

ARTICLES OF FAITH AND CORE PRACTICES

Articles of Faith (Our beliefs about God and His Works)

1. **The Bible**

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. We accept the original autographs as God-breathed, inerrant, infallible and complete, and therefore hold the sixty-six books of the Bible as the complete and divine revelation of God to man and the final authority for faith and life. The Scriptures are to be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matthew 4:4)

2. **The Nature of God**

We believe that there is only one true, eternal and living God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6,8; 45:6), who is Spirit (John 4:24), creator of all things (Revelation 4:11), sovereign (Isaiah 46:9,10), holy (Revelation 4:8b), omnipotent (Psalm 115:3), omniscient (Psalm 147:5), omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-17), immutable (Hebrews 13:8), immense (Jeremiah 23:24), immanent (Psalm 23:4a), and transcendent (Job 9:10), who is co-existent, co-equal, and co-eternal in three distinct Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (John 14:26; Mark 1:10,11; John 1:1,14; Acts 5:3,4; Matthew 28:19).

3. **The Lord Jesus Christ**

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, deity that pre-existed His incarnation (John 8:58; Philippians 2:6-11), the Word made flesh who assumed humanity through the Virgin Birth (Luke 1:27-35), so that while on the earth was fully human and fully God, two natures in one Person, divine and human (John 1:14). He is therefore the only Savior, who in reality suffered death on the cross, not only for the primitive transgression (“original sin”), but also for the actual sins of man (Isaiah 53:4-6; 2 Corinthians 5:21). We also believe in his sinless life (Hebrews 4:15), his miracles (John 11:47), his resurrection (Luke 24:46), his ascension (Acts 1:11), and his future second coming in power and great glory (Luke 21:27).

4. **The Demonic Realm**

We believe in the reality of the Devil and demonic spirits who oppose the work and people of God (Isaiah 14:12; 1 Peter 5:8; Luke 4:2; 8:12). Christ conquered them through Calvary (1 John 3:8; Ephesians 1:20,21; 6:11-12; Colossians 2:14,15; James 4:7), and they will ultimately suffer the punishment of eternal torment in the Lake of Fire with the unsaved who are condemned at the Great White Throne judgment (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15).

5. **Sin**

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26,27), but that in Adam’s sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God (Romans 3:22,23; 5:12; 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:17-19). Of himself, man is totally and utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. Forgiveness of sin is only achieved through repentance and faith in the shed blood of the resurrected Christ (1 Corinthians 15:22; 1 John 2:2; Romans 3:24-26, 5:9; 2 Peter 3:9).

6. **Salvation**

We believe that regeneration, or the “new birth,” is received through faith in Jesus Christ alone, who was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised for our justification (1 Timothy 2:5, 6; Romans 3:23-25; 4:25; 2 Corinthians 5:17). They who are “in Christ” are those

redeemed sinners who by means of Christ's blood have been made "new creatures." They had been condemned, but in Christ have been justified, are being sanctified, and will ultimately be glorified. (Romans 5:16-18; 8:30; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

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7. The Church

1. We believe that the Church is the universal "body" and "espoused bride" of Christ, which is solely made up of supernaturally born-again persons throughout the Church Age, of which Christ is the Head, (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; John 3:3-7, 29; 1 Peter 1:23; Ephesians 5:23).
2. We believe that the primary 4-fold mission of the Church is to glorify God (Romans 15:6), edify and disciple believers (Ephesians 4:11, 12), evangelize the world (Luke 24:47), and to be an enlightenment and restraining force in the world (Matthew 5:13, 14).
3. We believe that Jesus Christ left two ordinances for the Church: water baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion). We believe in water baptism by single immersion, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as an outward symbol of the inward work of regeneration accomplished by God in the life of the believer who has placed his/her faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:3,4). We believe in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper which Jesus commanded his disciples to observe by partaking of the emblems of bread and wine in remembrance of His sacrificial death (Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
4. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is mandated in New Testament Scriptures (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 11:19-26; 16:5; Titus 1:5).

8. The Baptism with the Holy Spirit

We believe in the baptism with the Holy Spirit as an experience received subsequent to salvation (John 14:17), with tongues as the initial physical evidence of having received the gift (Acts 2:4; 10:45, 46 and 11:15-17; 19:6). Jesus Christ is the baptizer (Matthew 3:11), and all believers within the Church Age are eligible to receive this baptism for the purpose of empowerment, witnessing and ministering (Acts 1:8; 2:39).

9. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

We believe that all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit enumerated in the New Testament were intended by God to endure throughout the Church Age (1 Corinthians 1:7; 12:28). These include the gifts of revelation (word of wisdom, word of knowledge, discerning of spirits), gifts of power (faith, healing, miracles), and gifts of utterance (prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues), (1 Corinthians 12:8-10). The purpose of the gifts is for the exhortation, edification and comfort of the Church (1 Corinthians 14:26).

10. Divine Healing

We believe in divine healing. God has revealed Himself in Scripture as the healer and He has not changed (Exodus 15:26; Psalm 103:3; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8). During the Church Age, healing is provided by Christ in the Atonement and is one of the signs that follows believers (Isaiah 53:4, 5; Matthew 8:17; Mark 16:18). God may heal directly, in answer to unction and prayer by the elders of the church, or through spiritual gifts of healing. (1 Corinthians 12:9, 28; James 5:14-16).

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11. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ and Final Events

We believe in the personal, premillennial, Second Coming of Jesus Christ to raise the dead in Christ and rapture His Church (first resurrection), bind Satan, purge the earth, and establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom, as was promised in the "Davidic Covenant" to the nation of Israel, and in the "Blessed Hope" to the Church, (Psalm 89:3,4; Daniel 2:44,45; Zechariah 14;

1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-6). After the Millennium, Satan will be loosed to deceive the nations. Afterwards, he, together with those of the second resurrection who will be judged before the Great White Throne, will be cast for ever into the Lake of Fire. The glorified believers will reign with God in a new heaven and a new earth, in a new Jerusalem (Revelation 20:7-15; 21:1-8).

12. **The Resurrection and Eternal State**

1. We believe that those who are born twice (“born again”) die once, but those who are born once (unregenerated) die twice (partake in the “second death”). Therefore, we believe there shall be a bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment, (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:46; John 5:28, 29).
2. We believe that the dead in Christ are absent from the body and present with the Lord, awaiting the First Resurrection after which they, in their glorified bodies, will bypass the Great White Throne judgment and reign in bliss for ever with the Lord, (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:4-6; 22:3-5).
3. We believe the souls of unbelievers remain, after physical death, separated from God in conscious punishment and torment until the Second Resurrection, after which they will be judged before the Great White Throne and be sentenced to the eternal “second death” in the Lake of Fire, (Matthew 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6,7; Revelation 20:6,11-15).

13. **Core Practices** (Our beliefs about us and our lifestyle requirements in obedience to God’s Word)

A. **Holy Living**

1. We believe in the necessity of living a consistent Christian life marked by obedience to God’s Word, holiness, and evidencing godly spiritual fruit (Matthew 28:20; John 14:21; 1 Peter 1:15,16; Hebrews 12:14; Galatians 5:22,23).
2. We believe in the necessity to abstain from a life-style which would bring reproach to the Lord, to include separation from all religious apostasy, idolatry, and the world’s sinful pleasures, practices and associations, as commanded by God, (Acts 15:28,29; 16:4; 21:25; Romans 12:1,2; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).
3. Regarding sexuality, we also believe that any form of fornication, to include, but not limited to, homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God’s gift of sex, (Leviticus 18:1-30; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

B. **Marriage**

1. We believe in the institution of marriage as designed by God the Creator, to be a lifelong union between one man and one woman, and that God hates divorce, (Genesis 2:18,20-24; 1 Corinthians 5:1; Hebrews 13:4; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 19:1-6). We also believe that cohabitation or sexual intimacy outside of the marriage relationship is a form of fornication, (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8).
2. We do not recognize and will not solemnize same-sex marriages. We recognize that same-sex marriage violates the divine ideal and that homosexual behavior is clearly and consistently condemned in Scripture as unnatural and immoral (Leviticus 18:1-30; 20:13; Genesis 19:5,13; Romans 1:26-32).

C. Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that life is a gift from God and is precious. We believe God's Word teaches that life begins at conception, that the unborn child is a human being, and that God has allotted our life span according to His plan for each of us. Therefore, abortion and euthanasia are examples of constituting the unjustified taking of human life (2 Samuel 19:15; Job 3:16; Psalm 31:15a; 51:5; 127:3; 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1-5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:15-18; Matthew 10:29-31; Luke 1:44; Acts 17:25).

D. Missions

We believe that God has given the Church the Great Commission to proclaim the Gospel to all the world and to every creature so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ we must take the initiative to reach all peoples at home and abroad with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:20).

E. Financial Stewardship

We believe that every Christian is a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him and is obligated to financially support his local church and the Great Commission. We believe that God has established the tithe as a model for supporting the local church, but that every Christian should also willingly give offerings cheerfully and sacrificially to support the spread of the Gospel and relief for those in need. We further hold that a contributor relinquishes all rights to direct the use of his tithe or offering once the gift has been made, (Genesis 14:20; Proverbs 3:9,10; Malachi 3:6,8-10; Matthew 23:23; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6,7; Galatians 6:6-10; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17).