

CONSTITUTION OF HOLLY TREE CHAPEL HOLLY LAKE RANCH, TEXAS

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of the Church shall be “Holly Tree Chapel” of Holly Lake Ranch, Wood County, Texas, (hereinafter referred to as “the Church”).

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purpose of the Church shall be to glorify God by the building up of the Body of Christ through the ministry of the Word, exercising of spiritual gifts, personal godliness, and proclaiming the person and work of Christ at home and abroad.

ARTICLE III: STATEMENT OF FAITH

A. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES:

We believe the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, to be the verbally inspired Word of God written by men in God’s control, without error and infallible in the original manuscripts, and the final authority in faith and life (II Timothy 3:15-17; II Peter 1:20-21; Psalm 19:7-9).

B. THE GODHEAD:

We believe in one God [“What He Is”], eternally existing in three persons [“Who He Is”] – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – these three being identical in essence and possessing precisely the same attributes and perfections (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14).

C. THE CONDITION OF MANKIND:

We believe that mankind was created in the image and likeness of God in innocence and without sin, but that in Adam’s sin humanity fell, inherited a sinful nature, became spiritually dead and alienated from God. Mankind of themselves are incapable of remedying their lost and depraved condition (Gen. 1:26, 2:1-24; Roman 3:10-18, 5:12; Eph. 2:1-3).

D. THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST:

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful mankind. This redemption He accomplished by voluntarily giving Himself as a sinless substitutionary sacrifice on the cross, thereby satisfying God’s righteous judgments against sin. After confirming that redemption by His bodily resurrection from the grave, He ascended to the right hand of His Father where He intercedes on behalf of those who trust Him (John 1:1,2,14,18; Luke 1:34-35; Romans 3:24-26, 8:34).

E. THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the divine Person who convicts the world of sin, that He brings spiritual life to those who are spiritually dead, that all believers are baptized with the Holy Spirit and thus placed into the one true Church, which is the Body of Christ, that He indwells them permanently, seals them unto the day of redemption, bestows spiritual gifts upon them, and empowers them for service (John 16:7-11, 3:5-8; I Cor. 12:7-11, 13; John 14:16-17; Eph. 4:30, 5:18; Acts 1:8).

F. SALVATION:

We believe that salvation from the penalty of sin is the gift of God's grace. It cannot be gained by meritorious works, but is freely bestowed upon all who put their faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ at Calvary and His glorious resurrection. All who so trust the Savior are forgiven of their sins – past, present and future – and born into the family of God by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:7, 2:8-9; John 1:12).

G. SECURITY, ASSURANCE, AND RESPONSIBILITY:

We believe that all saved (those whom God has redeemed) are kept by His power and are thus secure in Christ forever. It is their privilege to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation. However, this assurance must not be the occasion for sin, for God in Holiness cannot tolerate persistent sin in His children, and in infinite love He corrects them. True faith in Christ is expressed by a fruitful, God-pleasing life (John 10:27-29; Romans 8:28-29; I John 5; 13; Heb. 12:6; Matt. 7:20; James 2:20).

H. THE CHURCH:

We believe that the true Church, called in Scripture the Body of Christ, is a spiritual organism into which every person who has trusted Jesus Christ for salvation in this present age has been baptized with the Holy Spirit. The Scripture also teaches the establishment and continuance of local churches, groups of redeemed individuals joined together for worship, instruction, fellowship, service, and evangelism to the lost in the world (Eph. 1:22-23; I Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:42, 13:1-2; Matt. 28:18-19).

I. THE ORDINANCES:

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ instituted two ordinances to be observed by all believers until His return, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Their observance by each new believer is urged (Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 11:23-26).

J. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST:

We believe in the personal, imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His Church (I Thess. 4:13-18; Zech. 14:4-11; Rev. 19:11-16, 20:1-6).

K. THE ETERNAL STATE:

We believe that at death the souls of those who have trusted Christ for salvation pass immediately into His presence and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the physical body at His coming for the Church, when soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in glory. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain after death in conscious misery until the final judgment of the Great White Throne, when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be separated from God forever in conscious punishment (Luke 16:19-26; II Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; II Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:11-15).

L. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY:

We believe that marriage and the family were God's idea, and as divine institutions they are not open to human renegotiation or revision. Further, we believe that the Bible clearly teaches that God instituted marriage as a sacred and permanent covenant, witnessed and protected by God between one man and one woman as biologically designed by their natural birth (Gen. 2:22-25; Eph. 5:22-30; I Cor. 7:2-5).

ARTICLE IV: GOVERNMENT

The government of the Church, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, shall be vested in its members and administered by the Board of Elders and the Board of Deacons, whose authority is derived from and limited by the Articles of this Constitution and the Bylaws.

ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

Membership in a local church is a confession before God and mankind of a living commitment to that group of believers – a commitment of responsibility for and to the other members of the church. It should be entered into with solemnity and with joy.

- A. **QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP:** Any person who desires to unite with this Church shall be interviewed by at least two (2) elders after receiving a copy of the Constitution and the Bylaws of the Church. Membership shall be open to all, regardless of race, who shall give satisfactory testimony of their personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, acknowledge their agreement with the Statement of Faith, and express their intention to abide by the Constitution and the Bylaws of the Church. The suggested minimum age for membership is twelve (12) years.
- B. **COVENANT OF MEMBERSHIP:** In addition to the Qualifications for Membership listed above, any person wanting to become a member of this Church shall profess the following:
 - 1. **Faith:** I have received Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and have assurance of my salvation.
 - 2. **Doctrine:** I have read the Constitution of the Church, and I believe and accept its foundational doctrines, standards, and purposes. With the Lord's help, I will endeavor to do the following:
 - a) **Fellowship:** Attend regularly the services of the Church;
 - b) **Prayer:** Pray for my fellow members, Church leaders, Church activities, and charitable and missionary individuals or organizations;
 - c) **Support:** Be a steward and invest in the support of the Church and its projects; and
 - d) **Service:** Seek to be a blessing to others by using the spiritual gifts the Lord has given me by assuming an active responsibility in the programs and ministries of the Church.
 - 3. **Unity:** I will guard my tongue from destructive criticism and gossip, submit to discipline of the Church, and work for the good of all members, thus pleasing the Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- C. **RECOGNITION OF MEMBERSHIP:** Upon recommendation by the Board of Elders, the congregation shall recognize an applicant as a member at a regularly scheduled meeting of the

Church. It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Elders to maintain a current membership roll and review it at least annually.

D. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP: Members of this Church shall be bound by these common purposes:

1. To endeavor to please God in every way, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts and pursuing together a manner of life consistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God;
2. To emphasize the importance of God's Word and prayer in our personal lives, in our families, and in our fellowship together;
3. To attend as diligently as possible to the public worship of God with this Church, recognizing the value and importance of fellowship with other believers;
4. To share in the financial support of this Church and its varied ministries by cheerfully, systematically, and proportionately contributing of our means as God supplies and directs;
5. To pray regularly for the needs of the Church;
6. To serve the Lord willingly through this Church with the abilities and time He provides each being involved in a specific ministry to the needs of others, working together in Christian love and graciousness, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;
7. To commit ourselves to responsibility for the lives of the other members of this Fellowship, in helping to bring them to maturity in Christ, encouraging them in truth and love;
8. To submit ourselves in Christ to the discipline and exhortation of this Church;
9. To be ambassadors for Christ, and in love proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all mankind, being concerned for their individual needs, both physical and spiritual;
10. To accept the responsibilities of government in the Church as provided in the Constitution and the Bylaws, giving prayerful consideration to the Spirit's leading in decisions of the Church, and attending as diligently as possible to decision-making meetings of the Fellowship;
11. To seriously seek the wisdom and counsel of other members of the Body before concluding any decision to dissolve this pledge and commitment of membership; and
12. To complete a membership class. The membership class is open to everyone; however, all current, active members are grandfathered in and are not required to attend.

E. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP: Termination of membership may be made in any of the following ways:

1. Death – The names of deceased members shall be removed from the roll.

2. Transfer – Members in good standing shall be granted, upon request, a letter of transfer to another church of their choice.
3. Inactivity
 - a) Any member who consistently absents himself/herself from the gatherings of the Church, or who otherwise demonstrates a lack of genuine commitment to the Church shall be contacted by the Board of Elders and requested to re-evaluate his/her commitment to the Church. Any member who fails to respond to the efforts of the Board of Elders to renew his/her commitment of membership, or who fails to respond to correspondence directed to him/her at his/her last known address shall be removed from the roll of membership.
 - b) Any member moving from Holly Tree Chapel or vicinity shall be removed from the roll of membership after a period of three (3) months unless specifically requesting otherwise, in which case the member's name shall be maintained on the inactive roll of the Church. Active membership may be reinstated upon written request to the Board of Elders following return to the Holly Tree Chapel area.
4. Discipline – To maintain the peace and purity of the Church, the Scripture permits the removal of any person for disciplinary reasons (Romans 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; II Thess. 3:6; II Timothy 2:16-21). After reasonable attempts to restoration have been made without avail (Matt. 18:15-16; Gal. 6:1), charges shall be submitted to the Board of Elders in writing by those bringing them. The person must be notified of the charges and of the date of their consideration by the Board of Elders at least one (1) week in advance of that date, and must be given opportunity to answer the charges before the Board of Elders if so desired. Dismissal or any other form of discipline shall require a two-thirds (2/3rds) majority of the Board of Elders voting after careful and prayerful consideration. Persons who have been so disciplined, but who demonstrate a genuine attitude of repentance, may be restored to membership in accord with the regulations which govern the reception of members.

ARTICLE VI: ORDINANCES

- A. BAPTISM: Since baptism is the outward testimony of an inward spiritual transformation, it shall be administered only to those who give evidence of having been born again by faith in Jesus Christ. The Church shall accept as valid any regular form of water baptism if it is in agreement with the considered convictions of the individual believer, but the Church shall practice believer's baptism by submersion.
- B. COMMUNION: The Lord's Supper shall be administered on a regular basis as a commemoration of Jesus' sacrificial death, burial and resurrection, the elements being used as emblems of His body and blood. It shall be open to all self-examined believers, regardless of church affiliation.

ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3rds) majority of those members present and voting by secret ballot at a duly called congregational meeting. Amendment(s) may be proposed by

boards, officers, committees, group ministries or members of the congregation. A written proposal must be submitted to the Elder Board for approval. After approval, the proposed amendment(s) shall be published by letter to the membership and in the worship bulletin. The congregation will be notified in the worship bulletin and from the pulpit of the time and place of the scheduled meeting on the two (2) consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting.