

Constitution of the Church

Heritage Baptist Church Constitution, Doctrine, Core Values

ARTICLE I - NAME AND ORGANIZATION

This church shall be known as the Heritage Baptist Church of Lynchburg, Virginia. This church shall be organized as a Virginia Nonstock Corporation.

ARTICLE II - ARTICLES OF FAITH

See the attached doctrinal position.

ARTICLE III - CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spreading of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to biblically educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our behavior; and to avoid all unbiblical words and actions that affect the unity of the body of Christ and hinder the advancement of His Kingdom.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We, moreover, engage that when we remove from this place we will, 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.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this church shall consist of persons who have accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior and been baptized by immersion in this church or a church of like faith and order. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be a member. Upon completion of the new members' class, new members may be accepted by vote of the membership when requesting membership in any of the following ways: (1) by profession of faith and baptism, (2) by letter from a church of like faith and order, or (3) by restoration.

Prospective members must have their domicile in Virginia, in or around the city of Lynchburg. Those who have their domicile in another area may join as associate members with the full rights and privileges of members except the right to vote or to hold the office of pastor or deacon.

The church can terminate membership as a result of (1) death, (2) transfer to a church of like faith and order, (3) church discipline, or (4) an extended period of inactivity.

The matter of disciplining membership shall be left to the pastors and the deacons. Discipline includes the authority to remove from church membership and bar from participation in the Lord's Supper. Restoration will be made on the basis of genuine repentance. Any member disciplined will be dealt with according to Matthew 18:15-17. The decision of discipline may be presented to the church at a business meeting with the action required determined by the nature of the discipline and the offense committed. The mandate in Matthew 18:17 to "tell it to the church" can be satisfied at the pastoral and deacon level as the pastors serve as the elders of the church and the deacons serve as elected representatives of the church. If the discipline is taken before the entire church body, the church body will be notified as to the action taken, but no vote will be taken. The person involved shall be asked to be present at the meeting for rebuttal. The church leadership reserves the right to refuse a request for withdrawal of one's membership if they are in the process of church discipline, as mutually agreed upon by having signed the church covenant upon entry into membership.

ARTICLE V - CHURCH OFFICERS

1. Senior Pastor

In the selection of a senior pastor, the church shall be guided by the Scriptural qualifications as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The senior pastor shall be born a biological man whose life is characterized by blamelessness in the following qualifications:

1. A one woman man in both in body and mind. (1 Tim. 3:2)
2. A holy life thereby reflecting the deep holiness of God. (Titus 1:8)
3. Sober-mindedness in all aspects of life. (1 Tim. 3:2)
4. Self-controlled and disciplined in his spiritual walk and in daily life. (1 Tim. 3:2)
5. Respectable and worthy of emulation. (1 Tim. 3:2)
6. Hospitable, demonstrating love and care for others. (1 Tim. 3:2)
7. Hold firm to the revealed Word of God. (Titus 1:9)
8. Have the ability to accurately and effectively communicate the Scriptures in a public ministry. (1 Tim. 3:2)
9. Have the ability to instruct in sound doctrine and refute and rebuke erroneous beliefs. (Titus 1:9)
10. Not given to alcoholic beverages in drunkenness. (1 Tim. 3:3)
11. Gentle, having a life that reflects the compassionate nature of Christ himself. (1 Tim. 3:3)
12. Not quarrelsome in stirring up fruitless discussion and community division. (1 Tim. 3:3)
13. Not a lover of money in pursuing material temporalities rather than eternal riches in Christ. (1 Tim. 3:3)
14. Able to manage his household well, keeping his family life in submission and respect. (1 Tim. 3:4-5)
15. Not a recent convert but must have a tested life whereby the evidence of his Christlikeness is evident. (1 Tim. 3:6)
16. Have a good reputation among those outside of the church, faithfully representing Christ to the lost. (1 Tim. 3:7)

The senior pastor is the undershepherd of Jesus Christ, the head of the church, and is primarily responsible to Christ for the work of the church. As senior pastor he is the governing elder. He is the president and chief executive and administrative officer of the church in spiritual and physical matters and serves as a director, the chairman of the Board of Directors of the church, and the chairman of the members of the church. The senior pastor is to be called to serve indefinitely.

The duties of the senior pastor shall be such as are prescribed by the New Testament. He shall uphold the Articles of Faith and the Church Covenant as described in the Constitution. When the church becomes without a senior pastor, the deacons will appoint a pulpit committee to seek out a new senior pastor. The committee shall prayerfully search until they agree on one candidate to recommend to the deacons and the church. The church will be given the opportunity to vote after hearing the candidate. A two-thirds majority vote is required to call a senior pastor. The senior pastor may be removed from office at a special business meeting of the congregation called by the deacons or members of the congregation as noted under Article VII, Section 4. At the business meeting, reasons for his removal will be presented, and he will be allowed to answer the accusations. The meeting shall be presided over by a moderator mutually agreed on by the senior pastor and deacons. Should no moderator be agreed upon, the deacons shall appoint an outside moderator. The senior pastor shall be notified of the meeting and of the charges to be brought against him before such notice is given to the congregation. A two-thirds vote will be required to remove the senior pastor. *This step should be taken carefully and prayerfully.*

2. Pastoral Staff

Pastoral staff are considered to be pastors under the direction of the senior pastor and must satisfy the same Scriptural qualifications as the senior pastor (1 Timothy 3: 1-7; Titus 1:6-9). All members of the pastoral staff will be voted on by the congregation. A pastoral staff member may be dismissed by the senior pastor or a two-thirds vote of the congregation. Each member of the pastoral staff must be born a biological man whose life is characterized by blamelessness in the following qualifications:

1. A one-woman man in both body and mind. (1 Tim. 3:2)
2. A holy life thereby reflecting the deep holiness of God. (Titus 1:8)
3. Sober-mindedness in all aspects of life. (1 Tim. 3:2)
4. Self-controlled and disciplined in his spiritual walk and in daily life. (1 Tim. 3:2)
5. Respectable and worthy of emulation. (1 Tim. 3:2)
6. Hospitable, demonstrating love and care for others. (1 Tim. 3:2)
7. Hold firm to the revealed Word of God. (Titus 1:9)
8. Have the ability to accurately and effectively articulate the Scriptures. (1 Tim. 3:2)
9. Have the ability to instruct in sound doctrine and refute and rebuke erroneous beliefs. (Titus 1:9)
10. Not given to alcoholic beverages in drunkenness. (1 Tim. 3:3)
11. Gentle, having a life that reflects the compassionate nature of Christ Himself. (1 Tim. 3:3)
12. Not quarrelsome in stirring up fruitless discussion and community division. (1 Tim. 3:3)
13. Not a lover of money in pursuing material temporalities rather than eternal riches in Christ. (1 Tim. 3:3)
14. Able to manage his household well, keeping his family life in submission and respect. (1 Tim. 3:4-5)
15. Not a recent convert but must have a tested life whereby the evidence of his Christlikeness is evident. (1 Tim. 3:6)
16. Have a good reputation among those outside of the church, faithfully representing Christ to the lost. (1 Tim. 3:7)

3. Support Staff

The senior pastor and deacons may bring in such support staff as they feel are necessary to assist in providing for the church. They work under the direct supervision of the senior pastor, or indirectly under him and directly under the supervision of a staff member as directed by the senior pastor. A support staff member may be dismissed by the senior pastor or a two-thirds majority vote of the entire deacon board.

4. Deacons

Deacons are to advise and assist the pastor in spiritual interests of the church; discuss with him matters of importance; seek out, visit, and minister to the physical, moral and spiritual needs of the sick and aged, and to necessities among the membership; review the church membership as required and inquire as to the regularity and faithfulness of the members in attending and supporting the church; serve at the Lord's Supper; and be zealous to guard and promote a spirit of unity and peace within the church. Deacons shall meet with the pastor on a regular basis (i.e., monthly) to discuss such matters.

Deacons are to meet the spiritual qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-6. A deacon must be born a biological man that demonstrates a life of Christlikeness with the following requisites:

1. A dignified life worthy of emulation. (1 Tim. 3:8)
2. Not double-tongued but a speaker of truth with firm conviction. (1 Tim. 3:8)
3. Not controlled by alcohol or drunkenness. (1 Tim. 3:8)
4. Not consumed by material realities but honest in all of life's dealings. (1 Tim. 3:8)
5. Hold fast to the faith in Jesus Christ as revealed in Scripture. (1 Tim. 3:9)
6. A time tested life that demonstrates genuine submission and identification to Jesus Christ. (1 Tim. 3:10)
7. A life characterized by blameless adherence to the standards of the office of deacon. (1 Tim. 3:11)
8. If married his wife is characterized by a life worthy of emulation, not a slanderer or gossip, and demonstrates a disciplined and faithful life and faith in Jesus Christ. (1 Tim. 3:11)
9. A one woman man in both body and mind. (1 Tim. 3:2)
10. Able to manage his household well, keeping his family in submission and respect. (1 Tim. 3:12)

The first deacons shall be recommended to the church by the pastor; thereafter, the deacons shall recommend to the church names of those to be added. The church will vote on the entire group of names presented and they will require a two-thirds majority of those present at the business meeting to be approved. The deacons shall serve on a rotation basis for a period of three years. After an absence of one year a deacon may be re-elected for another term.

5. Other Officers

Other officers of the church and its related ministries may be elected or appointed as they are needed.

6. Special Qualifications for Leaders

All elected or appointed leaders of this church and any of its related ministries shall be saved, an active member of this church in agreement with the Articles of Faith in Article II, a tither, a soul-winner, loyal to the pastor, and living a separated Christian life.

7. Removal of Officers

All officers of the church may be removed in the same manner in which they were installed unless designated otherwise in this constitution.

ARTICLE VI - CHURCH MEETING

1. For Worship, Fellowship, Edification and Evangelization.

The church shall have regular weekly services and other meetings of organizations as desired.

2. For Business

At least twice a year, reports shall be made to the church by the pastor and staff, deacons, and other officers as deemed advisable of such things as are necessary. In addition, special meetings may be called by the senior pastor or by the deacons if the church is without a pastor, with not less than ten days' nor more than 60 days' notice to the church except that notice of a members' meeting to act on an amendment of the articles of incorporation, a plan of merger, domestication, a proposed sale of the assets of the church other than in the regular course of church business, or the dissolution of the corporation shall be given not less than 25 nor more than 60 days before the meeting date. The purpose of a special meeting must be in the notice. A majority of those present and qualified to vote may conduct any church business, except as otherwise qualified by the constitution.

ARTICLE VII - CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Each member of the church, 18 years of age or older (except an associate member), will have an equal voice in its government, exercised through a vote at regular or called business meetings. The senior pastor shall serve as

moderator of all business meetings, unless the office of senior pastor is being discussed. If the church is without a senior pastor, the chairman of the deacons will serve as moderator.

The church shall vote on the pastor, pastoral staff members, deacons, and other officers deemed appropriate; establishment or modification of major policies; the buying, selling or mortgaging of church properties; and the annual church budget. Matters of lesser importance will be handled by the senior pastor, his staff, and deacons, within their prescribed responsibilities.

All meetings will be conducted according to **Robert's Rules of Order**.

A two-thirds majority of those present and qualified to vote will be required when voting on changes in the constitution. On all matters not specified in this constitution, before a vote is taken it will be stated whether a simple majority or two-thirds majority is required for a motion to carry. When a business meeting is scheduled to discuss changes in the constitution, notice of the meeting as well as a copy of the proposed changes will be made available at least ten days preceding the meeting to each member eligible to vote.

Special meetings may be called by any member or members with not less than ten days' nor more than 60 days' notice to the church, except that notice of a members' meeting to act on an amendment of the articles of incorporation, a plan of merger, domestication, a proposed sale of the assets of the church other than in the regular course of church business, or the dissolution of the corporation shall be given not less than 25 nor more than 60 days before the meeting date, with a petition signed by 30% of the active voting members. When such a meeting is called, only the business on the petition will be discussed.

The Board of Directors shall adopt Bylaws consistent with this Constitution to govern those matters of the operation of the church not provided for in this Constitution. The Bylaws are subject to this Constitution and shall incorporate it by reference.

ARTICLE VIII - CHURCH FINANCES

The fiscal year shall be from July 1 through June 30. A budget shall be prepared by the senior pastor and his staff, approved by the pastor and deacons, and approved by the church annually which will give the staff accountant authorization to disburse funds. Special offerings may be taken with the approval of the senior pastor.

Disbursement of funds must not exceed the total dollar limit specified in the annual budget unless approved by the congregation at a business meeting. The amount of the dollar limit will be approved when the budget is approved by the congregation. Any expenditure not outlined in the budget must be approved at a business meeting, unless an emergency arises, in which case the monies to be spent must be approved by the pastor and a deacon.

ARTICLE IX - MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

Recognizing that the holiness of God is to be treated with the utmost reverence, we also recognize that God is loving and gracious and that we should likewise conduct ourselves in a manner befitting Jesus Christ Himself. All truth and beliefs with regards to sexual identity should be communicated with love and compassion in a Christ-like demonstration of grace.

1. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin by seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. No matter the nature of the offense committed, God's grace and love are exceedingly sufficient to make the individual anew.
2. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful, hostile, and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual or group are to be

repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture and the convictions of this church.

3. People of all backgrounds, self-proclaimed identities, and personal struggles are welcome at this church. However, ongoing life decisions which are contrary to God's Word may exclude them from certain levels of participation including, but not limited to, church membership, leadership positions, and areas of service.

In dealing with matters of sexuality, we do so out of fear and reverence for the holiness and majesty of God's standards of righteousness. In keeping with the character of God Himself, we affirm the following Scriptural convictions concerning sexual identities and conduct.

1. We believe that marriage was ordained by God at creation as the sacred union between one naturally born male/man and one naturally born female/woman. All sexual relations must therefore be reserved for that sacred union. Christian marriage is a representation of Christ's relationship to His church. . Genesis 1:26-28; 2:24; Psalm 127 & 128; 139:13-16; Matthew 19:1-10; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrew 13:4.

2. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a biological man and a biological woman who are married to each other (a natural sexual identity is one that is biologically male or female). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be indulged outside of a marriage covenant between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, pedophilia, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, polygamy, or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

3. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

4. Church facilities may not be used by any individual, group, or organization that advocate, endorse, or promote sexual immorality and this includes such things as homosexuality, adultery, fornication, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, pedophilia, polygamy, attempts to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex. This policy also applies to birthday parties, reunions, anniversaries, weddings, baby showers, etc.

5. Under no circumstance is the senior pastor, a staff pastor, or church member to officiate or endorse any wedding ceremony that violates the belief and teaching of this church body in accordance with the biblical teachings of sexual identity.

DOCTRINAL POSITION

I. BIBLIOLOGY:

The Doctrine of the Scriptures

We believe that God has revealed Himself to man both generally and specially. Nature is the product of God's general revelation¹ by which He communicates His existence and work as Creator. Scripture is the product of God's special revelation,² by which He communicates to man the truth about Himself that would have been eternally unknown – His nature, His character, His purpose for mankind, and His plan of redemption. The Scriptures are the product of the verbal,³ plenary⁴ inspiration of God resulting in the original autographs being inerrant, infallible and authoritative. The Holy Scriptures in their entirety, down to the very words of the original autographs, were given by divine inspiration. Inspiration was that work whereby God by His Spirit, through human writers utilizing their distinct personalities and literary styles, gave us His Word. The inspiration of Scripture is attested to by Scripture itself,⁴ by Jesus Christ,⁵ and by the character of God.⁶ Those sixty-six books, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament, have their place in the Bible on the basis of their inspiration and were recognized and submitted to as inspired and canonical by the Church. God also works in the illumination⁷ (making it understandable) and preservation (maintaining a trustworthy copy) of His Word. The Scriptures stand as our final standard for faith and practice.

¹Psalm 19:1; ²Romans 3:11, Ephesians 1:9; ³2 Peter 1:21; ⁴2 Timothy 3:16; ⁵Luke 24:44-45; ⁶Hebrews 6:18; ⁷Ephesians 1:17-18

II. THEOLOGY/PROPER:

The Doctrine of God

We believe in the one¹ and only living and true God; His divine essence is invisible,¹ incorporeal and personal Spirit;² His divine nature is undivided and indivisible. There exists three eternal Persons³ in the one divine essence, known respectively as the Father,⁴ Son,⁵ and Holy Spirit.⁶ He is self-existent, self-sufficient, life,⁷ eternal,⁸ infinite, omnipresent,⁹ omnipotent,¹⁰ omniscient,¹¹ wise, immutable,¹² sovereign,¹³ incomprehensible,¹⁴ inscrutable,¹⁵ holy,¹⁶ righteous,¹⁷ just,¹⁸ true,¹⁹ faithful,²⁰ good,²¹ long-suffering,²² gracious,²³ merciful²⁴ and loving.²⁵

¹Deuteronomy 6:4; ²Deuteronomy 4:15; ³Exodus 3:14; ⁴Romans 1:7, John 6:27; ⁵John 10:31-38, 1 John 5:20; ⁶Acts 5:3-4, 1 Corinthians 3:16; ⁷Genesis 2:7, Psalm 84:2; ⁸Isaiah 57:15; ⁹Psalm 139:7-12; ¹⁰Matthew 19:26; ¹¹Psalm 147:5; ¹²Malachi 3:6; ¹³Psalm 33:8-11; ¹⁴Isaiah 55:9; ¹⁵Job 33:12; ¹⁶Isaiah 6:1-5; ¹⁷Psalm 145:17; ¹⁸Isaiah 61:8; ¹⁹Psalm 119:16; ²⁰Deuteronomy 7:9, Psalm 119:90; ²¹Psalm 145:9; ²²Exodus 34:6; ²³Romans 5:15; ²⁴Psalm 103:13-14; ²⁵Jeremiah 31:3

III. CHRISTOLOGY:

The Doctrine of Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal, pre-existent Son of God.¹ Although pre-existent, Jesus, at the time appointed, emptied², and took upon Himself the form of a servant, the lowest description of man, and became incarnate³ by miraculous conception⁴ and virgin birth⁵ for the purpose of redeeming sinful men.⁶ He is fully God⁷ and fully man;⁸ perfect deity and humanity. He lived a sinless human life,⁹ and then offered Himself a sacrifice by dying on the cross¹⁰ and shedding His blood, in full substitution and as a sufficient atonement¹¹ for the sins of all men – but an efficient atonement¹² only to those who believe. He was buried and on the third day He arose bodily¹³ from the dead, alive forevermore. He later ascended bodily into Heaven¹⁴ where, at the right hand of the Father,¹⁵ He now intercedes for those who believe in Him.

¹John 8:58, John 1:1-3; ²Philippians 2:6-7; ³John 1:14; ⁴Matthew 1:20; ⁵Matthew 1:22-23, Isaiah 7:14; ⁶Genesis 3:15, John 3:16-17; ⁷John 5:22-23, John 8:58, John 1:1-3; ⁸Hebrews 2:14-18, Matthew 4:2, Matthew 8:24, Matthew 26:29; ⁹Hebrews 4:15; ¹⁰1 Corinthians 15:3; ¹¹1 Timothy 2:6, 1 Timothy 4:10, Titus 2:11, Hebrews 2:9, 1 John 2:2; ¹²John 17:9, 20, 24, Ephesians 1:4, 7; 2 Timothy 1:9-10; ¹³1 Corinthians 15:4, Matthew 28:5-6; ¹⁴Acts 1:9-11; ¹⁵Psalm 110:1,

Hebrews 1:13, Hebrews 10:12-13

IV. PNEUMATOLOGY:

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is a divine Person,¹ equal with God the Father and God the Son, having the same divine nature and partaking of the same divine essence.² The Holy Spirit actively ministered in the OT³ through creation, revelation and in a special, selective manner with men. The Holy Spirit actively ministered in the NT⁴ in all aspects of Christ's life, from His birth to His death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit now has a prime ministry in salvation as He calls,⁵ convicts,⁶ and regenerates⁷ the unbeliever. He indwells,⁸ baptizes,⁹ convicts,¹⁰ gifts,¹¹ controls,¹² teaches,¹³ guides,¹⁴ assures and prays¹⁵ for believers.

¹Acts 13:2, 1 Corinthians 2:10-12, Romans 15:30, John 14:26, Romans 8:26; ²Acts 5:3-4, 1 Corinthians 12:11, Acts 13:4, John 3:3-8; ³Genesis 1:2, Psalm 33:6, Micah 3:8, Genesis 6:3, Judges 13:25, Psalm 51:11; ⁴Luke 1:35, Luke 3:21-22, Luke 4:16-21, Hebrews 9:14, Romans 8:11; ⁵Acts 13:2; ⁶John 16:8-11; ⁷Titus 3:5; ⁸John 14:16-17; ⁹1 Corinthians 12:13; ¹⁰1 John 3:20; ¹¹1 Corinthians 12:4; ¹²Romans 8:6-9; ¹³1 John 2:27; ¹⁴Romans 8:14; ¹⁵Romans 8:26-27

V. ANGELOLOGY:

The Doctrine of Angels

We believe in the existence of created beings called angels. These spirit beings¹ are generally invisible but have some unknown form.² They are persons³ and bear the image of God. They are basically superior to man, yet inferior to God. There are holy, elect angels⁴ and unholy, fallen⁵ angels (demons). The elect angels minister⁶ on behalf of God to the nations of the world and to believers. The fallen angels chose to follow⁷ Lucifer (Satan). Satan now uses his gifts and abilities to oppose God at every level and by every possible means. The fallen angels⁸ assist Satan in his scheme. Eventually, Satan and all the fallen angels will be cast into the Lake of Fire for eternity.⁹

¹Luke 24:37-39; ²Luke 24:4; ³Job 38:7, Daniel 10:11, Revelation 22:16, 1 Peter 1:12; ⁴Ezekiel 28:14, Isaiah 6:2-7, Daniel 12:1, Daniel 8:16, Revelation 5:1; ⁵Matthew 8:16, Ephesians 6:12, Isaiah 14:12-14; ⁶Revelation 1:1, Revelation 8-9, Hebrews 1:14, Luke 16:22; ⁷Genesis 1:31, Revelation 12:4; ⁸1 Timothy 4:1, 1 John 4:1, 3, Matthew 12:42-45, Mark 5:1-5, Matthew 4:24; ⁹Revelation 20:10, Matthew 25:41

VI. ANTHROPOLOGY:

The Doctrine of Man

We believe in the literal Genesis account of creation. We believe that man came into being through the creative act of God. Man is the crowning part of God's creation, in that he was created in God's image¹ and was given dominion over all the rest of creation.² The image of God is personhood. Man's nature is material,³ the body, and immaterial,⁴ the soul and spirit. He fell from his original state of perfection⁵ through willful disobedience.⁶ As a result, his nature was corrupted,⁷ death was introduced to the world,⁸ and the sin nature was passed down to his posterity.⁹ All men are in one of two categories of existence – either saved or lost.

¹Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 9:6; ²Genesis 1:28-30; ³Genesis 2:7; 3:19; ⁴Genesis 2:7, Psalm 3:2, Genesis 41:8, 2 Timothy 4:22, Hebrews 4:12; ⁵Genesis 2:16-17; ⁶Genesis 3:6; ⁷Romans 8:1-14; ⁸Genesis 5:5, Genesis 3:23-24; ⁹Romans 5:12

VII. HAMARTIOLOGY:

The Doctrine of Sin

We believe that sin is a failure¹ to conform to the divine standard² of (and/or the transgression of) God's law.³ It entered the universe when Lucifer rebelled against God.⁴ It entered the world when Adam and Eve chose to disobey God in the garden.⁵ All men have inherited the sin principle from Adam⁶ and all are totally depraved.⁷ The basis of ultimate and complete victory over sin is found in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.⁸ Those who

believe in Christ are justified from their sin but sin is not dead in them until it is removed at their glorification.⁹

¹Romans 5:20-21, Romans 6:1-2, 6-7, Romans 7:17-18; ²Deuteronomy 19:15, John 1:29; ³Matthew 7:23, 1 Timothy 2:14; ⁴Isaiah 14:12-14, Revelation 12:1-4; ⁵Genesis 3:1-7; ⁶Romans 3:9-18, Romans 8:2, Romans 5:16; ⁷Romans 3:10-12, Psalm 14:1-3, Psalm 53:1-3; ⁸Romans 5:1, 9; ⁹1 Corinthians 15:50-53

VIII. SOTERIOLOGY:

The Doctrine of Salvation

We believe that because of sin,¹ its results,² and the character of God,³ all of mankind needs salvation. This salvation was sufficiently⁴ provided for all of mankind through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ but efficiently⁵ applied only to those who believe. Salvation is wholly the work of God's grace,⁶ God's mercy,⁷ and is completely apart from works.⁸ All three members of the Trinity are involved in salvation. The Father planned it,⁹ the Son purchased it,¹⁰ and the Spirit preserves it.¹¹ A saved person has been converted and justified as God has declared him to be righteous.¹² A saved person is sanctified as he grows to be more like Christ.¹³ A saved person will be glorified when he reaches his eternal home.¹⁴ The sinless Christ is the sinner's substitute, whereby, reconciliation is made with God on his behalf,¹⁵ redemption is made from the slavery of sin,¹⁶ regeneration makes him alive,¹⁷ and he is adopted as a child of God with all its rights, privileges, and responsibilities.¹⁸ All this is possible through the atoning death of Christ. The benefits of His atoning death are for all who by faith assent to the facts of the gospel,¹⁹ exercise repentance toward God,²⁰ and place their trust in Christ and His atoning work.²¹ This salvation is evidenced by one's fellowship with God and His people,²² one's obedience to God,²³ one's love for God's people,²⁴ one's confession of Jesus,²⁵ one's being made new,²⁶ and one's works of righteousness.²⁷ Salvation is secure as it is based in the very character, promises, power and deeds of God so that the true believer cannot lose his salvation and will be preserved until his glorification.²⁸

¹Psalm 51:5, Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 3:10-12; ²Romans 5:12; ³Hebrews 12:14, Romans 5:19, John 3:16, 2 Corinthians 5:21; ⁴1 Timothy 2:6, 1 Timothy 4:10, Titus 2:11, Hebrews 2:9, 1 John 2:2; ⁵John 17:9, 20, 24, Ephesians 1:4, 7, 2 Timothy 1:9-10; ⁶Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 2:11-15; ⁷Romans 6:23, Titus 3:5; ⁸Ephesians 2:8-10, Titus 3:5; ⁹Ephesians 1:3-6; ¹⁰Ephesians 1:7-12; ¹¹Ephesians 1:13-14; ¹²Romans 3:24, Romans 5:1; ¹³Ephesians 2:10-13; ¹⁴Romans 8:30; ¹⁵Colossians 1:20-21; ¹⁶Romans 3:24, Ephesians 1:7; ¹⁷Titus 3:5, John 3:3-7; ¹⁸Ephesians 1:5, Galatians 4:5; ¹⁹Acts 16:14, 32; ²⁰Acts 17:30, Acts 20:21, Acts 26:20; ²¹John 1:12, Galatians 2:16; ²²1 John 1:3; ²³1 John 2:3; ²⁴1 John 3:14; ²⁵1 John 4:15; ²⁶2 Corinthians 5:17; ²⁷1 John 2:29; ²⁸John 10:28-29, Ephesians 4:30, John 3:16, John 5:24, Romans 8:33-39

IX. ECCLESIOLOGY:

The Doctrine of the Church

We believe that the Church of Jesus Christ needs to be understood in two senses, namely universal and local. In the universal sense,¹ the church consists of all those during this age who have been born of God's Spirit and have therefore been baptized into the body of Christ. In the local sense,² a church is a called-out, living assembly of baptized believers associated by a covenant of faith, organized by NT principles, assembling regularly together, led by qualified pastors³ who are supported by qualified deacons,⁴ under the discipline of God's Word and the Headship⁵ of Christ, and observing the ordinances. The ordinances are those commands of Christ given to the Church, specifically, Baptism⁶ and the Lord's Supper.⁷ They are an act of obedience, not the conveyance of grace. The purpose of the church is four-fold:⁸ worship of God, fellowship with God and His people, edification of believers, and evangelization of the lost.

¹Galatians 3:26-29, 1 Corinthians 12:13; ²Acts 2:41-47, Acts 6:1-7, Acts 11:19-26, Acts 13:1-3; ³1 Timothy 3:2, Acts 11:30, 1 Peter 5:1-4, Acts 20:28, Titus 1:5-7; ⁴Acts 6:1-6, 1 Timothy 3:8-13; ⁵Ephesians 1:22-23; ⁶Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 2:38, 41, Acts 8:38-39, Mark 1:5-10; ⁷Luke 22:17-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-31; ⁸Acts 2:41-47

X. ESCHATOLOGY:

The Doctrine of Last Things

We believe in the pre-tribulational Rapture of the church,¹ in which all believers of the Church Age will be caught up by Christ to meet Him in the air.² They will then be judged and rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ.³ The Church is the Bride of Christ,⁴ who will be wed to Him in Heaven following the Rapture. Those left on the earth will undergo the seven years of the Great Tribulation.⁵ This period will culminate with the battle of Armageddon⁶ and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.⁷ Christ will then establish His Kingdom for 1,000 years.⁸ This period will conclude with Satan being loosed to lead a revolt with unbelieving children born in The Millennium.⁹ Following The Millennium, God will judge all unsaved people at The Great White Throne Judgment.¹⁰ The saved will spend eternity with God,¹¹ and the unsaved (with Satan and his fallen angels) will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire.¹²

¹Revelation 1:1, 3, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, Matthew 24:14, Revelation 7; ²1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; ³Romans 14:12, 2 Corinthians 5:10; ⁴Revelation 19:7, Revelation 21:9; ⁵Daniel 9:24-27, Revelation 11:3, Revelation 12:6, Revelation 13:5; ⁶Revelation 19:17-21, Zechariah 12:1-9, Zechariah 14:4; ⁷Revelation 19:11-16, Matthew 24:16-30; ⁸Revelation 20:1-6; ⁹Revelation 20:7-10; ¹⁰Revelation 20:11-15; ¹¹Revelation 21:1-10; ¹²Revelation 20:11-15