Rationale for the review and revision of the

Constitution and By-Laws of Hyland Heights Baptist Church

Preamble:

At a regular quarterly business meeting in 2019, the church voted on a motion to review and update the Hyland Heights Baptist Church Constitution and By-Laws. A committee was formed and presented for approval at the Annual Business Meeting in December 2019. The church approved the following members: Bruce Devers, Peggy Jones, Bill Gillespie, Lynne Sexton and Pastor Brian as the staff representative. In the past year both Dustin DuBose and Jeannine Dorrin were added.

The Committee began their research with a consultation from Dr. David Adams who has instructed Pastoral Seminary students for over 40 years on how to draft a Constitution and By-Laws document. It then collected, reviewed and referenced at least six sample Constitution and By-Law documents of like-minded churches from around the country. Using these resources as well the guidance of Robert’s Rules of Order, the Committee began to review and revise the Hyland Heights Document section by section, line by line and word by word. Prayerfully and painstakingly, this Committee poured over not only the text, but also its meaning and intention. It was the desire of the Committee to make necessary adjustments that would allow the vision of Hyland Heights to propel forward without losing the focus and dependence on the Word of God that guides and directs us. Many long hours of conversation, discussion, and debate ensued over the past 15 months. In cases where certain groups or individuals needed to provide input, the Committee sought them out. Various committees and the Leadership Team have reviewed the document, in either part or the whole, and provided their feedback as well.

It was definitely a work of love, first for the Lord but also for Hyland Heights Baptist Church. We are not presenting a perfect document, because we know that we cannot produce such a thing. We do however, present for your approval, an updated and revised Constitution and By-Laws with three purposes; dealing with and protecting against contemporary issues affecting the church, providing a clear and cohesive structure and eliminating outdated or restrictive material that might hinder the ministry, mission and effective function of Hyland Heights Baptist Church.

A. Why we need to do this task

1. The Church voted to complete this task during a regular business meeting.

2. We are at risk from out-of-date expectations, procedures and personnel.

3. We are at risk because we are not addressing contemporary issues.

4. The document is so detailed that it restricts or limits effective function.

B. According to pp. 12-13 of Robert’s Rules of Order we are to…

1. Define the primary characteristics of the organization and therefore protect the church,

its members, staff, facilities, and resources.

2. Prescribe how the church functions by…

a. Updating the document to addresses contemporary concerns

b. Removing outdated components

c. Reinforcing the values, strength and purpose of the document

3. Clarify all significant rules so that they cannot be changed without previous notice

and the vote of a specified large majority by…

a. Rewriting outdated language

b. Creating a document with better ease of use to assure compliance

C. This was accomplished by the following work;

1. Review and evaluation of the entire document.

2. Revision by incorporating carefully analyzed portions of similar churches’ documents.

3. Rewriting sections that contain antiquated language.

4. Removal of items that no longer apply, reducing the restrictions of specificity.

5. Relocation of details to supporting documents.

D. Revisions to the Constitution

1. Overall, adjustments were made to the format, spelling and grammatical inconsistencies or errors. A Table of Contents was added for easier reference to the various Articles and Sections.

2. Article I. Preamble – modifications were made for clarity and distinction of purpose. The committee felt that taking the purposes out of the paragraph and listing them numerically would produce a greater impact on their value and clarity in their purpose.

3. Article II. Name and Purposes – The primary paragraph remains intact. The second paragraph was moved to Article VI for the purpose of unification.

4. Article III. Statement of Faith – For simplicity, the committee chose to remove all the wording of the individual Articles of Faith and reference the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 edition for a more thorough description of each doctrine. There is no change to our adherence to these Articles of Faith.

5. Article IV. Church Membership Responsibilities and Covenant –Although the principles have remained intact, the structure and language have been updated. It was the committee’s desire to produce a document that was easy to understand and therefore easy to adopt and uphold by our membership. Each expectation is clearly supported, even expected in Scripture.

6. Article V. Polity and Relationships – This Article replaces IV Character for the purpose of clarity and simplicity.

7. Article VI. Marriage, Life, Gender, and Sexuality – It is important for the church to have a clear stance on these issues. So, it is necessary to refer again to a thorough document that states a biblical view of these issues. The Nashville Statement of 2017 does just that and it is the desire of the committee to protect the church and make clear our position on these issues as approved and recommended by the Leadership Team in 2020.

8. Article VII. Constitutional Amendments – This section only required some grammatical adjustments.

E. Revisions to the By-Laws

1. Overall, spelling and grammar issues were corrected. Also, a unified format and font were adopted throughout the entire document.

2. Article I. Membership – This article was updated for continuity and clarity regarding membership qualifications and classifications. The duties were arranged to coincide with the membership covenant and all rights were organized and clearly identified. Sections 1.8, 1.9, and 1.10 were collected from various areas of the By-Laws, updated and organized.

3. Article II. Church Leaders – The title was updated to better fit the content of this article. Several additions were made to adequately reflect our current staff and volunteer positions, expectations and responsibilities. Several deletions were made due to the changes in roles and responsibilities now handled by paid staff.

4. Article III. Leadership Team – There was a need to update the list of participants of the Leadership Team as well as clarify and simplify the details regarding their duties and meetings. Little to no changes were made to the sections on conflict of interest and non-compensation for Team members.

5. Article IV. Deacons – The committee felt it was necessary to separate the Deacons from Article V. Standing Committees/Teams. The reason for this was that the Deacons are not a committee but rather a biblically prescribed body of selected men to assist the pastors in the work of the ministry. Clarity was given to the sections on membership, duties and meetings for better effectiveness and purpose.

6. Article V. Committees – A clear definition was provided for all committees and each committee was reviewed and reorganized for consistency. All now include membership criteria, meetings, and duty expectations. Clarity on the leadership of the committees is also included. Some unused committees were removed, and a couple others were added based on the current needs and function of the Church.

7. Article VI. Teams – This is a new Article designed to identify and define needed areas of service for the Church.

8. Article VII. Ministries – This is a new Article designed to identify and define the various ministry areas of the Church. It replaces the contents of the former Article VII. Church Organizations.

9. Article VIII. Church Meetings – Greater clarity is provided to include details regarding baptism and the Lord’s Supper in Section 8.1. Worship. Simple clarification was made regarding the business meetings of the church regarding notification to the body, and responsibilities/practices at said meetings.

10. Relocation of Article IX. Settlement of Disputes – This article was moved to Section 10.1. Miscellaneous as the Committee did not feel it necessitated its own Article. It was also reworded to put the responsibility of reconciliation on the individual believer and not on the church as a whole.

11. Article IX. Fiscal Policies – A couple of the Sections were updated for clarity. Section 9.3 Safeguards on Accounting had significant changes. Reasons for these updates are primarily due to changes and updates to financial practice or individuals responsible for those duties. It is accurate with current practices.

12. Article X. Miscellaneous – Along with relocating Section 10.1, Section 10.2. Pastoral Ordination was added to this Article. Former Section 10.6 was deleted because those issues are addressed in the Personnel Handbook. Section 10.7 and 10.8 were set aside for future review. Some components of 10.8 are included in the Safety and Security Policies and not required in this document.

13. Article XI. Distribution – Slight wording change do provide greater significance to membership requirements.

14. Article XII. Amendments to the By-Laws – Simplicity and clarity were needed here along with a greater requirement for approval from simple majority to a two-thirds majority.

15. Authorization of Adoption – The authorized signer has been updated to comply with current contexts and expectations.