

1 **Constitution**  
2 *of the*  
3 **Highland Baptist Church**  
4 Georgetown, Indiana

5  
6 *Adopted by the membership on June 19, 2013*  
7

8  
9 **Preamble**

10  
11 We establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to  
12 govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution under the leadership of the Holy Spirit is to  
13 be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in  
14 the Holy Bible and articulated in the standards set forth in the Declaration of Faith (1962) and  
15 Covenant (2012) of this church.

16 The name of this organization is Highland Baptist Church of Edwardsville, Indiana.  
17

18 **Article 1—Purpose**

19  
20 This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate  
21 purpose in all its activities.

22 The church glorifies God by treasuring Christ and making disciples through:  
23

24 **Worship** – We worship God as a community, in our families, and individually.  
25

26 **Equipping** – We equip the saints for the work of the ministry through Bible instruction and  
27 study.  
28

29 **Evangelism** – We share the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism,  
30 and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture.  
31

32 **Missions** – We encourage, support, and participate in missions work, local, domestic, and  
33 international.  
34

35 **Ordinances** – We administer the ordinances of baptism by immersion and communion.  
36

37 **Fellowship** – We build and maintain the unity of the Spirit by encouraging and loving one  
38 another as Christ has commanded us.  
39

40 **Ministry** – We serve other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical,  
41 emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ.  
42

43 **Article 2—Relationship**

44  
45 This church is an autonomous, ecclesiastical body and maintains a friendly cooperative  
46 relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Southeastern Indiana Baptist Association,  
47 and the Southern Convention of Baptists in Indiana.  
48

49 **Article 3—Membership**

1  
2 Section 1 – Qualifications  
3

4 To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who:

- 5  
6 1) gives evidence of regeneration,  
7 2) who has been baptized, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration, and  
8 3) who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible.  
9

10 Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the  
11 Declaration of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant.

12 The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership.  
13 In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other  
14 evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.  
15

16 Section 2 – Admission of Members  
17

18 To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for  
19 admission and accepted by vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members,  
20 and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.  
21

22 Section 3 – Duties and Privileges of Membership  
23

24 In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be  
25 privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church,  
26 consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received  
27 from God. Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of  
28 this congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders.  
29 Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and  
30 professional consultation.

31 Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and  
32 responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on  
33 decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.  
34

35 Section 4 – Associate Membership  
36

37 Students and others temporarily residing in the Georgetown area who are members of an  
38 evangelical church may apply for associate membership. Qualifications are identical to those for full  
39 membership as set out above, except that home church membership must be retained. A letter of  
40 commendation will be sought from the applicant's home church.

41 Duties and privileges of associate members are the same as for other members  
42 except that:

- 43  
44 (a) when absent from the Georgetown area for extended periods of time they are  
45 released from the responsibility to attend our church services;  
46 (b) while they will be encouraged to participate in members' meetings they will not be  
47 eligible to stand for any office or to vote.  
48

1 Termination of associate membership as a disciplinary measure will be as it is for other  
2 members, except that the elders shall notify the pastor or elders of the home church of that  
3 termination.

#### 4 5 Section 5 – On Church Discipline 6

7 Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the  
8 name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall  
9 be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the  
10 instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and the example of scripture. Church discipline, then,  
11 should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

12 Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from  
13 communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew  
14 18:15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15; 1 Timothy 5:19–20; 1 Corinthians 5:4–5).

15 The purpose of such discipline should be:

16 For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see  
17 Proverbs 15:5; 29:15; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 3:4–5; Hebrews  
18 12:1–11; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; Ecclesiastes 7:5;  
19 Matthew 7:26–27; 18:15–17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1–  
20 5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14–15; 1 Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:13–14; James 1:22);

21 For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them  
22 (see Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians 3:16; 1  
23 Thessalonians 5:14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; 1  
24 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24–25);

25 For the purity of the church as a whole (see 1 Corinthians 5:6–7; 2 Corinthians 13:10;  
26 Ephesians 5:27; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2);

27 For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13–  
28 16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1–14; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Peter 2:2; 1 John  
29 3:10); and

30 Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Leviticus 19:2;  
31 Deuteronomy 5:11; 1 Kings 11:2; 2 Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah  
32 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; Romans 2:24; 15:5–6; 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1;  
33 Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; Colossians 4:5; 1 Peter 2:12).

#### 34 35 Section 6 – Termination of Membership 36

37 The church shall recognize the termination of a person’s membership following his or her  
38 death, and may do so after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church.  
39 Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily,  
40 at the recommendation of the elders) upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at  
41 any regular or special meeting of the members.

42 The church shall have authority to refuse a member’s voluntary resignation or transfer of  
43 membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church  
44 discipline, or for any other biblical reason.

#### 45 46 **Article 4—Meetings** 47

#### 48 Section 1 – Worship Meetings 49

1           Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the  
2 church determines.

3  
4 Section 2 – Members’ Meetings

5  
6           In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and  
7 loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

8           There shall be a regular members’ meeting at least every other month, at some time apart  
9 from a public worship service agreed upon by the membership.

10           An elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members’ meetings of  
11 the church. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that  
12 required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

13           Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be  
14 understood to be met by those members present. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of  
15 votes cast by members present.

16           A budget shall be approved by the membership at a members’ meeting not more than three  
17 months after the start of the fiscal year. Prior to this approval and subject to the elders’ discretion,  
18 expenditures may continue at the prior year’s level.

19           At any regular or special members’ meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as  
20 needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

21           Special members’ meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written  
22 request, submitted to the elders, of five percent of the voting membership. The date, time, and  
23 purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within two  
24 weeks preceding the meeting. In the event of a written request from the members, the elders shall  
25 call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

26  
27 **Article 5—Officers**

28  
29 Section 1 – Summary

30  
31           The Biblical offices in the church are bishops or pastors or elders—hereafter referred to as  
32 elders—and deacons. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this  
33 constitution of clerk and treasurer. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming  
34 their responsibilities.

35  
36 Section 2 – Elders

37  
38           The elders shall be comprised of not less than three men who satisfy the qualifications for  
39 the office of elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. A majority of the active eldership  
40 shall be composed of church members not in the regular pay of the church, and no elder shall hold  
41 the office of deacon during his tenure.

42           Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources  
43 of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1–6 and 1 Peter 5:1–4, the elders  
44 shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound  
45 doctrine), and shepherding God’s flock.

46           The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with  
47 the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His  
48 church and set apart as elders. Once a man becomes an elder at Highland Baptist Church, it is  
49 expected that he will continue to serve as an elder indefinitely.

1 An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two  
2 members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to  
3 the elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the  
4 instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21. Any of the elders may be  
5 dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any members' meeting of the church.

6 The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective  
7 members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the  
8 work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services,  
9 administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the  
10 ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process  
11 of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church  
12 for world missions. The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the  
13 congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

14 The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their  
15 responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The membership  
16 shall approve all candidates to fill the positions of senior and associate pastor. The scope and  
17 approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring  
18 authority for that position.

19 The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and  
20 evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to  
21 another staff member.

22 Each year the elders, after consultation with the deacons and the membership, shall present  
23 to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at a specially-called  
24 budget meeting and called up for a vote at the following members' meeting. No money shall be  
25 solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders.

26 The elders shall elect a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also elect one of their number  
27 to serve as moderator of members' meetings. For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit  
28 corporation laws of the state of Indiana, the elders shall elect two of their number to serve as  
29 incorporators of the corporation.

### 30 31 Section 3 – The Senior Pastor

32  
33 The senior pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in  
34 Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-  
35 time ministry of preaching and teaching.

36 He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion,  
37 and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution.

38 In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor the elders shall assume responsibility for  
39 his duties, any of which can be delegated.

### 40 41 Section 4 – Associate Pastors

42  
43 The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of  
44 associate.

45 An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in  
46 Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-  
47 time ministry of preaching and teaching.

48 He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform  
49 any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the constitution, or  
50 which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation.

1 In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for defined periods of time (such as  
2 sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the  
3 oversight of the elders.

4  
5 Section 5 – Deacons  
6

7 The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8–13 and Acts 6:1–7. The church shall  
8 recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men who are giving of  
9 themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. These members  
10 shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons. After a man is set apart as  
11 a deacon, it is expected that he will continue to serve indefinitely. A deacon’s term of office may be  
12 terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any deacon’s term may be terminated by a two-thirds  
13 majority vote of the elders, or by a two-thirds majority vote of the congregation as per Article 3,  
14 Section 6.

15 Deacons shall, under the oversight of the elders,

- 16 1) care for the temporal needs of members,
- 17 2) attend to the accommodations for public worship,
- 18 3) and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of  
19 administration.

20 The deacons shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to  
21 the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements  
22 only.

23 The deacons, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative  
24 positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

25 Deacons are not in a position of authority in areas of teaching, correction, or rebuke.  
26

27 Section 6 – Clerk  
28

29 It shall be the duty of the clerk to keep a record of all actions of the church, keep a correct  
30 list of the names and addresses of members, noting the time and manner of their reception and if  
31 necessary their dismissal, to furnish statistics of the church for the association, to attend all  
32 correspondence as directed by the church, and to render reports as requested by the pastor, the  
33 elders, the deacons, or the church.

34 The clerk shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term  
35 of one year.

36 In the absence or incapacity of the clerk the elders shall appoint a member to perform the  
37 duties of the church clerk.  
38

39 Section 7 – Treasurer  
40

41 The treasurer, who shall not be an active elder, deacon, or paid church staff member, shall  
42 ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial  
43 institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting  
44 regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at each members’  
45 meeting. The responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the elders. The treasurer shall  
46 also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books  
47 belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds  
48 belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church.  
49 The treasurer shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all  
50 transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.

1 The treasurer shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a  
2 term of one year.

3  
4 **Article 6—Elections**

5  
6 Section 1 – Principles

7  
8 The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following  
9 principles:

10 Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the  
11 election process;

12 Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders;

13 All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty  
14 appropriate in evaluating fellow members;

15 The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving  
16 consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

17  
18 Section 2 – Selection of Officers

19  
20 The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. Names of  
21 nominees to serve as elders, deacons, clerk, or treasurer shall be presented by the elders at the  
22 previous members' meeting (providing that previous meeting occurred at least eight weeks prior),  
23 and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator.

24 The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in  
25 the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is  
26 unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in  
27 opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible  
28 before the relevant church members' meeting.

29 The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a 75% majority of all votes cast for  
30 the office of elder. For all other offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a  
31 simple majority of all votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast.

32 The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date  
33 has been specifically designated.

34  
35 Section 3 – Calling of the Senior Pastor

36  
37 In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an elder must be  
38 followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the  
39 preaching gifts of any potential senior pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must  
40 receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt  
41 as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the  
42 nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as senior pastor (which shall include,  
43 if necessary, election to membership of his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday  
44 morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

45  
46 Section 4 – Calling of Associate Pastor

47  
48 In the calling of any man to the position of associate pastor, the same basic process of calling  
49 an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to  
50 assess the preaching gifts of any potential associate pastor and, before being asked to express its

1 judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned,  
2 they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant.  
3 Notice of the nomination of a man to be called as associate pastor (which shall include, if necessary,  
4 election to membership of him and his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning  
5 services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.  
6

7 **Article 7—Amendments**  
8

9           The Declaration of Faith and Church Covenant may be amended by a three-quarters vote of  
10 the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been  
11 offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the  
12 pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

13           This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting  
14 at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous  
15 members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two  
16 successive Sundays prior to such vote.

17           The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church members by  
18 the church clerk.