

ORGANIZATION

A. Name

This church is to be known as the Hartland Bible Church of Johnson Creek, Middleport, New York 14105.

B. Purpose - the objectives of this church shall be to glorify God as follows:

1. To edify those who believe In Jesus Christ.
2. To evangelize the community for which it has responsibility.
3. To provide a public place for worship and service.
4. To obey the Word of God.
5. To preach and teach the Word of God.
6. To support the world-wide preaching of the Gospel.

C. Church Government

1. Authority

This organization will be a self - sustaining Bible church. The final authority for all decisions and actions shall be retained by the Board of Elders who are fully accountable to the active membership. (Heb.13:7, 17; I Thes. 5:12, 13; 1 Peter 5:1-6)

2. Independence

This organization shall be a sovereign independent Bible church. It may cooperate with other organizations of like precious faith, for fellowship and service either by formal or informal alliance. In no case, however, shall decision making power over its affairs be surrendered. The church retains the right to withdraw from any such association as it chooses.

3. Support

The church's work, ministry, missionary program, and all other phases of service, will be supported solely by freewill contributions of its membership and friends. (II Corinthians 9:7; Malachi 3:10; I Corinthians 16:2).

II. DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

A. Scriptures

We believe in the verbal-plenary (full, complete, entire) Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures (excluding the apocrypha). We accept fully the writing of the Old and New Testaments as the very Word of God, without error in the original writings. Therefore, they are altogether sufficient in themselves as our only infallible and authoritative rule in matters of faith and conduct. (II Tim. 3:16 & 17; Matt. 24:35; Isa. 40:8; Psalm 119:105; II Pet. 1:23 & 25; Isa. 55:11; Jn. 12:48.)

B. God

We believe in one God eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; Three In One, co-equal, which is the Trinity. (Hebrews 9:14; Matthew 3:16 & 17; II Corinthians 3:14; I Corinthians 8:6)

C. Jesus Christ

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, the Eternal Word and only Begotten Son, without any change in His divine nature became man by a miracle of the Virgin Birth, thus to continue forever as both true God and true man, one Person with two natures. /We believe that as man He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin, that as the perfect Lamb of

God He gave Himself in death upon the cross, bearing there the sin of the world and suffering its full penalty of divine wrath in our place, that He arose bodily from the grave, that as our great High Priest He ascended into heaven, there to appear before the Father as our Advocate and Intercessor. (Jn. 1:14; Heb. 1:6; Isa. 7:14; Luke 1:31, 34-35; Heb. 4:15, I Pet. 1:18-19; 2:24; I Cor. 5:21; Jn. 20; Heb. 3:1, 4:14, I Jn. 2:1; Rom. 8:34)

D. Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who is the third person of the Trinity. He was involved in the creation, in the revelation of God's Word and the redemption of the world. He is presently at work revealing and glorifying Jesus Christ by convicting men of sin, convincing men of their need of a Savior and converting them. He indwells every believer giving newness of life and empowers the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. He guides believers into all truth, sealing them until the day of redemption. He sanctifies (sets apart, consecrates), appoints and bestows spiritual gifts to every believer who surrenders to Him.

E. Satan

We believe in the personality of Satan, the deceiver, and unholy god of this world, who is still working to destroy the souls of men. He and all his angels and all who receive not Christ as their Savior, will perish in the lake of fire. (Isaiah 14:12-14; Luke 4:6-7, John 3:8; Revelation 20; II Corinthians 11:14).

F. Creation

We believe that the universe and man came into existence by direct creation of God as recorded in Genesis. (Genesis 1 & 2; Psalm 33:6, 9; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17)

G. The Fall of Man

We believe that man, Adam, was created in the image of God, that he sinned, and thereby incurred not only physical death, but spiritual death, which is separation from God, and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature. (I Corinthians 15:22; I Corinthians 2:14; Romans 5:12, 14 & 17; Romans 6:23)

H. The Virgin Birth - See Article II, Section C. (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:14)

I. Salvation

1. Factors involved in Salvation

a) God's grace is the origin of salvation. We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition for conversion. (Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9 & 10, Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

b) Christ's death is the basis of salvation.

c) Man's faith is the condition for salvation.

2. Atonement for Sin

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified through His shed blood. (I John 4:10, I John 2:2; Romans 8, I Peter 1:18-19).

3. Results of Salvation

We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit, and thereby they become children of God and heirs of

eternal life. Proper evidence of the new birth appears in the fruits of repentance and fruit of the Spirit produced by faith and the newness of life through the "indwelling" power of the Holy Spirit. (John 3:3; II Corinthians 5:17; I John 5:1; II Peter 1:4; Romans 6:23; Colossians 2:13 Ephesians 4:30; Phil. 1:6; I Peter 1:5; Galatians 5:22 & 23).

4. Assurance of Salvation

Assurance of salvation is not based on the presence or absence of fruit. Assurance is placed solely on the grounds of the work of Christ on the cross and my faith therein. (John 5:24)

J. The Local Church

We believe that the local church is a congregation of born again believers, observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them according to His Word. We believe that the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all men. The local church has the absolute right of self-government and that the one and only head is Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. It is scriptural for churches of like precious faith to cooperate for the furtherance of the gospel. The local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of this cooperation. We believe that the qualifications and duties for the officers of the church (pastor and other elected officers) are clearly defined In the Scriptures. See Article V. (Acts 2:41-42; 15:13-18; I Corinthians 1:12; Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 4:11-12; Acts 20:17-28, I Timothy 3:17; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23-24).

K. The Ordinances of the Church

1. Baptism

a. What is Baptism?

It is a public act whereby an individual testifies to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ who is the Savior and Lord of his life. (Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38-39.)

b. Who should be baptized?

Everyone who knows and loves Jesus Christ should be baptized. The only prerequisite in Scripture to Believer's Baptism is that "they received the Word" which Peter declared to them, Acts 2:38. Therefore, we do not set any age limit but do ask each candidate to be interviewed by the Board of Elders (see Article IV, Section A and Article V. Section D, Par. 3) for the purpose of hearing his testimony regarding the Word he has received.

c. Why should a Christian be baptized?

1) The example of Jesus Christ, Matthew 3:13-17.

2) It is a command of Jesus Christ for all who truly love Him, (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:5-16)

3) It was the practice of the New Testament Church, Acts 2:38-41 & 47.

4) It is also a means of blessing. Obedience to God's Word always brings blessing. As we grow and develop a closer relationship with Jesus Christ It will be the natural desire of the heart, to do what He has asked, John 15:10-11.

d. When should a person be baptized?

At an appropriate time following the conversion experience. Since it is an act of obedience it is something that should be accomplished as soon as

possible to avoid misunderstanding or cause our love for Christ, which is seen through obedience, to be questioned. (John 15:11,14; Acts 2:41; 8:36-38; 10:44-48; 16:25-33).

e. By what method should a person be baptized?

The Bible teaches that baptism should be administered by immersion. We reach this conclusion from the following:

1) The Greek word "baptize" means to plunge under, to submerge.

2) From the example of Christ in Matthew 3:16 we learn that He "came immediately up out of the water."

3) Other Biblical expressions relating to the experience of baptism such as the need for much water, John 3:23; "and they both went down into the water" Acts 8:38; and "coming up out of the water" Mark 1:10, give every definite evidence that baptism was by immersion.

4) In Romans 6:3-6 we find that baptism must fulfill the symbolical image of death, burial, and resurrection. We note also that baptism is referred to as "being planted" and being raised. It is therefore not difficult to see that the only form of baptism which fulfills the symbolical representation is the immersion of a believer in water.

f. What does baptism represent?

It symbolically depicts the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and declares that the candidate has identified with Christ in that:

1) He is dead to sin (i.e. no longer living under the control of the sin nature although he still has it.) Romans 6:6, 11-12; 8:13; Colossians 3:5.

2) His sins are buried and he has been cleansed by the washing of water through the Word of God. (John 15:3; Ephesians 5:26) and that which has been buried with Christ will not be remembered against him, (Psalm 103:12; Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17).

3) He is raised together with Christ and has the power to live in the newness of life, (Romans 6:4; Phil. 4:13; II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20).

4) It further symbolizes the candidate's confident hope in the resurrection of born-again believers from the dead to life eternal when Christ shall appear. (I Corinthians 15:23; 15:50-54; II Corinthians 5:1-8, I Th. 4:16-18).

2. The Lord's Supper

This is a memorial feast, instituted by our Lord Jesus to set forth the significance of His death until He comes. By memorial feast we mean that we "eat the bread" and "drink the cup" as Christ said. "In remembrance of Me". (I Corinthians 11:24-26). When as obedient believers we participate in the Communion Service, we demonstrate a mutual faith and fellowship in Christ's death for us. (I Corinthians 10:16-17). The Lord's Supper symbolizes our communion with Christ and is regularly repeated to help us recognize the necessity for continuance in the Newness of Life, Romans 8:14.

L. The Security of the Believer

We believe that all who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ are assured of their eternal salvation here and now. (Phil. 1:6; John 10:28-29; Romans 8:35-39; Jude 1; II Timothy 1:12; I John 5:11-13; I Corinthians 3:1-15. John 5:24)

M. The Righteous and the Wicked

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the righteous to the state of eternal blessedness in heaven with Jesus Christ the Lord. The wicked dead will be bodily resurrected (though at a later time than the righteous dead) to enter the everlasting state of conscious suffering of the lost in the Lake of Fire. (Acts 24:15; I Corinthians 15:12-58; II Corinthians 4:14; 5:1-8; Rev. 20:11-15; Mal. 3:18; Gen. 18:23; Rom. 6:17-18; I John 5:19; Rom. 7:6; 6:23; Prov. 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matt. 25:34-41; John 8:21).

N. Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except to things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Lord of the conscience. (Rom. 13:17; II Samuel 23:3; Exodus 18:21-22; Acts 23:5; Matt. 22:21; Acts 5:20; 4:19-20; Daniel 3:17-18; I Tim. 2:1-2).

O. Separation

We believe in obedience to the Biblical command to separate entirely from worldliness and ecclesiastical apostasy unto God. Biblical separation does not mean isolation from the people of the world regarding their basic spiritual and physical needs. (Rom. 16:17; II Cor. 6:14; 7:1; I Th. 1:9-10; I Tim. 6:3-5; II John 9-11).

P. Things to Come

The "blessed hope" of every believer is the personal, bodily pre-millennial and imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (Acts 1:11; I Th. 4:13-18; Luke 12:40)

1. We believe in the transformation of the righteous both dead and living at the Rapture of the Church. (I Cor. 15:50-54; I Th. 4:13-18)

2. We believe that the Great Tribulation will follow the Rapture of the Church. This will be a seven year period when Antichrist will establish his throne and rule the world. During this period God turns His attention upon Israel and again deals specifically with this nation. (Acts 15:13-16, I Th. 2:4; Rev. 7:11:1-2, 14-19)

3. We believe that the second coming of Christ will close the tribulation period at the battle of Armageddon. (John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Heb. 9:28, Zech. 14; Luke 19:15-19; Rev. 19:11-21).

4. We believe that the millennial reign of Christ will begin following the battle of Armageddon, and it will be at this time that the Throne of David will be re-established in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. (II Samuel 7:12-16, Psalm 89:3-4; Jer. 33:22, 25-26; Acts 2:29-30; Rev. 20:6; Isaiah. 9:6-7; 11:1-16; Luke 1:32.)

III. COVENANT

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the public confession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ. We purpose, therefore, by the aid of the

Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to attend its services regularly, to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; to give faithfully of time and talent in its activities; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel throughout all nations. We also purpose to maintain family and private devotions, to train our children according to the Word of God, to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct; to avoid all gossip, backbiting, and unrighteous anger; to abstain from all forms of activity which dishonor our Lord Jesus Christ, cause stumbling to a fellow believer or hinder the winning of a soul to Christ, to be zealous in our efforts to advance the cause of Christ, our Savior and to give Him preeminence in all things.

We further purpose to encourage one another in the blessed hope of our Lord's return; 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 seek it without delay. We moreover purpose that when we remove from this place we will as soon as possible unite with some other church of like precious faith (born-again believers) where we will be able to carry out the principles of the Word of God