

ARTICLE III – DOCTRINE
(Amended 1/22/2017)

I. The Scriptures

- A. We believe that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” by which we understand the sixty-six books of the Bible are inspired in the sense that “holy men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit” to write the very words of Scripture. We believe that this divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the writing - historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetic - as appeared in the original manuscripts. This belief is often referred to as verbal-plenary inspiration of Scripture (Mark 12:24; 13:11; Acts 1:16; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 2:13; Gal. 3:16; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; 3:16).
- B. We believe that all the Scriptures center around the Lord Jesus Christ in His person and work in His first and second comings, and hence that no portion, even of the Old Testament, is properly read, or understood, until it leads to Him. We believe that all the Scriptures were designed for our rule of faith and practice (Mark 12:36; Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39; Acts 17:2-3; 18:28; 26:22-23; 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Tim. 3:16).
- C. We also believe that all Scriptures are to be interpreted literally - understanding that figurative passages bear a literal truth of the figure revealed - that there is one interpretation of Scripture, but this one interpretation may have many applications, although the applications should not invalidate the literal interpretation (Matt. 22:41-46; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 4:16-21; 24:44; John 10:6-10; 15:1-5; Gal. 4:22-31).

II. The Trinity

We believe that the Godhead is one being, eternally existing in three persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - and that these three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections and worthy of precisely the same honor, confidence, and obedience (Matt. 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; John 1:14; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor. 13:14; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 1:4-6).

III. The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

- A. We believe that, as planned by God and as prophesied in the Scriptures, the eternal Son of God came into this world that He might manifest God to men, fulfill prophecy, and become the Redeemer of a lost world. To this end He was born of a virgin, and received a human body and a sinless nature (Luke 1:30-35; John 1:18; 3:16; Heb. 4:15).
- B. We believe that, on the human side, he became and remained a perfect man, but sinless throughout His life; yet he retained His absolute deity, being at the same time very God and very man, and that His earthly life sometimes functioned within the sphere of that which was human and sometimes within the sphere of that which was divine (Luke 2:40; John 1:1-2; Phil. 2:5-8).
- C. We believe that in fulfillment of prophecy, He came first to Israel as her Messiah-King, and that, being rejected of that nation, He, according to the eternal counsels of

God, gave His life as a ransom for all (John 1:11; Acts 2:22-24; 1 Tim. 2:6).

- D. We believe that, in His infinite love for the lost, He voluntarily accepted His Father's will and became the divinely provided sacrificial Lamb and took away the sin of the world, bearing the holy judgments against sin which the righteousness of God must impose. His death was, therefore, substitutionary in the most absolute sense - the just for the unjust - and by His death He became the Savior of the lost (John 1:29; Rom. 3:25-26; 2 Cor. 5:14; Heb. 10:5-14; 1 Pet. 3:18).
- E. We believe that, according to the Scripture, He arose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He had lived and died, and that His resurrection body is the pattern of the body which ultimately will be given to all believers (John 20:20; Phil. 3:20).
- F. We believe that, on departing from the earth, He was accepted of His Father and that His acceptance is a final assurance to us that His redeeming work was perfectly accomplished (Heb. 1:3).
- G. We believe that He became head over all things to the Church which is His body, and in this ministry He never ceases to intercede and advocate for the saved (Eph. 1:22-23; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1).

IV. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

- A. We believe that the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the blessed Trinity, though omnipresent from all eternity, took up His abode in the world in a special sense on the day of Pentecost according to the divine promise, dwells in every believer, and by His baptism unites all to Christ in one body, and that He, as the Indwelling One, is the source of all power and all acceptable worship and service. We believe that He never leaves the church, nor any believer, but is ever present to testify of Christ, (seeking to focus believers on Christ and not on themselves or their experiences) We believe that His abode in the world in this special sense will cease when Christ comes to receive His own at the completion of the Church (John 14:16-17; 16:7-15; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 2:22; 2 Thess. 2:7).
- B. We believe that, in this age, certain well-defined ministries are committed to the Holy Spirit, and that it is the duty of every Christian to understand them and submit to them in his own life and experience. These ministries are: the restraining of evil in the world to the measure of the divine will; the convicting of the world regarding sin, righteousness, and judgment; the regenerating of all believers; the indwelling and anointing (for understanding truth) of all who are saved, thereby sealing them unto the day of redemption; the baptizing into the one body of Christ for all who are saved; and the continued filling for power, teaching, and service of those among the saved who are yielded to Him and who are subject to His will (John 3:6; 16:7-11; Rom. 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 6:19; 12:13; Eph. 4:30; 5:18; 2 Thess. 2:7; 1 John 2:20-27).
- C. We believe that revelatory and sign gifts of the Holy Spirit such as the speaking in tongues and miraculous healings were temporary and gradually ceased as the ministry of the apostles was completed, through whom the authority of the New Testament

Scriptures were established. We believe that speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism nor of the filling of the Spirit, and that the deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection (Acts 4:8, 31; Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 13:8; Heb. 2:3-4; 2 Cor. 12:12).

D. We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with His Own will, for the sick and afflicted (John 15:7; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15).

V. Creation and Humanity

A. *Creation*: We believe that in the beginning God created all things – the heavens, the earth, and everything in them, both seen and unseen – out of nothing. God the Father, through His Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit, created a perfect universe. (Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 104:30; 146:5-6; John 1:1-3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 11:3)

B. *Image of God*: We believe that humanity, male and female, was originally and immediately created in the image and likeness of God, and therefore human life possesses inherent and inestimable value from conception to physical death (Gen. 1:26-30; 9:5-7; James 3:9).

C. *Marriage and Sexuality*: We believe that God has ordained the institution of marriage, which is the union between one man and one woman (as genetically defined and created by God). We further believe that God has reserved sexual acts and practice for marriage; and so the practice of sex outside of marriage is sin (Gen. 1:26-30; 2:18-25; Psalm 139:13-18, Rom. 1:24-32; 1 Cor. 6:15-20).

D. *Total Depravity*: We believe that man fell through sin, and, as a consequence of his sin, lost his spiritual life, becoming dead in trespasses and sins, and that he became subject to the power of the Devil. We also believe that this spiritual death, or total depravity of human nature, has been transmitted to the entire human race of man, the Man Christ Jesus alone being excepted; and hence that every child of Adam is born into the world with a nature which not only possesses no spark of divine life, but is essentially and unchangeably bad apart from divine grace (Gen. 2:17; 6:5; Ps. 14:1-3; 51:5; Jer. 17:9; John 3:6; 5:40; 6:53; Rom. 3:10-19; 8:6-7; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 5:6; 1 John 3:8).

VI. Angels, Satan, and Demons

A. We believe that God created an innumerable company of sinless, spiritual beings known as angels: that one sinned through pride, thereby becoming Satan or the Devil; that a great company of the angels followed him in his moral fall, some of whom became demons and are active as his agents and associates in carrying out his unholy purposes, while others who fell are “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Matt. 25:41; 2 Cor. 11:14; 1 Tim. 3:6; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).

B. We believe that Satan is the originator of sin, and that, under the permission of God,

- he, through subtlety, led our first parents into transgression, thereby accomplishing their moral fall and subjecting them and their posterity to his own power; that he is the enemy of God and the people of God, opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped; and in his warfare appears as an angel of light, even counterfeiting the works of God by fostering false religious movements and doctrines, such as those that deny the trinity, deity of Christ or salvation by grace alone (Gen. 3:1-19; Rom. 5:12-14; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; 11:13-15; Eph. 6:10-12; 2 Thess. 2:4; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 1 John 4:1-6).
- C. We believe that Satan was judged at the cross, though not yet consigned to his final punishment, and that God allows him to rule as the “god of this world.” At the second coming of Christ, Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss for a thousand years. Afterwards he will be turned loose for a little while and then “cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,” where he “shall be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Col. 2:15; Rev. 20:1-3, 10).
- D. We believe that a great company of angels kept their holy estate and are before the throne of God. From there they are sent forth as ministering spirits “to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Luke 15:10; Eph. 1:20-21; Heb. 1:14; Rev. 7:11-12).
- E. We believe that man was made lower than the angels; and that, in His incarnation, Christ took for a little time this lower place that He might lift the believer to His Own sphere above the angels (Heb. 2:6-10).

VII. Salvation

- A. *New Birth*: We believe that, owing to universal death through sin, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless born again; and that no degree of reformation however great, no attainments in morality however high, no culture however attractive, no baptism or other ordinance however administered, can help the sinner to take even one step toward heaven; but a new nature imparted from above, a new life implanted by the Holy Spirit through the Word, is absolutely essential to salvation, and only those thus saved are sons of God (John 3:5-8; 2 Cor. 5:16-21; Gal. 6:15; Tit. 3:5; Jam. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23).
- B. *Only Through Christ*: We believe ~~also~~ that our redemption has been accomplished solely by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was made to be sin and was made a curse for us, dying in our place and that nothing can add in the very least degree to the sacrificial death and shedding of His blood, or to the merit of the finished work provided for us by Him who united in His person true and proper deity with perfect and sinless humanity (Lev. 17:11; Isa. 53:6; 64:6; Matt. 26:28; Rom. 5:6-9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; Phil. 3:4-9; Tit. 3:5-6; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).
- C. *By Faith*: We believe that the new birth of the believer comes only through faith in Christ alone and that repentance is a vital part of believing, and is in no way itself a separate and independent condition of salvation; nor are any other acts, such as confession, baptism, prayer, good works, or faithful service, to be added to believing as a condition of salvation (John 1:12; 3:16, 18, 36; 5:24; 6:29; Acts 13:39; 16:31;

Rom. 1:16-17; 3:22, 26; 4:5; 10:4; Gal. 3:22).

- D. *Extent of Salvation*: We believe that when an unregenerate person exercises that faith in Christ which is illustrated and described as such in the New Testament, he passes immediately out of spiritual death into spiritual life, and from the old creation into the new, being justified from all things, accepted before the Father according as Christ His Son is accepted, loved as Christ is loved, having his place and portion as linked to Him and one with Him forever. Though the saved one may have occasion to grow in the realization of his blessings and to know a fuller measure of divine power through the yielding of his life more fully to God, he is, as soon as he is saved, in possession of every spiritual blessing and absolutely complete in Christ, and is, therefore, in no way required by God to seek a so-called “second blessing,” or a “second work of grace” (John 5:24; 17:23; Acts 13:39; Rom. 5:1; 1 Cor. 3:21, 23; Eph. 1:3, Col. 2:10; 1 John 4:17; 5:11-12).
- E. *Eternal Security*: We believe that, because of the eternal purpose of God toward the objects of His love, because of His freedom to exercise grace toward the meritless on the ground of the propitiatory blood of Christ, because of the very nature of the divine gift of eternal life, because of the presence and immutability of the unchangeable covenants of God, because of the regenerating, abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who are saved, we and all true believers everywhere, once saved shall be kept saved forever. We believe, however, that God is a holy and righteous Father and that since He cannot overlook the sin of His children, He will, when they persistently sin, chasten them and correct them in infinite love; but having undertaken to save them and keep them forever, apart from all human merit, He, who cannot fail, will in the end present every one of them faultless before the presence of His glory and conformed to the image of His Son (John 5:24; 10:28; 13:1; 14:16-17; 17:11; Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 6:19; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1-2; 5:13; Jude 25).
- G. *Assurance*: We believe it is the privilege, not only of some, but of all who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, to be assured of their salvation from the moment they trust Christ to be their Savior; and that this assurance is not founded upon their own worthiness or fitness, but wholly upon the testimony of God in His written Word and conveyed by true faith in the Lord Jesus, sincere love for Him, and an endeavor to walk in obedience to His commands. This assurance produces within His children love, gratitude, and obedience (Luke 10:20; 21:32; Rom. 8:16; 2 Cor. 5:16-18; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 10:22; 1 John 5:13).

VIII. Sanctification

- A. We believe that sanctification, which is a setting-apart unto God, is threefold:
1. It is already complete for every saved person because his position in relation to God is the same as Christ’s position. Since the believer is in Christ, he is set apart unto God in the measure in which Christ is set apart unto God. This is called positional sanctification.
 2. We believe, however, that every believer retains his sin nature, which cannot be eradicated in this life. Therefore, while the standing of the Christian in Christ is perfect, his present state is no more perfect than his experience in daily life. This is

what is called progressive sanctification wherein the Christian is to “grow in grace,” and to “be changed” by the unhindered power of the Spirit.

3. We believe also that the child of God will yet be fully sanctified in his state as he is now sanctified in his standing in Christ when he shall see his Lord and shall be “like Him.” This is called ultimate sanctification (John 17:17; 2 Cor. 3:18; 7:1; Eph. 4:24; 5:25-27; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 10:10, 14; 12:10).
- B. *Practical Holiness*: We believe that we are called with a holy calling, to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and so to live in the power of the indwelling Spirit that we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. But the flesh with its fallen, Adamic nature, which in this life is never eradicated, being with us to the end of our earthly pilgrimage, needs to be kept by the Spirit constantly in subjection to Christ, or it will surely manifest its presence in our lives to the dishonor of our Lord (Rom. 6:11-13; 8:2, 4, 12-13; Gal. 5:16-23; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 2:1-10; 1 Pet. 1:14-16; 1 John 1:4-7; 3:5-9).
- C. *Separation*: We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon our blessed Lord, and that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations is commanded by God (Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 2 Cor. 6:14; 7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

IX. The Church

- A. *Universal Church*: We believe that all who are united to the risen and ascended Son of God are members of the Church which is the Body and Bride of Christ, which began at Pentecost and is distinct from Israel. Its members are constituted as such, regardless of membership or non-membership in the organized churches of earth. We believe that by the same Spirit all believers in this age are baptized into, and thus become, one body that is Christ’s, whether Jews or Gentiles, and having become members one of another, are under solemn duty to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, rising above all denominational differences, and loving one another with a pure heart fervently (Matt. 16:16-18; Acts 2:22-27; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:20-23, 4:3-10; Col. 3:14-24).
- B. *Local Church*: We believe that the New Testament teaches the establishment and continuance of a local body of believers known as the local assembly or local church of born again believers. Nowhere do the Scriptures teach that the local church is to be characterized by present day denominational distinctions. It is to be outwardly characterized by that same unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace as is found in the true Church, the Body and Bride of Christ (Acts 14:23; 15:41; 1 Cor. 1:10-18; Col. 3:14-24).
- C. *Responsibilities of the Church*: The basic responsibility of the local body of believers is to do the will of God which broadly speaking is threefold:
1. Seeking by the guidance, leading, and power of the Spirit of God, the salvation of all men from all nations, tribes, peoples, and languages.
 2. The edification of believers.
 3. The assembling of believers for worship, praise, and fellowship, and mutual

exhortation and encouragement unto good works in love (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 11:26; 14:23; Eph. 2:10; 4:3, 11-16; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9; Heb. 10:24-25; Rev. 5:9).

- D. *Ordinances*: We believe that believers' water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only ordinances of the church and that they are a Scriptural means of testimony for the church in this age. While holding to the importance and practice of the ordinance of baptism, we neither include it as a part nor hold it on the same plane of importance as the Gospel of redeeming grace in Christ, and we disagree with its sectarian practice as described in 1 Cor. 1:10-17. We believe in immersion as the mode of baptism and the memorial significance of the Lord's Supper (Matt. 28:19; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 10:47-48; 16:32-33; 18:7-8; 1 Cor. 11:17-33).
- E. *Missions*: We believe that it is the explicit message of our Lord Jesus Christ to those whom He has saved that they are sent forth by Him into the world even as He was sent forth of His Father into the world. We believe that, after they are saved, they are divinely reckoned to be related to this world as strangers and pilgrims, ambassadors, and witnesses, and that their primary purpose in life should be to make Christ known to the whole world (Matt. 28:18-19; Mark 16:15; John 17:18; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; 1 Pet. 1:17; 2:11).
- F. *Spiritual Gifts*: We believe that divine, enabling gifts for service are bestowed by the Spirit upon all who are saved. 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 (1 Cor. 12:4-11; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Pet. 4:9-11).
- G. *Church Leaders*: We believe that in the apostolic church there were certain gifted men - apostles, prophets, evangelists, Pastors and teachers - who were appointed by God for the equipping of the saints for their work of the ministry. We believe also that today some men are especially called of God to be evangelists, and pastor-teachers, and that it is to the fulfilling of His will and to His eternal glory that these shall be sustained and encouraged in their service for God. While men and women are spiritually equal, the offices of Pastor/Elder and Deacon are to be held by men (Gal. 3:28; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Tim. 2:11-15; 3:1-9).
- H. *Christian Service and Rewards*: We believe that rewards, wholly apart from salvation benefits which are bestowed equally upon all who believe, are promised according to the faithfulness of each believer in his service with his Lord, and that these rewards will be bestowed at the judgment seat of Christ after He comes to receive His own to Himself (1 Cor. 3:9-15; 9:18-27; 2 Cor. 5:10).

X. Dispensationalism

- A. We believe in the dispensational view of Bible interpretation. We believe that the dispensations are stewardships by which God administers His purpose on the earth through man under varying responsibilities. We believe that three of these dispensations or rules of life are the subject of extended revelation in the Scripture, namely the dispensation of the Mosaic Law, the present dispensation of the Church, and the future dispensation of the Millennial Kingdom. We believe that these are

distinct and are not to be intermingled or confused, as they are chronologically successive.

- B. We believe that dispensations are not ways of salvation, that according to the “eternal purpose” of God, salvation in the divine reckoning is always “by grace, through faith,” and rests upon the basis of the shed blood of Christ (Rom. 3:21-25; 1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 3:2, 9, 11; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 1:4).
- C. We believe that it has always been true that “without faith it is impossible to please God,” and that the principle of faith was prevalent in the lives of all the Old Testament saints. However, we believe that it was historically impossible that they should have had as the conscious object of their faith the incarnate, crucified Son, the Lamb of God, and that it is evident that they did not comprehend as we do that the sacrifices depicted the person and work of Christ. We believe also that they did not understand the redemptive significance of the prophecies or types concerning the sufferings of Christ; therefore, we believe that their faith thus manifested was counted unto them for righteousness. We reject the extreme teaching known as “Hyperdispensationalism,” such as that which opposes either the Lord’s Table or water baptism as a Scriptural means of testimony for the church in the present dispensation (John 1:29; Acts 2:41-42; 18:8; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; Heb. 11:6; 1 Pet. 1:10-12; cf. Rom. 4:3 with Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:5-8; Heb. 11:7).

XI. Last Things

- A. *Rapture*: We believe that, according to the Word of God, the next great event in the fulfillment of prophecy will be the coming of the Lord in the air to receive to Himself into heaven both His Own who are alive and also all who are dead in Christ. This event is the believer’s “blessed hope” and we should be constantly looking for His imminent return (John 14:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; Phil. 3:20; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Tit. 2:11-14).
- B. *Tribulation*: We believe that the rapture of the Church will be followed by the fulfillment of Israel’s seventieth week during which the Church, the body of Christ, will be in heaven. The whole period of Israel’s seventieth week will be a time of judgment on the whole earth, at the end of which the times of the Gentiles will be brought to a close. This period will be the time of Jacob’s trouble and is known as the tribulation. We believe that universal righteousness will not be realized prior to the second coming of Christ, that as the world approaches judgment, it is growing worse and worse, and that the present age will end with a falling away from the truth (Dan. 9:27; Jer. 30:7; Matt. 24:15-21; Luke 21:24; 2 Thess. 2:3; Rev. 6-19; 7:14).
- C. *Second Coming of Christ*: We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will return after the seven-year tribulation. He will return to the earth as He went, in person, and with power and great glory to reign for 1000 years in His Millennial Kingdom. He will lift the curse which now rests upon the whole creation, restore Israel to her own land, give her the realization of God’s covenant promises, and bring the whole world to the knowledge of God (Deut. 30:1-10; Isa. 11:9; Ezek. 37:21-28; Matt. 24:15-44; Acts 1:9-11; 15:16-17; Rom. 8:19-23; 11:25-27; Rev. 20:1-3).
- D. *Bodily Resurrection*: We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to

eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Acts 24:15; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-15).

- E. *Eternal State of Unbelievers*: We believe that after physical death, the spirits and souls of the unsaved remain conscious of condemnation and in misery until the final judgment of the great white throne at the close of the millennium, when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated but to be punished with a perfect justice, each in accordance with his or her sins. This is everlasting destruction and separation from the presence of the Lord (Matt. 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15).

- F. *Eternal State of Believers*: We believe that at physical death the spirits and souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation pass immediately into His presence and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the bodies when Christ comes for His own, whereupon souls and glorified bodies reunited shall be with Him forever in glory (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:6-8; Phil 1:23; 1 Thess. 4:13-17).