name of the church for the purpose of evangelism in any way that is ethical.

Church Growth

We are committed to church growth. In order for our church to grow, our people must grow in their own relationship with the Lord. We seek to assist each person in their spiritual growth. We worry about the “depth” of our spiritual growth and let the Lord worry about the “width.” Consequently, as Christians grow in depth, they will learn of their need to reach their communities with the good news of Jesus. Because of this, we will happily and with great perseverance invest in efforts to grow our church. There is no “ideal” size. Whomever God will bring, we want to accommodate. We never want to say, “Well, we’re big enough.” Until the Lord comes, there is always room for more. However, we will not become discouraged either if God determines to bless our efforts at growth in a smaller manner than we desire. He is the Lord. We are to be faithful and allow Him to give the increase.

Spiritual Gifts

We are committed to seeing people use their Spiritual gifts in ministry. We desire to be a church that utilizes everyone's gifts, talents and abilities. Every person in the body has spiritual gifts, and they are needed to fulfill the mission of the church. Harvest is not a place where you have to be asked to act on a need. We encourage our people to see a need and to work with others to meet the need. Every child of God is also a co-worker of God.

If you have an interest in any particular area of ministry, speak to one of the Pastors regarding that interest or calling. We remain open regarding direction for new ministries. However, all ministries under Harvest Community Church need to be approved through the Elders. We are very interested in developing new leaders as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission. Our integrity in the community is important as we seek to do the right things in the right manner.

Creativity

We are committed to doing things God’s way, even if it's not what we are accustomed to from our past church experience. It is our desire to hear from God, experience God and follow Him. Risk and failure are always possibilities as we try different ways to bring the gospel to the world. God requires a return on His investment in us, and we view reaching out, taking chances, being creative, and risking setbacks as all part of the path of success in bringing Him that return.

We continually evaluate ministry and programs to maintain effectiveness in reaching our community for Christ. We want to be a church that effectively implements change and thrives during the process. We will be required to make changes and adjustments to things we do.

Unity

We are committed to unity in the midst of diversity. We may differ in opinion without causing division in the body of Christ. This is an ongoing value of Harvest. We invite you to join us on this adventure in loving.

We extend God's grace to people and forgive as we have been forgiven.

Hospitality

Our goal is to treat every person who walks through the doors of Harvest with the same attention, affection, affirmation and acceptance that Jesus would give those individuals. We seek to display that we are disciples of Jesus by the way we serve and love one another. Rich or poor, young or old, black or white, dirty or clean, believer or unbeliever, all people are of equal importance to our God and worthy of our love and accommodation.

Mission And Principles of Harvest Community Church

Our Mission Rationale

From the beginning, Harvest has focused on reaching the world for Christ locally, nationally, and internationally. Locally, we believe we are to invest in people and invite them to join us at one of our local campuses so that they might hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. Nationally, we are willing to help plant churches and aid various ministries.

Internationally, we believe that we are to plant churches and aid the cause of Christ not only with money but with real people and the Word of God.

As we continue to adapt our methods and actions to best accomplish the mission of Jesus in the world, we have a need of being able to define our mission in a way that does not change, lest we lose our focus. With this in mind, we hold the following foundational principles:

1. We are "a community church with a world-wide vision."
2. Our Biblical Mandate is summarized in these words: "To Know Him and to Make Him Known," for by knowing Him we become like Him and learn to love one another in true community. We make Him known not only in our church community but in the wider world also.
3. We are church-builders, by making and being disciples.
4. We "Know Him" by exalting Him in offering our lives as worship.
5. We make Him known by declaring His excellencies to a lost world.
6. We "Make Him Known" by "loving the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength, and loving our neighbors as ourselves."

Our Guiding Texts for Mission

John 13:34-35 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." [John 15:8-14; Matthew 7:12; Romans 13:8-10; 1 John 3:10]

1 Corinthians 3:6-17 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. . . . 9 For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building. 10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. 11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw- 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's

work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. 16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. [Matthew 16:18; 1 Peter 2:4-5; 1 Tim 3:15; Ephesians 3:10, 20-21; Ephesians 5:22-32]

Matthew 28:18-20 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." [Mark 16:15; Luke 24:45-48; Acts 1:8; John 9:4; Ephesians 2:10]

Mission Statement

Harvest Community church exists to glorify and love God by seeking to grow a healthy church of disciples who know God and make Him known in our community, by establishing various campuses while also working towards the planting of churches anywhere in the world that do the same.

Principles for Mission

1. We trust the Word of God and believe that in its clear proclamation, faith is born and much good is done in the hearts of people. [Romans 10:17; Matthew 5:18; Matthew 4:4; 2 Cor 4:2]
2. We trust the Spirit of God to guide all of our efforts, and so all endeavors are to be prayer efforts from beginning to end. All good works of the church must be based on prayer. Therefore, we seek to foster prayer as individuals, at the family level, and as a church community. [James 5:15-16; John 16:24]
3. We see the cross as central to all we do and proclaim. Therefore, we commit to declare the death of Jesus Christ for sins and His resurrection repeatedly and give the cross the priority in our songs, sermons, funerals, weddings, and all other events where proclamation is possible. [Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 2:2]
4. We believe God to be sufficient for all things in our church and in our lives. Therefore, faith plays an essential role in our function. All plans and ministries are based on the idea that God is good to us and great enough to do through us all that we ask or think according to his will. [Hebrews 11:6]
5. We honor Jesus as the head of the church, our captain, our Savior, our Lord, our commander, our keeper, our guide. No man is head of the church, but Jesus alone. We seek Him in all things and work and live with hope surrounding us, knowing that our labor is not in vain and that He is with us, guiding us, and returning soon. [Ephesians 1:22]

6. We pursue mission work with our planned financial investment, as well as human involvement of all kinds. This means that we will remember to give regularly to the work of missions from our offerings; likewise, we will send our people, both in short and long term missions. Church planting anywhere in the world is our responsibility as the Lord leads us. This must remain a priority of each elder and a responsibility of all members of the body. [Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Timothy 6:17-18]
7. We seek to promote communication with the body, knowing that each member of Harvest has a right to know what their leaders are planning and have the opportunity to be persuaded that the Lord is indeed leading in each ministry activity. Communication is hard work among fallen man, and we are committed to diligence and constant improvement in this area. [Romans 12:10; 2 Timothy 4:2]
8. We are theologically rigorous, yet we are flexible on non-essentials that divide churches. The essentials, as we see it, are outlined in our statement of faith. Let each individual be subject to the word of God, reason, and his conscience as regards issues that are non-essential. [Romans 14:1-5]
9. Common sense and reasonableness are valued in decision making, especially when a definite plan or course of action is not mandated by the Bible. [James 3:17; Acts 15:22; Acts 15:24-25; Titus 2:2; Titus 1:8; Titus 2:5; Titus 2:6]
10. Church government is to be as lean as possible, flexible, and conforming to the items the Bible outlines. [Titus 1:5]
11. We use technology as a tool for the Gospel and strive to remain innovative in all we do. We believe that nothing is unclean of itself. Therefore non-traditional methods of church ministry are to be measured by their possible help in furthering the mission of Harvest. Creativity, art, advertising, and new ways of doing things are always options as the Lord leads. [1 Corinthians 9:22]
12. We seek to be opportunistic for Jesus. We are committed to risking in faith and taking chances for the Gospel. Along with that comes a commitment to change quickly as ministry opportunities present themselves. [Colossians 4:5; Galatians 6:10; Luke 19:11-27]
13. We seek to do all things well, constantly improving on our ministry efforts. [Ephesians 6:5-8; Ecclesiastes 9:10.]
14. We are committed to grace when things do not go according to plan, focusing on behavior and performance improvement, not on castigating the person. We know that ministry is messy and does not always go according to plan. [James 2:13; Ephesians 4:32; Proverbs 14:4]

15. We value biblical teaching and view the avenues of biblical teaching (i.e. Regular Bible Classes, Sunday Morning Bible Classes, etc.) as means to an end, and not an end in themselves. In other words, our teaching ministries exist to help meet the mission of the church; we cannot define success as merely having well-attended programs. We are free to re-schedule, cancel, or begin new classes and new formats for education as seems best in the present situation. [Matthew 9:17]
16. We aim to have orderly and vibrant worship of God through song, remaining flexible in our styles and inviting participation from all the church family. God must be glorified among us in song, and we must do all in our power to encourage focused and enthusiastic worship among the family of God. [Psalm 150; Hebrews 13:15]
17. We are committed to promoting a Christian worldview, engaging the culture, responding to current concerns and philosophies, and bringing Christ's unchanging and eternal perspective to bear, so that we may teach Christians to understand their times and be wise. [Romans 12:2]
18. As Jesus instructed the first believers to reach their local area ("Jerusalem"), their nearby neighbors ("all Judea"), their more distant neighbors ("Samaria"), and people in all places no matter how far ("even to the end of the earth"), we believe that we can reach Western PA and the ends of the world from Harvest Community Church. [Acts 1:8]
19. We are mindful to honor the Lord's command to be devoted to one another in brotherly love. We are a family in Christ. We emphasize, therefore, hospitality, the sharing of meals, and the fellowship of believers in organized as well as casual meetings. Also, we are committed to meeting the basic needs of the saints, bearing one another's physical and emotional burdens, and sharing in one another's joys. [Acts 2:44-47]
20. We are committed to crossing cultural boundaries in order to achieve the unity Jesus desires for His church. This means that we will continually seek to reach out across racial, generational, ethnic, and economic barriers that divide the world. [Ephesians 2:14; Galatians 3:28-29]
21. We value individual discipleship as the sure path to increased Christ-likeness. Spiritual maturity for each believer is God's desire and is necessary to fulfill His goal of building the church, His bride. As Jesus has commanded us to "make disciples", so we must train each believer in the basic doctrines and disciplines taught by the Bible. [2 Timothy 2:2; Colossians 1: 28-29]
22. We take seriously our responsibility to minister compassionately to those with emotional needs. There are those who come to Christ with deep hurts and in great need of loving attention and godly healing. When hurting people want to be a part

of Harvest, we seek to bring such people to a point of victory in Christ, so that they can serve Him with peace and joy. [1 Corinthians 12:23-24; Galatians 6:2]

23. We see our congregation as a part of the worldwide body of Christ. Accordingly, other believing congregations are not our competitors but members of our family. We seek to strengthen those churches engaged in the same work as ourselves. Furthermore, we have a responsibility to pray for other congregations and to support their ministries as we are able. [Mark 9:40; 1 Corinthians 10:24]
24. We believe that many Christians are refugees from unhealthy churches. We want to reach out and intentionally minister to these people, giving them a place to rest, heal, and re-enter the local church of our Lord. [Galatians 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:14]
25. God intends for healthy churches to raise up leaders. These leaders can work within Harvest's expanding ministry field or pursue the Kingdom of God in other places. Nevertheless, we are committed to identifying, mentoring, and training leaders from within Harvest's ranks. We believe that it is our job to "train the called" and not simply to "call the trained." [Matthew 9:38; 2 Timothy 2:2]
26. All believers are called by God to do good works. We seek to enable every member of Christ's body to complete that work. [Ephesians 4:11-12; Ephesians 2:10]
27. We value the family as a God-ordained institution and the basic unit of society. We are deeply committed to building and supporting godly marriages, promoting biblical parenting, and family worship. Furthermore, we will encourage the family to be the primary vehicle for training children to be followers of Jesus. Along these lines, the primary role of our ministry with children will be to enable parents and care-givers to be the primary pastors of their own children. [Genesis 2:24; Psalm 78:5; Malachi 2:16; Ephesians 5:22-33]
28. We value marriage and will seek to put first importance on the health of the marriages of all our people, especially our leaders. [1 Timothy 3:2; Ephesians 5:22-33]
29. As the church, the family of God, we seek to minister in the areas where families lack. It becomes the responsibility of the church to love and minister to children without Christian parents, widows and widowers without family, single parents, divorcees, and others living with family structural loss in order to fill the gap. [James 1:27]
30. In all things we seek to glorify God. We seek to increase our worship for Him in all ways according to His great holiness and power. He is the founder and focus of all that we do. We rob God if we will not worship Him with all of our strength, increasing His glory in the earth. [Deuteronomy 6:4-5]

31. Above all, our rule is love. When all else fails, we ask, "What does it mean to love God?" and "What does it mean to love one another?" in every situation. [Romans 13:8-10]

Leadership

The Elders

They are known around Harvest as the E-Team. Harvest is governed by the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ who is the head of the Church. The Elders are the pastors of the church responsible for the teaching and oversight of the ministries of Harvest. Harvest has Vocational (Paid) Elders and Non-vocational (Volunteer) Elders.

At Harvest, we believe the terms "Elder" and "Pastor" are interchangeable. Both vocational and non-vocational elders are responsible to prayerfully lead the church to grow the health and size of God's church everywhere. Each member of the Elder team is, therefore, equal in authority.

Our Elders have regularly scheduled meetings. Our Vocational Elders and staff meet weekly, usually on Tuesday to discuss and coordinate the ministry events of Harvest, and to pray for each prayer request communicated to the Church that week.

Office Manager

Our office staff supports the operations of our church and its ministries through many administrative functions on a weekly basis. This effort is coordinated through our Office Manager who assists our Pastors, Elders, and leaders in so many ways. We find the operational backbone of our efforts in this support group.

Deacons

In addition to Elders, Harvest has Deacon positions. These men and women are selected by the Elders and must complete a study of biblical leadership in addition to a period of substantial service with Harvest's ministries.

Harvest believes that the people of God are to be involved in various ministry efforts. You will find many of these ministry efforts led by our Deacons and Deaconesses who help to coordinate and align God's people to function efficiently.

Ministry Teams

These teams are comprised of small groups of people just like yourself who carry out the day to day work of God's Church. We are always open to looking at new ministries as God leads and look to improve the effectiveness of existing teams. Some examples of these teams include our Prayer Team, Missions Team, Jail Ministry Team and the Women's Ministry Team. More information regarding areas available for you to serve can be located on the website at www.harvestpa.org.

Conflict Resolution

When facing potential problems within the church, we are committed to dealing with people rather than dictating impersonal policies that attempt to deal with future problems. Our goal is always restoration. The pastor and the rest of the Elder Team care enough to confront potential problems so that peace may be maintained in the body of Christ.

Membership

There are at least three reasons for having formal "church membership."

- (1) The concept of membership is Biblical. A member is a "part" of the body of Christ, the local church.
- (2) Formal membership is valuable to the leaders of the church as they seek to fulfill their God-given task of shepherding. It is important to identify the core that can be counted on to build and sustain the ministries of the church.
- (3) Finally, and perhaps most importantly, experience shows that membership benefits the individual. Recognizable membership is an important step that moves each of us out of the vague clouds of good intentions and into the clear light of committed participation. Each Christian should be an active part of a local church and under the spiritual care and protection that brings. We invite Christians to join us in our ministry, binding our lives and ministries together and committing to love one another in Christian community.

We are committed to having every member of our church being involved in some form of ministry. Harvest Community Church is a place to serve, not observe!

Please take the time needed for you to decide that Harvest is the church you want to be a part of. For membership information, stop by the church office or visit www.harvestpa.org.

Facilities & Miscellaneous Information

Church Informational Meetings

Sometimes we call these “Family Meetings”. What in many churches is called a “business meeting,” we take as an opportunity for worship, fellowship, taking of the Lord’s Supper together, and dissemination of information from the church leaders.

Informational Meetings are scheduled a couple times each year. They are beneficial to keeping all the members of Harvest up to date on the progress of various ministry efforts.

Our Facilities

Harvest Community Church sits on seven acres of ground in East Franklin Township, Armstrong County. Founded in 1998, Harvest built its current sanctuary in 2000 and then added the Education Section in 2002. The balcony was added in the sanctuary in 2007. God has blessed the Harvest Family over its short time span, and we continue to seek his direction and leadership in the use of our facilities.

In the Spring of 2009, God gave Harvest the opportunity to gain a building in Fairview, PA. Formerly known as Whitestone Church, Harvest now conducts weekly worship services there. We call it the “Petrolia Valley Campus” or PVC.

Ministry efforts are the primary purpose of all of our facilities. When they are not in use, we do from time to time permit their use for other activities. Anyone seeking information related to such an event should contact the church office and complete an application of request at least 60 days in advance of any event.

Our Website

The church website is the first place to look for answers to “What’s going on?” www.harvestpa.org is kept up to date with all the latest plans of the various ministries. We also dedicate our weekly church bulletin to announcement of opportunities and services available at Harvest Community Church.

All sermons are available via podcast through the website.

Sunday worship service times and a list of current educational opportunities are also available. Please take time to check these things out.

There is a link to “My Harvest” on our homepage. “My Harvest” is an online church management system powered by Church Community Builder (CCB). In addition to being a phone/photo directory, events calendar, and database that will help you interact with other Harvest church folk, it incorporates many communication and management features that allow the staff and group leaders to more effectively work with their respective ministry groups.

Various features are available for all who attend Harvest, while other features are reserved for those who are involved at Harvest and attend regularly. We encourage everyone to log in and update his/her personal and family information and photos on a regular basis. Each individual can set his/her communication preferences and contact information while still being tied to the family collectively.

If you need a username and password, click the link to “My Harvest” on the homepage and select “**Sign Up**”. If your name, email address, and phone number match that which is in CCB, the system will auto-generate a generic password. The user name is always your email address. You should change your password to something easier to remember when you log in for the first time.

Pastors

Mike Greiner	Lead Pastor	mikegreiner@harvestpa.org	724-548-5643 x 27
Fred Neal Jr.	Executive Pastor	bigfredneal@harvestpa.org	724-548-5643 x 25
Fred Neal III	Campus Pastor	fredneal@harvestpa.org	724-548-5643 x 30
Rodney Miller	Visitation & Care Pastor	rodneymiller@harvestpa.org	724-548-5643 x 26
Chris Clinch	Worship Pastor	chrisclinch@harvestpa.org	724-548-5643 x 31
Kevin Giddings	Counseling & Family Care Pastor	kevingiddings@harvestpa.org	724-548-5643 x 22
David Dickson	Harvest Kidz & Harvest Students	daviddickson@harvestpa.org	724-548-5643 x-35

Elders

Huey Adams	Elder	hueyadams@harvestpa.org
Russ Baptiste	Elder	russbaptiste@harvestpa.org
Jack Bowser	Elder	jackbowser@harvestpa.org
George Kolesar	Elder	georgekolesar@harvestpa.org
Louis Rondinelli	Elder	louisrondinelli@harvestpa.org

Staff

Tammy Rondinelli	Office Manager	tammyrondinelli@harvestpa.org	724-548-5643 x 28
Debbie Baptiste	Support Staff	debbiebaptiste@harvestpa.org	
Marion Seavers	Support Staff	marionseavers@harvestpa.org	

Deacons & Deaconesses

Nate Adams	Student Ministries	elior84@gmail.com
Dan Barker	Media Ministries	dbarker@windstream.net
Rich Bowser	Buildings & Grounds (KIT)	richbowser@harvestpa.org
Shaun Brumbaugh	Unassigned	sllkbrum@consolidated.net
David Burton	Media Ministries	heyburty@gmail.com
Jeff Dailey	Media Ministries	jeffdailey@harvestpa.org
Gordon Frack	Safety & Security Coordinator	gordonfrack@harvestpa.org
Michelle Grooms	Children's Ministry	michellegrooms@harvestpa.org
Jan Hart	Women's Ministries	janhart@harvestpa.org
Mindy Knappenberger	Family Focus/Helps Ministries	mindyknappenberger@harvestpa.org
Barb Morris	Biblical Counseling	standfirm@windstream.net

Deacons & Deaconesses (continued)

Ray Police	Men's Ministry	raypolice@harvestpa.org
Dave Questiaux	Ushers & Greeters (PVC)	davequestiaux@harvestpa.org
Dave Straite	Petrolia Valley Campus	dstraite1@zoominternet.net
Steve Tack	Recovery and Jail Ministries	stevetack@harvestpa.org
Fred Wood	Ushers & Greeters (KIT)	lindaw2279@windstream.net

Harvest Community Church Policy Manual Appendix to the Heart of Harvest of Harvest Community Church

Harvest Community Church

Policy on Path to Non-Vocational Eldership

All current Elders should be on the lookout for men within our membership that have demonstrated a willingness to provide leadership in our efforts to serve the Lord at Harvest Community Church. They must be willing to continuously go above and beyond that which may be asked of others. (John 13: 3-17) Our desire would be to review men already serving in leadership roles at Harvest, but that would not be a mandatory requirement. This process will include steps that will be appropriate for any man being considered. The testing of the individual will be included in this outlined process no matter what roles the individual may have already served.

1. Once an individual has been identified as a potential candidate, the current elder should engage the Lord in prayer regarding the potential of this individual and after a time, bring his name to the attention of the other Elders if so led by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 20:28)
2. Once this is done, his name shall be recorded in the minutes of an Elder meeting indicating such and request that all Elders include this individual in prayer for the Lord's leading in our church. At least one E Team meeting should elapse before moving beyond this step.
3. After that time, any Elder so led should request the approval of the E-Team to approach and ask this individual to consider the call in his prayers.
4. After a prayerfully considered response from the individual indicating a willingness to proceed, the Elders will assign one Elder as a mentor to enter into the 12 week Biblical Eldership bible study with the man and also provide a copy of the book Biblical Eldership by Alexander Strauch. Both, the completion of the bible study and the reading of the book, must be completed before moving to the next step.
5. After completion of step 4, the mentoring Elder will report to the Elders, at a regular meeting that the candidate has successfully fulfilled Step 4. All Elders should increase their prayerful consideration of this individual. At this time the Elders will conduct an interview of the candidate related to the potential call. A report will be provided covering this interview at the next Elder's meeting. A vote may be taken at that meeting or any subsequent meeting related to extending an invitation to become a "Candidate" for Elder. Once approved by ALL Elders, the candidate should attend all activities and meetings of the Elders for the next 90 days and be invited to give input but will lack a vote in any matter.
6. During this 90 day period, the candidate will be reviewed and tested for spiritual qualifications and commitment, as well as evaluated for a practical fit with the E Team. (1Tim 3: 1-7, Titus 1: 6-9, 1 Peter 5: 1-3). A meeting will be arranged with the candidate's wife. This will provide the Elders opportunity to evaluate her support concerning her husband's potential obligations as well as provide information related to

his family life and character. The Elders will seek information from the congregation and community to confirm the candidate's reputation.

7. At the completion of this 90 day period, a vote will be taken to offer an official call to the candidate. This 90 day period of testing may be extended for any reason by a majority vote of the Elders. The final approval will require a unanimous vote of all Elders. At any point, the Elders may determine that the candidate may not be appropriate to serve in this capacity. If so, they will meet with the candidate and explain the reason for such decision and arrange for any appropriate discipleship that may be appropriate.
8. Once approved, the candidate will be introduced as an Elder to the congregation at the next weekly service. This will include the laying on of hands by the Elder Team.

Harvest Community Church

Policy on General Policy on Church Discipline

1. Our General Stance on Discipline within the Church

All members of the Body of Christ have an individual responsibility to live righteously and to encourage righteous behavior in other believers. Interpersonal accountability is a Christian obligation that extends beyond the membership of the local church. As Galatians 6:1-5 instructs, this process begins with self-examination and a spirit of humility sensitive to one's own faults. Believers are instructed to be aware of their own sins, to be penitent, and to be quick to seek reconciliation with offended individuals (Matthew 5:23-25; 7:1-5). It is recognized that Harvest Community Church members have a special relationship one to the other. Consequently, Harvest Community Church members have the privilege of experiencing the full expression of love and care for the local body as outlined in Scripture and as detailed below.

Church discipline is regarded as a serious and clear directive in Scripture. Church discipline is intended to restore an erring member (2 Corinthians 2:5-8), to purify the Church (1 Corinthians 5:6-8), to warn other members about the dangers of sinful behavior or teaching (Deuteronomy 19:20; Acts 5:11; 2 Corinthians 7:11), and to demonstrate the reality of righteous living to the unsaved world (Ephesians 4:22-24). Discipline is exercised with compassion for the erring member and a sincere desire to seek that person's repentance, reconciliation, and if necessary, restoration to the fellowship of the local church (Matthew 18:12-14).

Discipline does not entitle the elders to abuse their authority over the members of the church (1 Peter 5:1-3). Specific guidelines are followed that identify the grounds for church discipline and the process of such discipline.

The members of Harvest Community Church belong to a spiritual body of local believers who identify with a common purpose and mission. There is a mutual accountability that each member has, one to the other, to encourage and provoke holy living (Hebrews 10:23-25). Church discipline begins with individual accountability that is a responsibility of every member. Members are encouraged to take this responsibility seriously.

Scripture is clear that the motives of the individual(s) or the elders dealing with the erring member must be pure before our Savior, His Church, and the world.

- (a) They are to avoid vengeance and arrogant presumption (Galatians 6:1).
- (b) They are not to be motivated by hostility or anger but by a loving concern for the erring member (2 Thessalonians 3:15).

- (c) They are to approach the erring member with heart-felt sorrow and sincere concern (1 Corinthians 5:2; 2 Corinthians 2:4).
- (d) They are to be ready to grant restoration to the erring member when repentance occurs (Luke 17:1-10; 2 Corinthians 2:5-8).

2. Offenses Applicable to Church Discipline.

Individual accountability is an on-going expression of believers and is always the first step in dealing with an erring member. No member is above or immune from accountability (1 Timothy 5:19-22). Church discipline is not God's method for making the church sinless. Scripture defines certain deviations from the truth as grounds for formal disciplinary action. Sin that damages the church, weakens its testimony, or promotes disunity constitutes an offense that necessitates formal disciplinary action. These sins can be understood in the following categories:

- (a) False teaching constitutes a deliberate, persistent program of teaching that intentionally rejects the foundational doctrines of Scripture (Titus 3:10; Revelation 2:14).
- (b) Apostasy constitutes a public denial of the essential truths of God's Word (i.e., a belief in the inspired Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the final authority for belief and behavior; a belief in the Trinity; a belief in the complete humanity and the complete deity of Christ; a belief in the utter sinfulness of all humanity; a belief in the virgin conception of Christ and His Incarnation as the eternal Son of God; a belief in Christ's substitutionary atonement as the only way of salvation; a belief in the bodily resurrection and return of Christ; a belief in salvation by God's grace alone through faith in Christ alone; a belief in the eternal damnation of the lost and the eternal glorification of the saved). These essential truths are reflected in the Doctrinal Statement of the Church Constitution (Galatians 2:11-14; 1 John 2:19).
- (c) Divisiveness constitutes behavior that undermines the unity of Harvest Community Church either between members or against God's established authority in the church (Philippians 4:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:14).
- (d) Immorality is constituted scripturally as behavior that is deemed immoral and brings shame on the testimony of Christ and the local church (1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:9-11). This category includes sexual immorality and sexual deviancy (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8). While sexual behavior may or may not be known publicly, these sins internally pollute the church and disrupt its mission. Scripture denounces sexual impurity. These sins include adultery, homosexual relations, and every other kind of sexual deviancy or impurity that Scripture calls fornication (porneia). (Romans 1:26-27).

- (e) Any sin which breaks the commandments of God, such as lying and stealing, for which one is without repentance, especially if it is ongoing or habitual.

3. Procedures in Membership Accountability.

Church discipline is to be handled prayerfully, carefully, and justly. Below are the steps of accountability and discipline that follow the guidelines given in Matthew 18:15-20.

- (a) First step: Arrange a private meeting with the offender. Humbly confront the person with the nature of the offense. If the person repents, the matter is closed (Matthew 18:15; Luke 17:3). Scripture does not specify the number of times that an offender should be confronted on an individual basis. Scripture is clear that believers should be long-suffering and have an unrelenting desire for that person's repentance (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a; 1 Peter 4:8). If there is no repentance and the offense is of the nature categorized above as "Offenses Applicable to Church Discipline" then there is a responsibility to move to the next step in the process.
- (b) Second step: Set up another private meeting, this time with one or two other witnesses present (Matthew 18:16). This step should never be taken in haste but only after there is prayerful conviction that step one has not availed. If repentance occurs, the offender should seek forgiveness from the circle of offense and no more.

It is important to understand who qualifies as a witness and what their function is in the disciplinary process.

Biblically, a witness is a person who bears testimony of another's wrongdoing based on firsthand knowledge. A person is not constituted a witness who bears testimony based on hearsay, gossip, or secondhand knowledge (Deuteronomy 19:15-19). The Bible condemns false witnesses (Exodus 20:13). Accusations not substantiated by two or three witnesses must be left to the One who knows all things and judges righteously (Numbers 35:30; Psalm 51:3-4).

It is the function of a witness to insure that the offense is clearly and impartially presented and that nothing is left unsaid. The witnesses also keep each others' motivations and actions accountable before God (Matthew 18:20). Also, a second witness can give feedback to the first, validating or denying the seriousness of the sin in question.

- (c) Third step: If there is no repentance, the circle of knowledge must be broadened at this point to include the elders for their consideration. Then the Elders will investigate and seek to determine what has taken place, meeting with both the person in question and the one who has brought the charge and any witnesses. If the Elders concur, then they will approach the person in question and give another chance for repentance and explain the next step in the process in the case that repentance is not forthcoming.

(d) Fourth step: At this point, the matter must be brought by the elders to the members of Harvest Community Church (Matthew 18:17). The entire membership has a responsibility, as opportunity provides, to call the offender to repentance. An equitable period of time will be established by the Team of Elders in order to optimize the fullest effect of the witness of the entire membership, to allow for the work of the Lord, and to provide more than ample time for repentance.

Should there be repentance, the entire body should be quick to respond with forgiveness, grace, and love (2 Corinthians 2:5-8). While repentance and forgiveness are instantaneous, restoration to service will be monitored by the elders for the benefit and development of the person.

If there is no repentance, the elders will meet to take action on the final step.

(e) Fifth step: As defined in Matthew 18:17, the unrepentant offender will be considered a "pagan or a tax collector."

This phrase contains two interrelated aspects. First, the offender is likened to a pagan, which signifies that the person is outside the community of God's blessing and grace. Second, the offender is likened to a tax collector, which signifies that the person is untrustworthy and potentially dangerous.

By way of application, this constitutes a removal from church membership and fellowship resulting in a recognition that the unrepentant offender is outside the realm of God's blessings (1 Corinthians 5:1-13). Common ground for intimate friendship has been removed. The entire congregation has an ongoing responsibility to act in unison, calling the person to repentance with all contact, so as not to undermine the scriptural process or the severe temporal consequences of the person's obstinate behavior. It is sincerely hoped there will be repentance and reconciliation as a result of the consistent and loving application of this heart-wrenching but biblical action.

The action of the church in matters of discipline carries the highest conceivable authority and is both final and binding as clearly stated in Matthew 18:18-20. There can be no appeal to any court as a result of this action (1 Corinthians 6:1-2), and a member may not resign his/her membership in order to avoid church discipline.

If a person under discipline is not factious, disruptive or a harmful influence, he is welcomed to attend all church meetings that are open to unbelievers with the exception of small groups that meet for the purpose of fellowship.

If a member seeks to attend another church in order to avoid church discipline, the Elder Team may inform the Elders or Pastors of that church so that they may encourage him/her to repent of his/her sin.

Christians who come to Harvest Community Church in an attempt to escape discipline in another church will not be permitted to become members nor fellowship beyond public

meetings that are open to unbelievers until repentance comes and repair of the relationship with the previous church is manifested.

4. Integrity of Knowledge.

In all matters of church discipline, if and when members become aware of the offense and the disciplinary action being brought against the unrepentant member, the members are expected, without exception, to hold the knowledge with integrity, avoiding gossip and the defamation of character (Ephesians 4:31-32; James 4:11). Church disciplinary matters are internal affairs and must not be paraded before the world.

Harvest Community Church

Policy on Statement on Divorce and Remarriage

Marriage

1. Marriage is a gift from God.

The idea of marriage began with God in the Garden of Eden, before sin. The first human relationship was a marriage and history will end with a marriage between Jesus Christ and His glorious bride, the church.

Marriage is a covenant of companionship. It may be defined as follows:
God has created marriage to be a covenant for life between a man and a woman, entered into for companionship, sexual unity, procreation and to display the love Christ has for His church.

Marriage is a precious gift from God, though it should be noted that singleness is a gift as well. Married believers and unmarried believers have equal access to God, for both come through the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ.

2. Marriage is a covenant enacted through vows.

The heart of a wedding ceremony is the exchange of vows between bride and groom. These vows initiate a covenant, a solemn pledge before God and witnesses to lovingly live together for life. Unlike a modern contract, typically entered into for personal protection and convenience and for a limited period of time, the marriage covenant is entered into for the purpose of intimacy, mutuality and permanence.

3. Marriage is between a man and a woman for life.

Marriage, as intended by God, is between one man and one woman as long as they both shall live. We must reject any variations on this pattern including homosexual marriage, polygamy and serial monogamy (see below under `divorce').

4. Marriage is for the purpose of companionship, sexual unity, procreation, and displaying the love between Christ and His church.

The relationship between husband and wife, this covenant of companionship, is at the heart of what God intends marriage to be. The friendship and fellowship which are part of this companionship are to be augmented and enhanced by sexual companionship as well. Though child-bearing is not the primary purpose of marriage, it is an essential one and married couples should normally heed God's command to be fruitful and multiply.

Divorce

5. God's intention is marriage, not divorce.

Divorce is a common and sad fact in our world, though this in no way makes our time in history unique. Many times throughout history God has addressed the topic of divorce making His perspective abundantly clear, that He loves marriage and generally opposes divorce. Nowhere is this more clear than in the many Old Testament passages where Israel is described as God's bride who has been endlessly unfaithful to Him, committing spiritual adultery through her frequent idolatries. God's patience, steadfast love, and grace are an inspiration to every spouse. At the same time, in the face of Israel's endless sins, He sent her away with a writ of divorce (Jer. 3:8).

6. The Old Testament, Jesus and Paul all provide for divorce under certain circumstances.

The practice of divorce is regulated and permitted under both the old covenant and new. Any divorce is always the result of sin. However, while every marriage is composed of two sinners, it should be noted that guilt is not equally shared in every divorce. In fact, the situations in which God allows for a divorce typically are the result of one spouse sinning in a way that leaves them bearing the weight of guilt.

7. We believe God permits a believer to seek a divorce when:

- (a) A spouse is guilty of sexual immorality.

Sexual immorality includes adultery but also involves sexual contact with another person.

- (b) An unbelieving spouse abandons the marriage.

It is important to note that God permits divorce in these cases, but He does not require it. The church will not encourage a spouse to divorce when he or she has faith towards God for the marriage to be restored - even when the situations listed above exist.

For the church to condone divorce in such cases, the spouse must submit the fact of his or her marital situation to the pastors to determine before God in Scripture what He would permit. If a spouse who is a member of the church should seek a divorce from another member due to abandonment, he or she must first wait for the church to follow in its practice of church discipline to the end of treating the sinning spouse as an unbeliever before divorce may become an option.

Separated spouses awaiting a pending divorce should consider themselves married until the day a civil court declares the divorce final and legally recognized. They should thus conduct themselves in the church as a married person.

Remarriage

8. A believer whose spouse is deceased is free to remarry. (Rom 7:2-3)

However, he or she should first seek to know if God is calling him to `remain as he is' and serve the Lord in an unmarried state.

9. A believer who is divorced for biblically acceptable reasons is free to remarry.

Any believer who is divorced under the above conditions, that is, their spouse has committed sexual immorality or has abandoned them, is free to remarry. They, too, should heed the counsel to first ask if God is calling them to serve Him in an unmarried state.

10. A believer who is divorced for biblically unacceptable reasons should seek forgiveness from God, the restoration of the marriage, and reconciliation with the ex-spouse. Remarriage is not an option until the ex-spouse remarries or dies.

Divorce for the wrong reasons is serious, but a forgivable sin. Divorce is not the unforgivable sin; it too, can be washed away through the blood of Jesus Christ. Repentance will involve not only seeking forgiveness from God, but also seeking to reconcile with the ex-spouse and, if possible, to restore the marriage.

If a divorced person becomes a member of the church, he or she must understand that remarriage will only be condoned by the church when the circumstances prior to the divorce, or following the divorce, fall under the two conditions listed above. If the circumstances of the divorce do not conform to what Scripture deems acceptable, the divorced person should consider, before God and in the counsel of the church, whether to seek reconciliation with the former spouse.

11. If someone has remarried without biblical grounds, even though it was a sin to do so, that marriage has become a legitimate marriage and the believer must not divorce again but must remain faithful in the new marriage.
12. We understand that not every situation is the same. Some can be very complex. For this reason, we encourage any who are confused on these situations to seek the counsel of the elders for their particular case. It is the desire of the Elders of Harvest Community Church to make the best of even bad situations, bringing healing and peace wherever possible.

Harvest Community Church Policy on General Statement on Gender Issues, The Denver's Statement

RATIONALE

We have been moved in our purpose by the following contemporary developments which we observe with deep concern:

1. The widespread uncertainty and confusion in our culture regarding the complementary differences between masculinity and femininity;
2. the tragic effects of this confusion in unraveling the fabric of marriage woven by God out of the beautiful and diverse strands of manhood and womanhood;
3. the increasing promotion given to feminist egalitarianism with accompanying distortions or neglect of the glad harmony portrayed in Scripture between the loving, humble leadership of redeemed husbands and the intelligent, willing support of that leadership by redeemed wives;
4. the widespread ambivalence regarding the values of motherhood, vocational homemaking, and the many ministries historically performed by women;
5. the growing claims of legitimacy for sexual relationships which have Biblically and historically been considered illicit or perverse and the increase in pornographic portrayal of human sexuality;
6. the upsurge of physical and emotional abuse in the family;
7. the emergence of roles for men and women in church leadership that do not conform to Biblical teaching but backfire in the crippling of Biblically faithful witness;
8. the increasing prevalence and acceptance of hermeneutical oddities devised to reinterpret apparently plain meanings of Biblical texts;
9. the consequent threat to Biblical authority as the clarity of Scripture is jeopardized and the accessibility of its meaning to ordinary people is withdrawn into the restricted realm of technical ingenuity;
10. and behind all this the apparent accommodation of some within the church to the spirit of the age at the expense of winsome, radical Biblical authenticity which in the power of the Holy Spirit may reform rather than reflect our ailing culture.

AFFIRMATIONS

Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18).
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order and should find an echo in every human heart (Gen 2:18, 21-24; 1 Cor 11:7-9; 1 Tim 2:12-14).
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall and was not a result of sin (Gen 2:16-18, 21-24, 3:1-13; 1 Cor 11:7-9).

4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women (Gen 3:1-7, 12, 16).
In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.

In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.

5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women (Gen 1:26-27, 2:18; Gal 3:28). Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community (Gen 2:18; Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; 1 Tim 2:11-15).
6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.

In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership (Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; Tit 2:3-5; 1 Pet 3:1-7).

In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 11:2-16; 1 Tim 2:11-15).

7. In all of life, Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission - domestic, religious, or civil - ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin (Dan 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29; 1 Pet 3:1-2).

8. In both men and women, a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries (1 Tim 2:11-15, 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9). Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.
9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness; no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world (1 Cor 12:7-21).
10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.