

What We Believe

So that you may know the foundation of what we believe without having to sit in on a year's worth of sermons, we have included a description of our "Tenets of Faith" from our Constitution and By-laws.

We do not presume to say that these Tenets of Faith represent the final word on Bible truth, and we shall probably have occasion to refine, revise, and enlarge parts of it as we pursue our way in God. We are persuaded however, that it is consistent with truth and a right purpose to "set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us" ^{Luke 1:1}. Such a statement puts in the hands of the present membership a summary of the truths to which we bear witness, and also provides a basis for instructing those who are joined to us in the Lord.

From Our Constitution and By-Laws

1. The Bible is the supreme revelation from God, superior to conscience and reason, though not contrary to reason and is therefore our infallible rule of faith and practice. (John 7:17; Romans 12:1-2; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21)

2. The one true God revealed Himself as the eternally self-existent "I AM", the Creator of heaven and earth and the Redeemer of mankind. He has further revealed Himself as embodying the principles of relationship and association as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe that it pleased the Father to reveal Himself in Jesus who is the express image of the Father. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10,11; Matthew 28:19; Mark 12:29; Luke 2:22; Colossians 1:19; Hebrews 1:1-3)

3. The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God and that the Scriptures declare:
 - His virgin birth. (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:31-35)

 - His sinless life. (Hebrews 7:16; I Peter 2: 22)

 - His miracles. (Acts 2:22; 10:38)

 - His substitutionary work on the cross. (I Corinthians 15:3; II Corinthians 5:21)

 - His bodily resurrection from the dead. (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; I Corinthians 15:4)

- His exaltation to the right hand of God. (Acts 1:9,11; 2:33; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1-3)
4. Man was created good and upright, for God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." However, by voluntary transgression, man rebelled and thereby incurred not only physical death, but spiritual death also. (Genesis 1:26,27; 2:17; 3:6; Psalms 51:5; John 8:32-36; Romans 5:19; 6:23)
 5. Man's only hope of redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. All men must be born again. "By grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is a gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast." The emphasis for a continual walk in grace should be of heart righteousness and purity. All believers must live a pure life, being an example to both the believing and the unbelieving. Salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, being justified by grace through faith, man becomes a new creature and an heir of God, according to the hope of eternal life. The inward evidence of salvation is the direct witness of the Spirit. The outward evidence to all men is a life of righteousness and true holiness. Therefore, salvation gathers into itself all the redemptive acts and processes as justification, redemption, grace, propitiation, imputation, forgiveness, sanctification and glorification. The Hebrew and Greek words for salvation imply the ideas of deliverance, safety, preservation, healing and soundness. (John 3:3-5; Romans 4:1-5; Ephesians 2:8-9; 4:24; Colossians 4:5; I Thessalonians 4:12; Luke 24:47; Romans 10:13-15; Titus 2:11-12; 3:5-7)
 6. Water baptism is a vital part of the overcoming Christian's life. The ordinance of water baptism is to be performed by immersion and by a minister of the New Covenant. It is the means whereby those who have been justified by faith in the blood of Jesus:

- receive the covenant sign of circumcision of the heart,
- are made partakers in the burial of Christ,
- become identified with Him in His resurrection.

(Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 22:16; Romans 6:1-14; Colossians 2:9-12; I Peter 3:18-22)

7. All believers should earnestly seek and expect the promise of the Father, which is the baptism in the Holy Spirit according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that this baptism is an important and necessary experience in the life of every believer, and is not dependent upon the believer's worthiness, but is a free gift of God. This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the initial experience of salvation. (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8, 8:12-17, 10:44-46, 11:14-16, 15:7-9)

8. We believe that speaking in tongues is the initial physical sign of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and afterwards has the continual effect of edifying the believer. (I Corinthians 12,13,14; Isaiah 28:11, 12; Acts 2:4, 10:44-48, 19:6)

9. The gifts of the Spirit (prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues, faith, working of miracles, gifts of healing, word of wisdom, word of knowledge, discerning of spirits, etc.) will be operative in the Church. We also believe that these gifts are imparted by the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit at His will. We further hold that these gifts should work in harmony with the unity of the body and that love must be the motivation for the working of all gifts. "Let all things be done decently and in order." (I Corinthians 12-14)

10. The Church is the body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, for the fulfillment of the great commission. (Mark 16:15) Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the General Assembly and the Church of the First Born, which are written in heaven. (Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:22; Hebrews 12:23)

11. The divine appointments of the five-fold ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers were given in the New Testament Church at the ascension of Christ, and they continue to this day. (Romans 12; I Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11; Timothy 3:2-12; Titus 1:5-9)

12. There is a priesthood to which every believer is called and should therefore minister unto the Father in praises and offer up the sacrifices of his time, body and material holdings for the service of the Lord. (John 15:16; Ephesians 1:4-5; I Peter 2:4-5, 9-10)

13. The doctrine of the laying on of hands is in harmony with the Scriptures for the:
 - confirmation and ordination of ministers by the presbytery,
 - baptism in the Holy Spirit,
 - impartation of anointing for spiritual gifts by the presbytery,

- ministry of healing of the sick.

(Acts 13:1-3; I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:6; Acts 8:17-18; Mark 16:18)

- 14.** The Scriptures foretell the personal, physical return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the restoration of all things spoken by the mouth of all the prophets since the world began. (Matthew 23:39, 24:42-44, 25:31; Mark 14:62; ACTS 1:11, 3:19-21; Philippians 3:20-21; I Thessalonians 4:14-18)
- 15.** There will be a new heaven and a new earth wherein righteousness will dwell and there will also be an eternal hell in which all that are unrighteous will have their part. (Isaiah 65:17, 66:22; II Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1, 8; Matthew 24:36-51; II Thessalonians 1:5-9)
- 16.** The following sacraments are in harmony with the Scriptures and are therefore to be observed by the Church:

Water Baptism: Those who have been made partakers of Christ's death by faith in His shed blood are participants in His burial and resurrection through immersion for the covenant sign of the circumcision of the heart. [(Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-10)

The Lord's Supper: This is a memorial of the covenant made with God through the blood of Christ. It is a continuation of the eternal covenant of the Passover Feast, which God commanded the Israelites to observe. Those who have made covenant with God through the blood of Jesus are commanded by the Lord to partake until He returns. We observe the Lord's Supper each Sunday in remembrance of Him. (Mark 14:24; Luke 22:19-20; John 6:51, 53; I Corinthians 10:16, 11:25-32)