

**We Believe**  
**Article VI. The Church**

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

**There are Four Essential concepts or beliefs in the Congregational Church.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Believers
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Church
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Association
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Processes

**1. \_\_\_\_\_ Believers**

\_\_\_\_\_ **church membership is the most important distinctive in the Baptist Church.**  
(Acts 2:47, 1 Corinthians 1:1-3, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

**2. \_\_\_\_\_ Church**

**The most important distinction concerning autonomy in the Baptist church is not that we are \_\_\_\_\_ of others, but that we are \_\_\_\_\_ upon Christ.**

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**3. \_\_\_\_\_ Association**

The early church rallied behind statements like the Nicene Creed in 381 and the Apostles Creed.

And today we rally behind our church covenant and our doctrines as expressed in the BF&M. As we have mentioned before Baptists have associated around confessions of faith since the 1600's.

**As Harrisburg Baptist Church we associate together as members:**

**- Through our church \_\_\_\_\_ . It for guides and directs us in our \_\_\_\_\_ and our lifestyle.**

**Harrisburg Baptist Church Covenant (Constitution and By-Laws 2015)**

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

We pledge, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to serve God in the unity of the spirit and of Christian love; to strive for the growth of this church in knowledge and holiness; to walk together in Christian love; to promote the spiritual and physical welfare of the church; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry of the church.

We also pledge to maintain family and private devotions; to educate our children religiously; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to serve God in all of our relationships; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealing, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to be faithful to the church; to seek to be an example for Christ in all things; to use our influence to combat militant sin and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further pledge to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating liquor and other substances; to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and, mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover pledge that when we remove from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and this principle of God's word.

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- Around \_\_\_\_\_ as expressed in the Baptist Faith & Message.

**4. \_\_\_\_\_ Processes**

In the constitution of Harrisburg Baptist Church our polity is communicated as:

“The government of this church is vested solely in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body nor does it seek to exercise such control but recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches.” (HBC Constitution and By-Laws)

Regardless of the practical ways that a church organizes itself, Jesus is the head of the Church.

**Democracy in the church is not about choosing what pleases or benefits the \_\_\_\_\_.**  
**This is called \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Democracy in the church is not about choosing to do what benefits the \_\_\_\_\_. This is called the \_\_\_\_\_ principle and was proposed by an atheist philosopher, John Rawls of Harvard in the 1970s.**

**Democracy in the church is practiced when the church votes and agrees to \_\_\_\_\_**  
**\_\_\_\_\_ by following \_\_\_\_\_ as closely as possible in each situation.**