

# CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

## CONSTITUTION

### PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of *this* church and the freedom of action of *its* body in relation to other churches.

### ARTICLE I NAME

This body shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Jasper, Indiana.

### ARTICLE II AFFILIATION AND PURPOSE

#### Section 1. Affiliations

This church shall be affiliated with the White River Baptist Association, the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana and the Southern Baptist Convention as well as its sister churches.

#### Section 2. Our Vision Statement

“A church united to enjoy God’s grace and extend His glory”

#### Section 3. Our Core Values<sup>1</sup>

- A. To be a **kingdom-focused** church that passionately pursues planting churches, partnering with like-minded churches, and praying for the church universal.
- B. To be a **gospel-saturated community** that is marked by authentic relationships, vital companionship, and mutual edification that is brought together to partner for missions as well as to equip families.
- C. To practice **worship-fueled discipleship**, wherein we fight together in the battle to believe that God is the source of all delight instead of the fleeting pleasures of sin (idolatry).

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<sup>1</sup> Our Purpose Statement is further defined in Appendix I: Our Vision and Mission

D. To be a hospitable people that offers a **refuge for the broken** with the hopes of Christ-centered transformation.

E. To be a **missional** people living as though sent to our local community and our global community with the intention of spreading Christ for the joy of all peoples.

F. To be a community of believers that is radically **centered upon the glory of God**.

### **ARTICLE III Statement of Basic Beliefs & Covenant**

#### **Section 1. Statement of Faith and Doctrine:**

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired word of God without mixture or error in its original language and the basis for our beliefs. As such we also subscribe to the doctrinal statement of “The Baptist Faith and Message 2000” as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention. (See Appendix II)

#### **Section 2. Church Covenant**

- Having, as we trust, been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to Him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other.
- We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian church, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and encouraging one another as occasion may require.
- We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others.
- We will endeavor to bring up such as may at any time be under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.
- We will rejoice at each other’s happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other’s burdens and sorrows.
- We will seek, by divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, remembering that we have been buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in the newness of life. Furthermore, we engage to seek God’s help in abstaining from all drugs, food, drink, and practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another’s faith”.
- We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We

will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel to all nations.

- We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.
- May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

### **Section 3. Ordinances**

The ordinances of the church are believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper.

## **ARTICLE IV GOVERNANCE AND RELATIONSHIPS**

The *governance* of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership. (See Article I of the Bylaws.) All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable only to the church, unless otherwise specified by church action.

This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation common among Southern Baptist churches. Insofar as is *biblical*, this church will cooperate with and support the White River Baptist Association, the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

## **BYLAWS**

### **ARTICLE I CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Section 1. General**

This is an autonomous and democratic Southern Baptist church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-governance in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

#### **Section 2. Candidacy**

##### **A. Qualifications**

Any person meeting these qualifications may offer himself or herself as a candidate for membership in this church.

To qualify for membership in this church, a person:

- must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration,
- who has been baptized in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration,
- and who is in agreement with the core doctrines as explained in Essential Doctrines in Appendix III

## **B. New Member Process**

The normal process for becoming a member is:

1. An assessment of a person's qualification for membership in an interview with at least two leaders (elders) of the church and one of the following:

- By profession of faith followed by baptism according to the policies of this church.
- By promise of a letter of recommendation from another church of like faith.
- By statement of a prior conversion and subsequent baptism by a church of like faith, when no letter is obtainable.

2. Accepted by vote of at least 75% of the members present at any regular Sunday morning worship service. Upon their approval newly elected members shall relinquish their membership in other churches.

3. Upon reception, the new member will be presented at any regular church service to celebrate their new membership.

## **Section 3. Rights of Members**

- Attendance at, appropriate participation in, and affirming/voting during church members meetings (Act. 2:41; 4:4; 5:13-15; 6:1-6; ICo. 1:2; 5:4-7; 13)
- Service in the ministries of the church to extend God's kingdom in accordance with one's gifts, calling, and qualifications (ICo. 1:2; 12:4-27; Eph. 4:7,11-12,16; IPe.4:10-11)
- Oversight and care from elders and deacons of the church (Act. 20:28; IPe. 5:2-3)
- Discipline from the membership of the church under the direction of the elders. (Pro. 12:1; Act. 2:41; 9:26; Gal. 6:1-2, 10; ICo. 5:4-5; Heb. 12:4-13).

## **Section 4. Termination of Membership**

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- A. Death of the member.
- B. Transfer by letter to another Southern Baptist church.
- C. Exclusion by action of this church.
- D. Erasure upon request or proof of membership in a church of another denomination.
- E. After nonattendance for one year and if possible completion of an exit interview.

## **Section 5. Discipline**

### **A. General Statement**

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

Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from the Lord's Supper for a definite period, removal from office, and removal from fellowship.

(See Mt. 18:15–17; 2 Thess. 3:14–15; 1 Tim. 5:19–20 1 Cor. 5:4–5).

### **B. Purpose of Church Discipline**

Church discipline shall be conducted for the purpose of:

- Repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined
- Instructing in righteousness and for the good of other Christians—as an example to them
- The purity of the church as a whole
- The good of our corporate witness to non-Christians
- Glorifying God by reflecting His holy character

## **Section 6. Inactive Membership**

Inactive members shall be those members who have relocated away from the immediate area and are thus not able to attend this church regularly. The church office shall maintain a file/list of inactive members for the sake of posterity.

Inactive members shall be granted a letter of transfer upon request providing there are no moral or ethical reasons for contrary action. Inactive members will not be removed for nonattendance (per section 4, letter E).

## **Section 7. Exit Interviews**

We would request that all members fill out an "Exit Interview" prior to removing or transferring membership from FBC.

## **ARTICLE II MEETINGS**

### **CHURCH MEETINGS**

#### **Section 1. Worship Services**

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

#### **Section 2. Members Meetings**

##### **A. General Guideline**

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

##### **B. Regular Members Meetings**

The church shall hold regular members meetings as designated by the church on a date set by the church. The elders (pastors) shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

The chairman of the elders (pastors) shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church. In the absence or incapacity of the chairman of the elders (pastors), another elder appointed by the elders (pastors) shall perform these duties. The date, time, and purpose of any regular or special meeting shall be announced at the Sunday morning service of the church at least two weeks preceding the meeting.

##### **C. Annual Meeting**

There shall be an annual members' meeting, at which officers are normally elected, positions filled, and a budget approved by the membership in January. The fiscal year will commence on January 1.

#### **D. Special Members Meetings**

The church may conduct called members meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at the Sunday morning service of the church at least two Sunday morning services prior to the meeting.

For non-essential—yet urgent—matters, whereas time does not permit standard notice, all reasonable means will be employed to inform members of the special members meetings. In such an instance a quorum will be understood to be met by no less than 25 members present.

#### **E. Quorum**

For all meetings, special and regular, provided that all constitutional provisions for notifications have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present.

#### **F. Parliamentary Rules**

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all members meetings of the church. Meetings shall be run according to Robert's Rules of Order. On any matter that is brought to vote, a two-thirds vote is needed for it to pass (unless this constitution specifies otherwise). Abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. Only votes cast by members present at the time of the meeting will be counted.

### **ARTICLE III CHURCH OFFICERS**

All who serve as officers of the church and those who serve on church committees shall be members of this church.

#### **Section 1—Summary**

##### **A. The Head of the Church**

Jesus Christ is the Lord and head of this church and He rules primarily through the Scriptures.

##### **B. Church Officers**

The biblical offices in the church are elders (pastors) and deacons, but the church is ultimately governed by the congregation. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of clerk and treasurer. Our church also recognizes the board of trustees as legal officers for the church. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

## **Section 2—Elders (pastors)**

### **A. Description**

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

The elders (pastors) shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, oversee the work of the deacons and ministry teams, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions.

### **B. Selection and Terms of Office**

The elders (pastors) shall be comprised of not less than five men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Tit. 1:6-9. Only men may serve as elders (pastors) in accordance with 1 Tim. 2:12; 3:2. A majority of the active eldership shall be composed of church members not in the regular pay of the church. No elder (pastor) shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure. Those elders (pastors) not receiving compensation from the church will be called “non-staff elders” for the purpose of this constitution, although biblically and functionally there is no difference among the elders.

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders (pastors). This recognition shall be reaffirmed by the church triennially. After a non-staff elder (pastor) has served two consecutive three-year terms, he shall not be eligible for re-election to the eldership for at least one year. The elders will determine their own non-staff chair.

### **C. Termination**

An elder’s term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder (pastor) should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders (pastors) and, if need be only afterwards, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matt.

18:15-17 and 1 Tim. 5:17-21. Any elder (pastor) may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any formally called members' meeting of the church.

In the event of an accusation of a staff elder, the non-staff elders will be responsible for determining the validity of the accusation and/or the proper course.

### **Section 3—The Senior Pastor**

The senior pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder (pastor) described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the ministry of preaching and teaching.

His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out in Article 3, Section 2B, for elders (pastors). His call shall be defined as per Article 4, Section 3.

He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution. In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor the elders (pastors) shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

### **Section 4—Associate Pastor(s)**

The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of associate. An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder (pastor) described in Section 2 above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the ministry of preaching and teaching.

His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out in Article 3, Section 2B, for elders (pastors). His call shall be defined as per Article 4, Section 4.

He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation. In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the elders (pastors).

### **Section 5—Deacons**

The office of deacon is described in 1 Tim. 3:8-13 (cf. Acts 6:1-7). The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men who are giving of themselves in service to the church, who possess gifts of ministry, and who are called to further service and care for the church's members. The number of deacons shall

be determined by the needs of the ministry and the call and qualifications of men in the church.

These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons. This recognition shall be reaffirmed by the church triennially. After a deacon has served two consecutive three-year terms, he shall not be eligible for re-election to the diaconate for at least one year.

Deacons shall advise and assist the elders (pastors) in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the word, new and existing ministries of the church, and the care of the members of the congregation. The deacons may be organized in the most fitting way to accomplish the mission of the church. Thus the ministry of deacons may involve several diaconal committees. The deacons as a whole and each committee therein will determine its own chair.

The responsibilities of deacons do not include preaching, teaching, or oversight, which are the responsibilities of the elders (pastors), or financial control of the church. Deacon ministry will emphasize a ministry of service, not a ministry of oversight. Although they may teach and preach in contexts in which they are not infringing upon the oversight duties of elders (pastors) (Acts 6-7:53; Titus 2:3), the responsibilities of deacons include the following:

1. The ministry of mercy is a particular responsibility of deacons. They shall see that the sick, the sorrowing, and the aged receive spiritual and physical comfort.
2. Deacons shall also attend to the benevolence ministries of the church. They shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders (pastors) at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only.
3. Deacons shall attend to the accommodations for public worship. Deacons may assist in providing for the elements during the Lord's Supper.
4. Deacons shall attend to the welcoming and greeting ministries of the church.

### **Section 6—Church Clerk**

The church shall elect annually a clerk as its clerical officer. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the church.

The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a register of names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, death, or erasure, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church and preserve on file all communications and written official reports. The clerk shall be responsible for preparing the annual letter of the church to the association. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary who will assist the elected clerk. All church records are church property and shall be kept on church property unless otherwise designated by church action.

### **Section 7—Church Treasurer**

The church shall elect annually a church treasurer as its financial officer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each regular members meeting a financial summary.

The treasurer's report and records shall be reviewed annually by discussing with the finance team or public accountant.

### **Section 8—Trustees**

The church shall elect three or more trustees to serve as legal officers for the church. They shall hold in trust the church property. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property. When the signatures of trustees are required, they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to church-approved matters. Trustees who serve as legal representatives shall serve on a rotation basis, with one new legal trustee being elected every year. A non staff elder shall serve as a non-voting member to offer guidance. The trustees will determine their chair.

In addition the Trustees shall assist the church in matters related to properties administration. Its work includes such areas as maintaining all church properties for ready use, and recommending policies regarding use of properties.

### **Section 9—Personnel Committee**

The Personnel Committee assists the church in matters related to employed personnel administration, including those called by church action. Their work includes such areas as resolving staff issues, employment, salaries, benefits, other compensation, policies, job descriptions, and personnel services. The church shall elect a minimum of five members. A non-staff elder shall serve as a non-voting member to offer guidance. The personnel committee will determine their chair.

Those serving on the Personnel Committee shall be reaffirmed by the church triennially. After he/she has served two consecutive three-year terms, he/she shall not be eligible for re-election to the personnel committee for at least one year.

### **Section 10—Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee develops and recommends an overall stewardship development plan and a unified church budget. It advises and recommends in the administration of the gifts of church members and others, using sound principles of

financial management. It works with the treasurer in the preparation and presentation to the church of required reports regarding the financial affairs of the church.

The Finance Committee shall be, at minimum, composed of the chair of the trustees, the chair of the deacons, the chair of personnel, the bookkeeper, a non-staff elder, the Senior Pastor, and the treasurer that will serve as chairman.

## **ARTICLE IV ELECTIONS**

### **Section 1—Principles**

The process for church elections shall be carried out to fulfill the following principles:

1. Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, shall be an integral part of the election process.
2. Nominations shall proceed with the support of the elders (pastors).
3. All candidates for church office shall be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members.

### **Section 2—Selection of Officers**

#### **A. Process**

The election of officers shall be held at the annual members meeting of the church. Two months prior to the election the elders (pastors) should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process.

A selection of names of nominees to serve as elders (pastors), deacons, clerk, and treasurer shall be presented by the elders and made known to the church at least one month prior to voting. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders (pastors). Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders (pastors) as far in advance as possible before the meeting at which the church would vote on the candidates.

#### **B. Election and Commencement of Duties**

A person receiving 75% majority of all votes cast for any office is to be declared elected to that office.

The persons elected shall assume their respective offices at the beginning of the fiscal year (unless another date has been specifically designated). Elections to fill any vacancy that may occur during the course of the year may be held at any members' meeting, upon recommendation of the elders (pastors), in adherence to the process in section 2A.

### **Section 3—Calling of Senior Pastor**

#### **A. Process During Vacancy**

The church may declare the office of pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given.

When the office of senior pastor becomes vacant the church shall be called to a special called members meeting at which time an elder (pastor)--selected from within that body-- shall moderate. The elders will make a motion to form a pastor selection committee. This will be done within 2 weeks after the office has been declared vacant.

A Pastor Selection Committee shall be elected by the church to seek pastor, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. An active non-staff elder must be on the pastor selection committee.

During the time that the church is without a senior pastor, the elders (pastors) will be responsible for having the pulpit filled for worship services. It will be expected that current ministerial staff will be asked to fill the pulpit as much as possible.

#### **B. Election of Senior Pastor**

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose. At least one week's notice will be given at the Sunday morning worship service the week before the meeting is to take place. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those members present being necessary for a choice.

### **Section 4—Calling of Associate Pastor(s)**

In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential associate pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders

that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as associate pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of his wife if he is married) must be given at one Sunday morning service following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

## **Article V INDEMNIFICATION**

### **Section 1—Mandatory Indemnification**

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders (pastors) determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The church shall purchase appropriate insurance to meet these potential liabilities.

### **Section 2—Permissive Indemnification**

At the discretion of the elders (pastors), the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

### **Section 3—Procedure**

If a quorum of the elders (pastors) is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders (pastors) seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

## **ARTICLE VI DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian church (see, e.g., Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 6:1-8), the church shall urge its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles and the avoidance of suits of law to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities.

## **ARTICLE VII AMENDMENTS**

Changes in the constitution and bylaws may be made at any regular members meeting of the church provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous members meeting and copies of the proposed amendment shall have been made available to each member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments to the constitution shall be by three-fourths majority vote of church members present. Amendments to the bylaws shall have a concurrence of three-fourths majority vote of the members present and voting.

## **APPENDIX I OUR VISION AND MISSION**

### **Vision Statement:**

*“A church united to enjoy God’s grace and extend His glory”*

There are six core values that flow out of this overall vision statement:

1. Kingdom-Focused
2. Gospel-saturated Community
3. Worship-Fueled Discipleship
4. A Refuge for the Broken
5. Missional
6. God-Centered

### **Kingdom-Focused**

We understand that we are not “the” church. There are many other churches with varying expressions that are faithful to our common Head; Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we will be a kingdom-focused church

This value will be expressed through our passion to plant churches, partner with like-minded churches, and pray for the church universal.

### **Gospel-saturated Community**

We believe that the Church is a blood-bought community of believers that have been joined together for the glory of God. Those that comprise the church are believers that have been bought with the blood of Christ and are being transformed into an increasing commitment to treasuring the Lord's glory. The biblical term *koinonia* (self-sacrificing conformity to a shared vision) is the expression of life within the body. The gospel that has placed us into this *koinonia* informs every relationship.

Therefore, we will be a gospel-saturated community.

A gospel-saturated community is marked by:

- *Authentic relationships*: Because our identity is fundamentally in Christ we can authentically relate to one another.
- *Vital companionship*: Our union with one another is as necessary as a human body needing a brain, heart, lungs, etc. to function. Deep relationships within the body of Christ are not optional for the believer—they are vital.
- *Mutual Edification*: God is glorified in the display of diverse people unified for a common purpose. Part of this purpose is spurring one another on to take hold of Christ.
- *Partnering for Mission*: We are fundamentally brought together for the display of God's glory. The fact that God has joined us together and set us on mission is what separates us from The Rotary Club.
- *Family-Equipping*: Because the gospel informs every relationship a gospel-saturated community will be engaged in equipping families to further the mission of enjoying His grace and extending His glory.

You will see this value fostered by our passion to equip families (marriage-enrichment, child-rearing, singles ministries), exhort members (practicing regenerate church membership, church discipline, accountability groups), and edify one another to experience ever-increasing joy in God and extend His glory (prayer, discipleship, mentoring groups).

### **Worship-Fueled Discipleship**

We believe that discipleship is the process whereby a believer grows in knowledge and enjoyment of God at the expense of idolatry. We believe that Christian growth into Christ-likeness happens because the believer comes to realize, in an ever-increasing measure, that at His right hand are pleasures evermore (Psalm 16:11) and “the sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply”. Therefore, the fight of faith is a fight to believe that God is the source of all delight instead of the fleeting pleasures of sin (idolatry).

Therefore, our discipleship will be fueled by worship.

This value will inform our every action. Over every program, Bible study, sermon, relationship etc. we will ask the question “How does this help increase my joy in God above idolatry”?

We believe to truly ask this question of EVERYTHING will have far reaching consequences and will greatly inform and shape our discipleship relationships.

This will also shape not only the way we do spiritual disciplines but the fact that we do spiritual disciplines. The spiritual disciplines, such as bible reading, prayer, etc. are primarily for us to grab hold of what Christ has already purchased. The spiritual disciplines are the God-ordained means to increasing our joy in Him. Therefore, the means to live out worship-fueled discipleship is to saturate our lives with prayer and Scripture.

### **A Refuge for the Broken**

We believe that it is only by grace that we have entered into union with God and union with our gospel-saturated community. Because of this we believe we are to be people marked by grace. We believe in the already but not-yet aspect of redemption. As such we are broken people that are increasingly being healed in Jesus. We believe that Christ calls the church to be a refuge for the broken; but we also believe that this refuge will inevitably provide gospel healing.

Therefore, we will be a refuge for the broken

This value will inform several of our actions:

- *Purposeful Benevolence*—those that are broken and in need we will help. But we will seek ways to help for more than one day but a lifetime.
- *Community Resource*—we want our church to be known to the community as a place of resource. As the Lord extends common grace causing the sun to shine and the rain to come even upon unbelievers we want to extend this common grace to our community as well.
- *Transformative*—we want to be a church that is actively fighting brokenness with the transformative power of the gospel. This will cause us to form redemption groups, provide biblical counseling, and other avenues to heal brokenness with the gospel of Jesus.

- *Fighting Social Injustice*—a refuge for the broken will fight social injustice, not primarily through political means but through the transformative power of the gospel.
- *Hospitable People*—it should go without saying that a refuge for the broken will be marked by people that offer an atmosphere of hospitality. Our practices will be ultimately informed by the gospel—but we will act in such a way to be hospitable and accessible to the unbelieving community.

## **Missional**

To be “missional” fundamentally means to “live sent”. When a church “lives sent” we come to understand that when we gather as a church our fundamental task is to train and equip believers to live out the good news of the gospel in our community.

But this also means that we are not only sent to the people in our local community—but we are also sent to be his witnesses even to the ends of the earth. There is no square inch of creation that Jesus cannot cry out, “This is mine”. There is not one person on earth of whom it could be said God is not worthy of their worship. Furthermore, it is a scriptural mandate for the Church to take the gospel to every people group. And we see the fruit of this in Revelation 5 when peoples from every tribe, tongue, nation, and people are gathered around the throne to worship the Lord.

Furthermore, we believe that it is the call, of all believers, to not only tell the gospel story, but to also live the story of the gospel. As such we are called to not only evangelize but also make disciples. This means that we are called to reproduce our joy in God in the life of another person.

Therefore, we will *live sent* to our local community and our global community, with the intention of spreading Christ for the joy of all peoples.

## **God-Centered**

God is inexhaustible in His glory. The aim of all God’s actions is the honor and display of His glory. Our aim ought to be the same. Therefore, the ultimate purpose and aim of the church and the individual is to glorify God. This is more than just a theological statement it will inform all of our actions.

Therefore, everything we do as a people will be centered upon the glory of God

This is essentially what our mission statement says. We are united together for the common purpose of enjoying God’s glory and extending that glory (and our

enjoyment of Him) to all of the nations. What is God's glory? To say it simply it is the outer display of His inner beauty.

What does this mean for us as a church?

We will constantly ask the question: How does this magnify the beauty of God?

This will shape the way we ask questions as a church. Rather than saying, "how will this grow our church" we ask "is this being faithful". We do not have to walk around blindly wondering how to give glory to God. He has revealed to us through His Word that which glorifies Him. Therefore, another way of asking "does this magnify the beauty of God" is to ask "does this accurately represent God as He has revealed Himself in Scripture".

## APPENDIX II THE BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE 2000

### **I. The Scriptures**

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

*Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.*

### **II. God**

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

### **A. God the Father**

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

*Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.*

### **B. God the Son**

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

*Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.*

### **C. God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

*Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.*

### **III. Man**

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

*Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.*

### **IV. Salvation**

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from

personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

*Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.*

### **V. God's Purpose of Grace**

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-*

48; *John* 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; *Acts* 20:32; *Romans* 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; *1 Corinthians* 1:1-2; 15:24-28; *Ephesians* 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; *Colossians* 1:12-14; *2 Thessalonians* 2:13-14; *2 Timothy* 1:12; 2:10,19; *Hebrews* 11:39-12:2; *James* 1:12; *1 Peter* 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; *1 John* 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

## **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.

*Matthew* 16:15-19; 18:15-20; *Acts* 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; *Romans* 1:7; *1 Corinthians* 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; *Ephesians* 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; *Philippians* 1:1; *Colossians* 1:18; *1 Timothy* 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; *Hebrews* 11:39-40; *1 Peter* 5:1-4; *Revelation* 2-3; 21:2-3.

## **VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

*Matthew* 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; *Mark* 1:9-11; 14:22-26; *Luke* 3:21-22; 22:19-20; *John* 3:23; *Acts* 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; *Romans* 6:3-5; *1 Corinthians* 10:16,21; 11:23-29; *Colossians* 2:12.

## **VIII. The Lord's Day**

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's

conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

*Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.*

### **IX. The Kingdom**

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

*Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.*

### **X. Last Things**

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

*Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.*

### **XI. Evangelism and Missions**

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.*

## **XII. Education**

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is coordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

*Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.*

## **XIII. Stewardship**

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

*Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.*

## **XIV. Cooperation**

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

*Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.*

#### **XV. The Christian and the Social Order**

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

*Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16, 43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.*

#### **XVI. Peace and War**

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

*Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.*

### **XVII. Religious Liberty**

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

*Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.*

### **XVIII. The Family**

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

*Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.*

### **APPENDIX III ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES**

- In essential beliefs — we have unity.  
*“There is one Body and one Spirit...there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of us all...” Eph. 4:4-6*
- In non-essential beliefs — we have liberty.

*“Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters... Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls... So then each of us will give an account of himself to God... So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.”* Romans 14:1,4,12,22

- In all our beliefs — we show charity.  
*“...If I hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but also the very secrets of God, and if I have the faith that can move mountains — but have no love, I amount to nothing at all.”* 1 Cor. 13:2 (Ph)

## **The Essentials We Believe:**

### **1. About God**

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three personalities: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.

Genesis 1:1,26,27, 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 13:14

### **2. About Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven’s glory and will return again someday to earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Matthew 1:22, 23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5; 14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14,15; 1 Corinthians 15:3,4; Romans 1:3,4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14,15; Titus 2:13

### **3. About the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He give every believer a spiritual gift when they are saved. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily.

2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13, 14:16,17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:18

### **4. About the Bible**

The Bible is God's Word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is the truth without any mixture of error.

2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21; 2 Timothy 1:13; Psalm 119:105,160, 12:6; Proverbs 30:5

## **5. About Human Beings**

People are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. People are the supreme object of God's creation. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "sin". This attitude completely separates people from God and causes many problems in life.

Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1, 2

## **6. About Salvation**

Salvation is God's free gift to us but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith we are saved. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith.

Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8,9; John 14:6, 1:12; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:1

## **7. About Eternal Security**

Because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, the true believer is secure in that salvation for eternity. If you've been genuinely saved, you cannot "lose" it. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It's the grace and power of God that gives us this security.

John 10:29; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25, 10:10,14; 1 Peter 1:3-5

## **8. About Eternity**

People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally

separated from God is Hell. Hell is described as a place of great eternal torment. To be eternally in union with God is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence.

John 3:16; John 14:17; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:17-18; Revelation 20:15; 1 Cor. 2:7-9

## **9. About Human Sexuality**

God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity should be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. All forms of sexual immorality including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography are sinful acts of God's gift of sex. However, we understand that it is God's plan for the church to treat those who are engaged in such activity with the love of God, to help them to know Christ as their personal Savior, and to help them to live more holy lives.

Rom. 1:26-29; 1 Thess. 4:1-8