

ARTICLE IV - DOCTRINE

The Bible is God's special revelation of Himself so that we might know Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. In order to love God, learn of God and live for God, the Word of God is essential. True faith, teaching, spirituality, fellowship, service and the spread of the Gospel is achieved through a knowledge of His Word. Therefore, we are committed to the truth as revealed in His inerrant and infallible Word – the Bible. As a local New Testament Church, we put forth this summary of our beliefs based on His Word. Though not exhaustive, these teachings reveal the foundation upon which we desire to glorify Christ, edify one another and testify to the lost souls of men the excellencies of Jesus Christ.

1. THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the 66 books of the Bible are without error in their original writings.^a The author of the Bible is God, who used men moved by the Holy Spirit.^b Therefore, we believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture.^c We further believe the Bible to be the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions shall be tried. Thus, we believe the Bible to be the sole authority for our faith and practice.^d See APPENDIX 1 for additional information regarding the Scriptures.

- (a) *Psalm 19:7-9 and Psalm 119; and John 17:17.*
- (b) *1 Corinthians 1:13-14; and 2 Peter 1:19-21.*
- (c) *2 Timothy 3:15-17.*
- (d) *Hebrews 4:12.*

2. THE TRUE GOD

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God^a who is an infinite, eternal, self-existing^b, perfect Spirit.^c He is the great "I AM."^d He is the supreme ruler of heaven and earth.^e He is overwhelmingly glorious in character (holy, just, omniscient, wise, faithful, good, loving, merciful, free and sovereign), worthy of all honor and obedience.^f In the unity of the Godhead there are 3 persons^g—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit—who are equal in essence and divine perfection, yet distinct in person and role.^h

- (a) *Genesis 1:1; and Deuteronomy 6:4-5.*
- (b) *Genesis 1:1; Exodus 40:34-35; Job 36:26; Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 6:1-3; Romans 11:33-36; Hebrews 11:6 (His existence is assumed); and Revelation 1:8.*
- (c) *John 4:24 and 15:26.*
- (d) *Genesis 17:1; Exodus 3:14; and Mark 14:62.*
- (e) *1 Chronicles 29:11.*
- (f) *2 Samuel 22:4, Psalm 18:3; and 1 Peter 1:2.*
- (g) *Matthew 3:16-17 and 28:19; John 17:1-5; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:4; Ephesians 4:4-6; and Philippians 2:5-6.*
- (h) *Genesis 1:2 (Note distinct roles in Creation); John 15:26; Philippians 2:5-7; and Colossians 1:16.*

A. THE FATHER

We believe by the decree of the Father all things were created according to the kind intention of His will.^a As a result, the Father is glorified and will be glorified.^b

- (a) *Psalm 119:89-91; Isaiah 14:26-27 and 46:10-11; Daniel 4:35; and Acts 2:24-26 and 17:24-26.*
- (b) *John 17:1-5; Romans 11:33-36; and Ephesians 1:5 and 1:11.*

B. THE SON

We believe that God has revealed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ who is the eternal Son of God. He was active in creation at the beginning of the world and sustains all things.^a In accordance with the decree of the Father, He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of Mary, who was a virgin. As a result of His birth, in the person of Jesus Christ, true deity and sinless humanity were united—fully God and fully man.^b Jesus lived a sinless life, died a vicarious death, rose in bodily form and ascended into Heaven. He now ministers as our high priest, He is the head of the Body, the Church^c, He will one day return for His Bride, the Church, and He will establish His earthly kingdom as He sits on the Davidic throne.^d

(a) *John 1:1-4; Colossians 1:15; and Hebrews 1:1-4.*

(b) *Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; and Philippians 2:5-7.*

(c) *1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:17; 1 Timothy 2:5; and Hebrews 4:15 and 9:11-14.*

(d) *John 14:1-2; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; and Revelation 3:21.*

C. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature. He was active in creation.^a Presently, He is active in restraining the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled through the Church. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. He bears witness to the truth of the Gospel in preaching. He is the agent in the new birth and in the sanctification of a believer.^b He always functions in harmony with God's truth.^c

(a) *Genesis 1-3; Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; and 1 Peter 1:2.*

(b) *John 16:8-11; Romans 8:14-16; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 1:13-14; and 2 Thessalonians 2:7.*

(c) *John 14:25-26 and 16:13-15; and 1 Corinthians 2:10-13.*

3. CREATION

We believe in the Genesis account of creation whereby all creation was spoken into existence by God out of nothing in six (6) literal days. We believe man and woman were created in God's own image and after His own likeness.^a We further believe that humanity did not evolve from any other form of life. See APPENDIX 2 for additional information regarding creation.

Genesis 1-3; Exodus 20:11; Psalm 33:6-9; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16-17; and Hebrews 1:1-4.

4. THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man, although created without sin, fell by the transgression of one man, Adam.^a As a result, all of humanity is in sin by nature, disposition and act. Humanity, therefore, is justly under the condemnation of God without defense or excuse.^b

(a) *Genesis 2:16-17 and 3:6-7; and 1 Corinthians 15:21-22.*

(b) *Isaiah 53; John 3:35-36; Romans 1:18-20, 3:9-18 and 5:12-19; and Ephesians 2:1-3.*

5. SALVATION

A. We believe that the only way of salvation for sinners is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.^a This is possible due to the sinless life, the substitutionary death and the resurrection from the grave of Jesus Christ. He was made to be sin and a curse for us and died in our stead.^b Nothing man does can add or take away from the finished work of Christ.

(a) *Romans 3:20 and 3:28; Galatians 2:16; and Ephesians 2:8.*

(b) *Isaiah 53:4-6; 2 Corinthians 5:21; and 1 Peter 2:24.*

- B. We believe that the new birth comes only through faith in Christ. Repentance is inherent in belief and is not in itself a separate and independent condition of salvation.^a There are no other acts (such as a religious ritual, baptism, prayer, good works, etc.) that can be added to belief as a condition for salvation.^b
- (a) *John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Romans 5:1; and Ephesians 1:13-14.*
 (b) *Ephesians 2:8-9; and Titus 3:5.*
- C. We believe that justification is God declaring righteous^a those who, by faith, believe^b in the finished work of Jesus Christ. This righteousness is wholly apart from any merit or work of man.^c Instead it involves the placement of our sins onto Christ and the placement of Christ's righteousness onto us.^d Therefore, God is just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.^e
- (a) *Romans 5:1 and 8:33.*
 (b) *John 1:12.*
 (c) *Romans 3:20 and 4:6; and Titus 3:5.*
 (d) *2 Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 2:14; and 1 Peter 2:24.*
 (e) *Romans 3:26.*
- D. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the agent in salvation.^a He draws sinners by His power to the truth of the Gospel so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel, the result being a newness of life.^b
- (a) *John 16:8-11; and 1 Corinthians 2:14.*
 (b) *Romans 8:9; Galatians 3:1-3; and Ephesians 2:14-22.*
- E. We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God by which He graciously saves sinners.^a Though a divine act, it is perfectly consistent with the responsibility of man to respond to the Gospel. Election includes all the means in connection with the salvation of a sinner.^b It is the most glorious display of God's grace and goodness toward mankind.^c His election of sinners for salvation excludes all boasting by man and promotes within man humility, love and praise of the one who redeemed him.^d The Biblical teaching on election is foundational for the assurance of our salvation.^e
- (a) *Ephesians 1:3-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:8-9; and 1 Peter 1:1-2.*
 (b) *Exodus 33:18-19; Jeremiah 31:3; Romans 9:22-24; and Ephesians 1:9-11.*
 (c) *Romans 3:27-28; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, 4:7; and Colossians 3:12.*
 (d) *1 Corinthians 15:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:12-13; 2 Timothy 2:10; and 1 Peter 2:9.*
 (e) *Ephesians 1:3-6; and Hebrews 6:11-12.*

6. THE EXTENT OF SALVATION

- A. We believe that the blessing of salvation is made free to all by the Gospel. It is the duty of all to accept it by faith. Nothing prevents the salvation of anyone, but his own depravity and rejection of the Gospel. Therefore we believe the atonement was unlimited.
- John 5:24; 2 Peter 2:1; and 1 John 4:10.*
- B. We believe that when an unregenerated person exercises faith in Christ, he/she passes immediately out of spiritual death into spiritual life.
- John 3:16; Romans 5:1; Colossians 2:10; and 1 Thessalonians 2:13.*

7. SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification is the process by which the Holy Spirit manifests the life of Christ in the believer.^a This work occurs in three (3) phases. Positional sanctification occurs at the time of our salvation when we are made complete in Christ.^b Progressive sanctification is the consistent work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer by conforming his/her daily life to Christ.^c Ultimate sanctification is the receiving of our glorified bodies when Jesus Christ returns for His Bride, the Church.^d

- (a) *Romans 8:9 and 8:14; and Galatians 5:16-25.*
- (b) *Ephesians 1:3-5; and Colossians 2:9-10.*
- (c) *Philippians 1:9-11; Hebrews 6:1; and 2 Peter 1:5-8 and 3:18.*
- (d) *Romans 8:29-30; and 2 Corinthians 5:6-8.*

8. ETERNAL SECURITY

We believe that genuine Christians will be kept by the power of God and will persevere until the end.^a A believer's eternal security is accomplished through the finished work of Christ at Calvary and the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit.^b We also believe that as a believer sins in this life, he will experience the chastening of the Father.^c God the Father cannot fail and will in the end present every believer faultless before His throne.

- (a) *Philippians 1:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; and Hebrews 10:22.*
- (b) *John 8:31; Ephesians 1:13-14; and Hebrews 10:1-18.*
- (c) *1 Corinthians 11:31-32; Ephesians 4:30; and Hebrews 12:5-11.*

9. THE CHURCH

A. THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

We believe that all who have been genuinely saved through the Gospel of Jesus Christ are immediately placed, through the baptism of the Holy Spirit,^a into the Body of Christ,^b the universal church, of which Christ is the head.^c

- (a) *Romans 6:1-11; and 1 Corinthians 12:12-14.*
- (b) *1 Corinthians 12:12-13.*
- (c) *Ephesians 1:22-23; and Colossians 1:17-18.*

B. THE LOCAL CHURCH

We believe that the local church is a visible manifestation of the universal church in a particular location.^a A local church is a gathering of believers who have been saved and baptized through immersion. A local church is committed to the Lord and each other for the purpose of carrying out the will of God as revealed in His Word.^b As a local church, we are responsible to submit our hearts to the teaching of the Word, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, to faithfully care for our homes and church family and to assist in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth.^c As a local church, we are free from external controls of any religious organization.^d We adhere to the pattern of a congregational form of church polity that acknowledges the Biblical position of the saints who are often referred to as brethren, the overseers who are referred to in Scripture as leaders, pastors or elders; and servants who have traditionally been called deacons. We further accept the responsibility to gather together at prescribed times to stimulate one another to love and good works.^e

- (a) *Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; Philippians 1:1; and 1 Thessalonians 1:1.*
- (b) *Acts 2:42-47; and Ephesians 4:1-6, 9 and 11-16.*
- (c) *Ephesians 4:3 and 5:22-6:4; 1 Timothy 5:8; and Hebrews 13:17.*
- (d) *Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 14:23 and Acts 15; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; and Titus 1:5.*
- (e) *Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9 and Titus 2; and Hebrews 10:25-26.*

10. THE TWO ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

- A. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer. It publicly displays his faith in Christ and identifies him with other believers in a local church.

Matthew 28:19; and Acts 2:41-42, 8:38-39 and 9:18.

- B. We believe that the Lord's Table was instituted by Christ prior to Calvary and carried out by the church after His ascension into heaven. It is a memorial undertaken by a local church to remember Christ. The frequency of this memorial varies but shall always be preceded by a believer's self-examination.

Luke 22:14-23; and 1 Corinthians 11:17-23

11. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

- A. We believe that all Christians are called by God to live not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. To accomplish this, the Holy Spirit manifests the life of Christ in our being, our home, our church and the world. We believe that after salvation we are divinely reckoned to relate to this world as strangers and pilgrims, ambassadors and witnesses, and that through our lives we should make Christ known to the world. Furthermore, our love for one another is essential for us to fulfill the Great Commission in our community. Thus, we strive together for the Gospel of Christ.

Acts 1:8; Romans 6:11-13 and 8:1-13; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Galatians 5:16-23; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3; 1 Peter 1:14-16.

- B. We believe that God through the ministry of the Holy Spirit has enabled us for service through the spiritual gifts and natural talents He has given us. While there is a diversity of gifts, each believer is energized by the same Spirit and each is called to his own divinely appointed service as the Spirit may will.^a

Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:11-16; and 1 Peter 4:10-11.

- C. We believe that God through the Spirit gave gifts to the church to edify the body of Christ and to glorify Himself. The revelatory gifts ceased at the completion of the Word, while the service gifts continue until Christ completes the church.

1 Corinthians 3:8-13.

- D. We believe that upon the rapture of the Church, each believer will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive from the Lord His praise for his life as a believer.

1 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; and Revelation 19:7-8.

12. ANGELS

Angels are created beings; thus, they are not objects of worship or veneration. They were created prior to the creation of the physical world.^a Between creation and the fall, certain angels, led by Satan, fell from their exalted state of service to God by sinning against God.^b

(a) *Job 38:7*

(b) *Genesis 3:1-5; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Isaiah 14:12 ff.*

A. HOLY ANGELS

Holy angels are those beings that carry out the will of God by ministering to Him,^a communicating His message to mankind,^b carrying out judgment for God,^c and ministering to the saints.^d

(a) *Isaiah 6:1-4*

(b) *Luke 2:9-14*

(c) *Revelation 7:1 ff*

(d) *Hebrews 1:6-7, 14*

B. FALLEN ANGELS

Fallen angels are those beings that attempt to thwart the will of God through deception, falsehood and various other means. In Scripture these angels are commonly referred to as demons.^a They are led by one who is called

either Satan, ^b the Devil, ^c or the Evil One. ^d Their fate is sealed as they await being thrown into the lake of fire which is hell. ^e

(a) *Matthew 8:31, Job 1:6-7*

(b) *2 Corinthians 11:14*

(c) *Matthew 4:1-11*

(d) *John 17:15*

(e) *Isaiah 14:12-17; Revelation 20:10*

13. END TIMES

A. THE RAPTURE

We believe the Church will be raptured prior to the tribulation period. At this point the Lord will descend from heaven and receive to himself both His own who are alive and all those who have died in Christ. This event is the blessed hope for which we should be constantly looking.

John 14:1-3; Romans 8:19-23; 1 Corinthians 15:50-56; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; and Titus 2:11-14.

B. THE TRIBULATION

We believe that prior to the Second Coming, the church will be removed from God's wrath that will be revealed during the 70th week of Daniel. Israel's 70th week, or the Tribulation period, will be a time of judgment on the whole earth and a time of preparation for Israel to receive her Messiah. The latter half of the tribulation will be the time of Jacob's trouble which Jesus called the Great Tribulation.

Deuteronomy 30:1-10; Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24-25; and Revelation 6:1-17.

C. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

We believe the Second Coming of Christ follows the Tribulation. Upon His return, the Lord will sit on David's throne for 1,000 years, to lift the curse which now rests upon creation, to restore Israel to her own land, to fulfill all of God's covenant promises to Israel and to bring the whole world to the knowledge of God. At the end of the 1,000-year reign of Christ, Satan will be loosed for a season to rebel against the Lord. At the end of the rebellion, all those who are unbelievers will be judged at the Great White Throne and cast into hell, which is the second death.

2 Samuel 7:8-17; Isaiah 11:1-10 and Isaiah 61; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Zechariah 14; and Revelation 20:1-3.

14. THE ETERNAL STATE

- A. We believe that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Regardless of how God has managed His plan (dispensation), all believers who have exercised faith in Him will be with Him forever in glory.

Job 19:25; Daniel 12:1-3; Luke 23:39-43; 1 Corinthians 15:1-28; and 2 Corinthians 5:8.

- B. We believe that the unbeliever will likewise experience the eternal state. The eternal state for the unbeliever will consist of everlasting punishment due to their rejection of God.

Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; 2 Peter 2:4-9; Jude 6-7; and Revelation 20:11-15.

APPENDIX 1: The Scriptures:

- *We accept modern translations that are based on the Hebrew and Greek texts.*

- *For further explanation on our acceptance of the sufficiency, inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture, please see the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978).*

APPENDIX 2: **Creation:**

- *Based upon creation, we believe God ordained the institution of marriage as being between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:21-25; and Matthew 19:1-6).*