

BY-LAWS

Highland Park Baptist Church

300 SE Washington
Bartlesville, Ok. 74006

918-333-7340

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ARTICLE I
INCORPORATION

The Highland Park Baptist Church, Bartlesville, Oklahoma, referred to hereinafter as the “Church”, is incorporated in the State of Oklahoma as a “Not for Profit” institution. The Church is a religious body under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God.

ARTICLE II
AFFILIATION

- A. The Church is an autonomous body.
- B. The Church is aligned with and cooperating with the Washington-Osage Baptist Association, The Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, and The Southern Baptist Convention.
- C. All new affiliations or changes in existing affiliations must be approved at a regular scheduled business meeting by 75% of the voting membership of the Church who are present at time of voting as defined in Article IV paragraph D.

ARTICLE III
STATEMENT OF FAITH

- A. The Church has adopted three formal statements of doctrine; as a witness to our beliefs, and as a pledge of our faithfulness to the doctrines revealed in Holy Scripture and rooted in Baptist history: *Statement of Basic Beliefs* (Appendix A), *Five Doctrinal Statements* (Appendix B), and the *2000 Baptist Faith and Message* (available at: <http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp>).
- B. The Church's statement of faith can only be changed if such a change is approved at a regular scheduled business meeting by 75% of the voting membership of the Church who are present at time of voting as defined in Article IV paragraph D.
- C. Statement of Faith – Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

- 1. Marriage

The *2000 Baptist Faith and Message*, expresses our fundamental biblical conviction that Christian marriage is, by definition, the spiritual and physical uniting of one man and one woman in an exclusive covenant commitment for their joint lifetime. Christian marriage is God’s unique

gift to reveal the union between Christ and His Church. As such, this local church believes that wedding ceremonies on church property are spiritual observances of worship of God who created this divine institution. As worship services, weddings on church property shall be officiated by one or more ordained ministers of the gospel. The church may decline to make its facilities or ministers available for any wedding if it is determined that one or both of the parties are not biblically and/or legally qualified to marry. Such determinations may be made by the elders, subject to the direction of the church.

No minister or employee of the church shall officiate at any marriage ceremony unless such marriage is consistent with this policy.

2. Gender and Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Highland Park Baptist Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Highland Park Baptist Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Highland Park Baptist Church.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

A. The Membership

The Membership of the Highland Park Baptist Church of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, shall consist of all persons whose names appear on the Church Membership Roll.

B. Admissions to Membership

Applications for membership may be received at any regular worship service of the Church on any Sunday, any regular mid-week prayer service of the Church, or any publicly and previously announced worship service of the Church or at any like meeting held by any Mission of the Church. Membership shall become effective:

1. After a public profession of faith in Christ as personal Saviour, and upon baptism by immersion in water as authorized by the Church; or
2. Upon receipt of a church letter of dismissal and recommendation from some other Baptist church of like faith and order; or
3. By statement, acceptable to the Church, of previous membership after baptism in a church of like faith and order; or
4. By restoration, in the event membership has been terminated by special church discipline, after evidence has been presented that the cause which prompted such action no longer exists and genuine repentance and reformation has occurred.

C. Church Discipline of Membership

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Cor. 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin and promoting purity (1 Tim. 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Gal. 6:1).

The Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted the local church with the authority and responsibility to discipline members for flagrant sin or serious doctrinal error, with the goal of the restoration of the offender. Discipline is entrusted to the Elders and is to follow the biblical pattern given in the New Testament (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:7-8; Gal. 6:1; 2 Thess. 3:6; Titus 3:10-11; and 2 John 7-11). Any member of this church who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct

that is opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, or is threatening to the testimony of this church, or is divisive to the body, shall be subject to church discipline.

Discipline will follow the said biblical pattern, and is an effort to bring the individual to repentance and protect the church from unrepentant sin. Discipline may involve exclusion from participation in ministry and communion, as well as dismissal from the fellowship of this church. An individual may be disciplined by the Elders short of dismissal from the fellowship, as they deem appropriate for the specific circumstance (for example, an individual may remain in certain circumstances a member of this church but be denied the privilege of serving in a particular ministry). The Elders, as is required by Scripture, may report to the congregation the names of those who have lost membership by reason of church discipline, and the reason for that discipline, as described in Matthew 18:15-20.

A member of this church cannot voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership in the midst of the discipline process, and may only voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership if they are not the subject of a discipline proceeding at the time or only after a disciplinary process, of which they are the subject, has been concluded as determined by the Elders.

D. Statement of Mediation

Members of the church must submit any legal dispute with the church for mediation before a mutually agreed-upon Christian mediator. Lawsuits between believers, or threats of lawsuits between believers, are a matter of grave concern for the church, are contrary to biblical and church teaching, and mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a biblical fashion (1 Cor 6:1-7).

E. Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated only in one of the following manners:

1. Upon death of the member.
2. Upon issuance of a Church letter of dismissal and recommendation for membership in some other Baptist church.
3. Upon a member's joining a church of another faith.
4. Upon the personal request of the member to be removed from the rolls of the church, but limited by the provisions of church discipline as set forth in section C above.
5. Upon the expiration of a period of two years without communication by said member with the Church during said period according to the policy for

membership review placed in the Highland Park Baptist Church Policies and Procedures Manual (Section V-B).

6. Upon withdrawal of fellowship by the Church from a member as provided by the Holy Scriptures. These processes are detailed in section C above.

F. Voting of Members

Every member of the Church twelve years of age and older shall be entitled to vote on any matter coming before the Church for its determination. These shall constitute the voting membership of the church. Only voting members present when a matter is presented shall be entitled to vote. Each such member present shall be entitled to one vote which shall be exercised in person and not in proxy. All such matters shall be determined at a regular or special business meeting of the Church held in accordance with these By-Laws by vote of a majority of the voting members present, unless otherwise specified in the By-Laws or the Highland Park Baptist Church Policies and Procedures Manual.

E. Meeting of Members

1. **Worship Services.** Public services for worship shall be held at least once per week on Sundays. Other public services for worship may be held at such other occasions as are deemed best for the advancement of the cause of Christ by the direction of the Pastor or the Elders or as determined by the action of a majority of the voting membership of the Church present at any regular or special business meeting of the Church.
2. **Regular Business Meeting.** Regular business meeting of the members for the transaction of the business and affairs of the Church shall be held at the third Sunday evening service of each quarter and notice thereof is not required. A regular business meeting may be continued on a subsequent date by the action of a majority of the voting membership of the Church present at the regular business meeting or any continuation thereof. Any item of business may be considered at a regular business meeting or any continuation thereof.
3. **Special Business Meetings.** The Church may be called into conference for handling of its business and affairs by oral announcement of the time, place, and nature of business at two preceding regularly scheduled services of the Church by the Pastor or the Elders. One of the oral announcements must be made at a Sunday morning worship service. Only items of business within the scope of the nature of business stated in such announcement may be considered at a special business meeting. A special business meeting may be continued to a subsequent date by the action of a majority of the voting membership present at the special business meeting or a continuation thereof.

F. Quorum of Members

The voting members present at a regular or special business meeting shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE V

THE CHURCH OFFICERS

A. Pastor

The Pastor shall be a man called to be the spiritual leader of the Church in accordance with Scriptural requirements. The Church shall support the Pastor with their prayers and finances in such manner as to allow him the greatest time for evangelism and the preaching of the Gospel. It shall be the duty of the Pastor to preach to the Church, to administer or cause to be administered the ordinances of the Gospel, to act as moderator at the business meetings when present, and to perform the various other duties incumbent on his office. The Pastor shall be selected by the Church and shall continue as Pastor until his service is terminated by his death, resignation, or vote of 75% of the voting membership of the Church as stipulated in Article IV D. When the Pastor leaves, the Church shall form a search committee according to the current procedures contained in the Highland Park Baptist Church Policies and Procedures Manual.

B. Staff Members

The Church Staff Members are those called by the Church to serve the spiritual needs of the Church. They shall be responsible to the Pastor. The description for each Staff Member shall be determined by the Church. Each Staff Member shall continue in his office until his services are terminated by his death, resignation, vote of 75% of the voting membership of the Church as stipulated in Article IV D, or by action of the Elders. When a Church Staff Member leaves, the Church shall form a search committee according to the current procedures contained in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

C. The Elders

The Elders are officers of the Church as provided in Article VII of these By-Laws.

D. The Deacons

The Deacons are officers of the Church as provided in Article VIII of these By-Laws.

E. Church Clerk

The Clerk shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of each business meeting of the Church, shall prepare the annual Church letter, and shall keep and maintain the membership roll of the Church, with such other duties as the Elders may prescribe.

The term of office for the Clerk shall be the Church year as defined in the Highland Park Baptist Church Policies and Procedures Manual.

The procedure for electing the Church Clerk is contained in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

F. Church Treasurer

The Church Treasurer shall maintain an accurate account of the finances of the Church and shall present a report of such finances at each regular business meeting. The Treasurer cannot serve as a Trustee (see The Corporate Officers below), a check signer, or as a member of the Finance Team (see Article IX) while serving as Treasurer.

In view of the serious responsibilities of this office, the person who fills this position should be one who has passed the qualifications to serve as elder or deacon.

The term of office for the Treasurer shall be the Church year as defined in the Highland Park Baptist Church Policies and Procedures Manual.

The procedure for electing the Church Treasurer is contained in the Highland Park Baptist Church Policies and Procedures Manual.

G. Relationship of Officers

The Church officers are all servants to the Church and have no governmental authority over each other, the Church, or other members of the Church, except as expressly authorized by the By-Laws. The Pastor, Staff Members, Elders, and Deacons shall provide guidance to the Church and to each other, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, through their personal service to the Church and to one another.

ARTICLE VI

THE CORPORATE OFFICERS

A. The Corporate Officers

In compliance with laws of the State of Oklahoma, the Church shall have three

Trustees as Corporate Officers.

1. The Trustees shall select a President and Secretary.
2. Duties: Any two of the Trustees are authorized to collectively act as the legal agent of the Church.
3. Election: Trustees shall be elected by the Church from the membership of the Elders and Deacons on a staggered basis. The term of office shall be for three years with one term expiring at the end of each Church year. Trustees may not succeed themselves. The Pastor and Church Staff Members shall not be eligible to serve as trustees.
4. Removal of Trustees: Any Trustee may be removed by the Church at anytime whenever in its judgment the best interests of the Church will be served. Any office shall become vacant when the holder dies, resigns or is no longer a member of the Church. Should an office be vacated, the Church will elect a member to serve the remainder of the unexpired term at the next business meeting.

ARTICLE VII

THE ELDERS

A. Purpose

Scripture indicates that God raises up men who are scripturally qualified to be elders and overseers of the local church, and that these men are to be the spiritual leaders of the church. The Church believes that the terms elder, overseer and shepherd/pastor are synonymous. The Elder body, some of whom fill church vocational roles and others non-vocational roles, are brothers with the people, always seeking God's best for the members of the church. (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 20:17-18; 1 Peter 5:1-2; Acts 14:23; 2 Corinthians 8:19)

B. Membership:

1. The body of Elders of the church shall consist of the Pastor and a minimum of five men elected by the Church. The elected elders shall serve for a term of five years. Terms shall be staggered. Since there is no defined number of elders that may serve at once, the Elder body shall determine the exact number of elders whose terms will expire each year. An elder may serve successive terms, but must go through the election process for each term.

2. Eldership shall be an ordained position, and shall be treated as such.
3. An elder cannot also serve as an active deacon during his term as elder.

C. Election

The method of election is described in the Highland Park Baptist Church Policies and Procedures Manual.

D. Qualifications:

1. Scriptural. Those who hold the office of elder shall be men who meet the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:2-7, and Titus 1:5-9.
2. Church.
 - a. Has not been divorced. Marriage is not required for eldership.
 - b. Abstains from the use or sale of alcoholic drink and illegal use of drugs.
 - c. At least 30 years old and a member of Highland Park Baptist Church for at least five years of total membership.
 - d. Subscribes to and supports the Church covenant.
 - e. Gives faithfully and sacrificially to the church.
 - f. Is not a member of the Church Staff.

E. Priorities

1. Shepherd the flock of God: oversee, guide, lead and guard the Church with a servant attitude.
2. Study and teach the Word of God, exhort in sound doctrine, and refute those who contradict.
3. Warn and protect from false teaching.
4. Equip the saints for ministry.
5. Propose church policy and doctrine.
6. Guard their own hearts and provide an example for all.
7. Pray for the members of the church.
8. Lead in unity.

9. Be zealous to guard the unity of the spirit within the church in the bonds of peace.

(Acts 6:3-4; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:9; Acts 20:28-32; Ephesians 4:11-12; Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22-23; Acts 11:27-30; 1 Timothy 4:14; 1 Peter 5:2-3; Acts 6:4; James 5:13-25; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 2:27)

F. Duties

All duties and responsibilities not assigned by the Church to other church officers, teams or organizations, including but not limited to the following:

1. Formulate and recommend long range vision for the Church.
2. Advise, counsel and encourage all organizations and officers of the Church with respect to planning, actions, and evaluations.
3. Provide a source of counsel to the Pastor and the Church Staff.
4. Provide information as needed to the deacons and finance team concerning pastoral staff and support staff compensation.
5. Administer routine business of the Church and provide recommendations to the Church on business matters requiring notice to and action by the Church.
6. In the event the Church is without a Pastor, the remaining Elders shall ensure that all responsibilities of the Church are met and that all operational needs of the Church are provided for.
7. In the event the Pastor is unable to preach for a regularly scheduled worship service, the Elders shall see that the pulpit is filled.
8. In the event the Pastor is unable to attend a business meeting, an elder shall serve as moderator.

G. Decision Making

Unity and harmony in the church begins with the Elders.

Each elder serving on the elder body has one vote. However, the elders are not to operate by majority rule or vote. Elders are to seek and find the mind of the Lord through unanimity, reached after thorough and Biblically-related discussion. The ultimate authority is not the authority of men, but of God, and is expressed not through men acting as individuals, but through the collective, united agreement of men whom the Spirit has led to serve as elders.

In areas of potential conflict of interest, an elder will not participate in discussion or vote, and will limit himself to supporting the remaining elders in prayer.

ARTICLE VIII

THE DEACONS

A. Purpose

Assist the Church and the Pastor in all matters of the physical and spiritual needs of the members of the Church.

B. Membership

The membership of the Deacons will be according to the number of biblically qualified men who are willing to serve and determined by the need of the church. The Deacons shall be elected by the Church for a term of three years on a staggered basis whereby three terms expire each year thereafter.

C. Method of Election

The method of election is described in the Highland Park Baptist Church Policies and Procedures Manual.

D. Qualifications:

1. Scriptural. Those who hold the office of Deacon shall be men who meet the qualifications set forth in Acts 6:3-8, 1 Timothy 3:8-13, and Titus 1:6.
2. Church.
 - a. Has not been divorced. Marriage is not required for deaconship.
 - b. Abstains from the use or sale of alcoholic drink and illegal use or sale of drugs.
 - c. At least 21 years old and a member of Highland Park Baptist Church for at least one year.
 - d. Subscribes to and supports the Church covenant.
 - e. Gives faithfully and sacrificially to the church.
 - f. Is not a member of the Church Staff.

E. Duties

Include the following:

1. Assist in pastoral ministry including visitation of sick, bereaved and those having other needs.
2. Promotion of the fellowship of the members of the Church;
3. Visitation of all new families coming into the Church;
4. Assist in administering the ordinances of the Church.
5. Be zealous to guard the unity of the spirit within the church in the bonds of peace.

F. Deacon Emeritus

In the event that a deacon, after years of faithful and honorable service to God and to the Church, shall no longer be able to render active service, the Deacon Body may recommend to the Church that such a man be accorded the recognition of Deacon Emeritus. Any deacon so elected shall not have voting privileges in deacon meetings.

ARTICLE IX

CONVEYANCES AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS

The Church may sell, convey, mortgage, encumber or otherwise deal with or dispose of real or personal property owned by the Church and may evidence any such transaction by deed, bill of sale, mortgage, deed of trust, contract or other appropriate instrument, with or without the seal of the Church, signed by any two of the Trustees of the Church, when such transaction is authorized by appropriate resolutions adopted in accordance with these By-Laws; provided that any such transaction shall be authorized by the Church.

ARTICLE X

EFFECTIVE DATE

These By-Laws shall become effective as of the date of their adoption by the Church, and shall supersede and take effect in lieu of the By-Laws in effect prior to that time.

ARTICLE XI

TEAM MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

There shall be three standing Ministry Teams implemented to serve the Church.

1. Finance Team
2. Personnel Team
3. Properties Team

The purposes, membership, terms and responsibilities of the standing Ministry Teams are defined in the Highland Park Baptist Church Policies and Procedures Manual.

ARTICLE XII

DISSOLUTION

- A. Should an irreconcilable division of membership occur within the Church because of doctrinal differences, the title to and possession of property and assets owned by this congregation shall remain with the group of members holding the doctrinal position of the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message.
- B. Parties of the outgoing group in custody of physical properties of the Church shall immediately relinquish same to proper church officials.
- C. All offices and positions held by members of the outgoing group shall automatically be declared vacated at the time of division.

ARTICLE XIII

AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be amended, supplemented, suspended or superseded only by action of the Church in regular business meeting. The Church Clerk shall maintain all updating of the By-Laws as approved by the Church. An updated edition will be made available to the membership yearly.

APPENDIX A: Statement of Basic Beliefs

The Bible

I believe that every word of the Bible is uniquely inspired of God, wholly without error as originally given by God, and is true, authoritative, and sufficient for faith and practice.

Deuteronomy 4:1-2; Psalm 19:7-11; 119:11, 89, 105, 140; Jeremiah 15:16; Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1-2; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:20-21.

God

I believe there is only one true and living God, the Creator and Sustainer of all things in heaven and earth (visible and invisible). He is all powerful, all knowing, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. All things exist for the glory of God.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Psalm 148; Proverbs 16:4; Isaiah 61:3; Romans 11:33-36; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Ephesians 1:3-14

Trinity

I believe that God eternally exists in three distinct Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-6, 46:9-10; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5; Genesis 1:26; Psalm 45:6-7, 110:1; Matthew 3:13-17, 28:17-20; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

The Father is the head of the Trinity, though each Member is co-equal and co-eternal.

Hebrews 1:3; John 12:49-50; Luke 22:42; John 5:30; 10:28-30; 14:28; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Hebrews 10:9.

The Son, Jesus Christ, is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament, Who was born of the Virgin Mary, and is both fully God and fully human. He died on the cross to redeem mankind, rose again from the dead to justify the believer, ascended to the right hand of God where He intercedes for us, and in the Father's own time will return in visible, physical form to overthrow sin and judge the world.

Matthew 1:20; 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 2:52; 24:1-53; John 1:1-4, 14; 20-21:25; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 15:12-34; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:8; Galatians 4:4-5; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; Hebrews 1:1-3; 9:28; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 1:7, 13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

The Holy Spirit is the One sent from God to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, of judgment, to regenerate and cleanse from sin. He is the indwelling Guide, Teacher, and Strengtheners of the believer.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Psalms 51:11; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26;15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 13:2; Romans 8:9-11, 14-16, 26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 2 Timothy 1:14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; Revelation 22:17.

Humanity

I believe that all humanity, Christ excluded, is sinful by both nature (birth) and choice (actions). The deserved penalty for sin is eternal death, both physical and spiritual.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5, 7, 15-22; 3:19; 6:5; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Jeremiah 17:5-9; Romans 3:23; 5:8; 5:12-21; 7:18; Ephesians 2:1-3; James 1:14-15; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

Salvation

I believe that Jesus Christ is the only Savior from sin. Salvation is the sovereign work of God by grace alone, on the basis of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, and not on the basis of human merit or works. Only those who turn from sin (repentance) and to Jesus through faith in His Person and work will be saved and raised to eternal reward. Those who do not turn from sin and to Jesus will be raised to eternal punishment. Only through repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ can one be reconciled to God and experience true life and joy.

Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 25:31-46; 27:22-28:6; John 1:11-14, 29; 3:3-21, 36; 5:24-29;10:9, 28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; 24:15; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:21-26; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18, 29-39; 10:9-10, 13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8, 14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

APPENDIX B: Five Doctrinal Statements

1. *What We Teach About God*

We teach that there is but one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4), an infinite, all-knowing Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)—each equally deserving worship and obedience.

God the Father

We teach that God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psalm 145:8-9; 1 Corinthians 8:6). He is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:36). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men (Ephesians 4:6), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Romans 8:14; 2 Corinthians 6:18). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chronicles 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither the author nor approver of sin (Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38-47), nor does He abridge (reduce in scope) the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Peter 1:17).

God the Son

We teach that Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies, and in these He is co-equal, co-eternal, and equal in divine substance with the Father (John 10:30; 14:9).

We teach that God the Father created according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence and in operation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2).

We teach that in the incarnation (God becoming man) Christ surrendered only the prerogatives (rights and privileges) of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. In His incarnation, the eternally existing second Person of the Trinity accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so was fully God and fully Man (Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9).

We teach that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Micah 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9-10; Colossians 2:9).

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23, 25; Luke 1:26-35); that He was God incarnate (John 1:1, 14); and that the purpose of the

incarnation was to reveal and glorify God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:29; 2 Corinthians 4:4,6; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 7:25-26; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

We teach that, in the incarnation, the second Person of the Trinity laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting (depriving or stripping) Himself of His divine attributes (Philippians 2:5-8).

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory (appeasing, paying of penalty), and redemptive (John 10:15; Romans 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24).

We teach that on the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin; and that he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God (Romans 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18).

We teach that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High Priest (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Romans 4:25; 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).

We teach that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that God has accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross. Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers (John 5:26-29; 14:19; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23).

We teach that Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is His Body (Romans 7:4; Ephesians 4:12), unto Himself at the rapture, and returning with His church in glory, will establish His millennial kingdom on earth (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20).

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One through whom God will judge all mankind (John 5:22-23):

- Believers (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10).
- Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matthew 25:31-46).
- Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15). He is the final Judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Matthew 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31).

God the Holy Spirit

We teach that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, underived (not a created being),

possessing all the attributes of personality and deity, including intellect (1 Corinthians 2:10-13), emotions (Ephesians 4:30), will (1 Corinthians 12:11), eternity (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (God is everywhere) (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscience (God knows all things) (Isaiah 40:13-14), omnipotence (God has all power) (Romans 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is co-equal, co-eternal, and equal in divine substance with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 10:15-17).

We teach that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind. We recognize His sovereign activity in creation (Genesis 1:2), the incarnation (Matthew 1:18), the written revelation (2 Peter 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7).

We teach that the work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost, when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16-17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ, which is His church (1 Corinthians 12:13). The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming believers into the image of Christ (John 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher, who guided the authors of the Holy Bible into all truth as they committed to writing God's revelation (2 Peter 1:19-21). Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation, and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (John 16:13; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27).

We teach that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays, but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18). We teach, in this respect, that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the perfecting of the saints today, and that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles in the beginning days of the church were for the purpose of pointing to and authenticating the apostles as revealers of divine truth, and were never intended to be characteristic of the lives of believers (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:1-4).

2. *What We Teach About the Holy Scripture*

We teach that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the 66 books of the

Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the full, inspired, and authoritative Word of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-14; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Timothy 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed.

We teach the literal, grammatical-historical (literal – we take the words for what they mean in their normal plain sense; grammatical – we follow the usual grammatical rules of literature, including recognizing tools such as similes, metaphors, etc.; historical – we attempt to determine the historical background and context of a passage) interpretation of Scripture which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Genesis 1:31; Exodus 31:17).

We teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We teach that God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual authorship. The Holy Spirit so superintended (exercised oversight of) the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's Word to man (2 Peter 1:20-21) without error in the whole or in the part (Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16).

We teach that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20). It is the responsibility of believers to ascertain carefully the true intent and meaning of Scripture, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations. Yet the truth of Scripture stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it.

3. *What We Teach About Man*

We teach that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Genesis 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9).

We teach that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live his life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11)

We teach that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence, incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death, became subject to the wrath of God, and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or

doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 John 1:8).

We teach that, because all men were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all mankind in all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).

4. *What We Teach About Salvation*

We teach that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of redemption through Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

God's Sovereignty and Man's Responsibility

We teach that God owes sinners no mercy of any kind, only condemnation, so God's provision of salvation is a matter for endless praise, that He should choose to save any of us; and doubly so when His choice involved the giving of His own Son to suffer as sin-bearer (Romans 8:32). We also teach that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own part or to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Ephesians 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:2).

We teach that the work of salvation as taught in Scripture is based upon the sovereignty of God. (John 1:11-13) We also teach that God's sovereignty in no way contradicts or negates the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord. (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Acts 2:37; Romans 1:18-20; 10:9-10; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelations 22:17). From a human viewpoint this truth is a seeming paradox, but it is totally reconciled in the mind of God. Yet even the ability to repent and trust Christ is granted by the grace of God (John 6:65).

We teach that God, through His sovereignty and before the moment of creation, chose those out of the fallen human race whom He would redeem, bring to faith, justify, sanctify and glorify in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:28- 39; Ephesians 1:3-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:9-10). This divine choice is an expression of free, unconstrained, and sovereign grace.

We teach that the action of God's sovereignty will result in what God determines. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith, and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; James 4:8). God has not revealed to the

church the identity of those who will be so chosen, but in His sovereignty has made provision to work through the church to call the chosen to Himself (Matthew 28:19-20). Therefore, we preach, teach and witness to all mankind, trusting that God will accomplish the work of salvation through us according to His will.

We teach that none of this should be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty. God did not create the universe as a clockwork device that He set in motion and then sat back to watch it unwind. Rather, God's sovereignty reveals to us the greatness of His glory and grace. God is truly sovereign, but He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Romans 9:11-16). This sovereignty will always exalt the will of God in a manner totally consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:25-28; 2 Timothy 1:9). Acknowledging God's sovereignty moves us to humility, confidence, joy, praise, faithfulness, and holiness in response.

Regeneration

We teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality (means, agency, tool) of the Word of God (John 5:24) when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation. Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works are the proper evidence and fruit of regeneration (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:10), and will be experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (Ephesians 5:17-21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:16; 2 Peter 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). Such conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3).

Justification

We teach that justification before God is an act of God (Romans 8:33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Isaiah 55:6-7) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20; 4:6) and involves the imputation of (charging of) our sins to Christ (Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24) and the imputation (crediting of) of Christ's righteousness to us (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21). By this means God is enabled to "be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

Sanctification

We teach that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and is therefore identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. This positional sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2).

We teach that there is also, by the work of the Holy Spirit, a progressive sanctification by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God by the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17, 19; Romans 6:1-22; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23). In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh—but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended until death. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

We teach that separation from sin is part of progressive sanctification and is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments, and that the Scriptures clearly indicate that in the last days apostasy (abandoning of faith) and worldliness shall increase (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5).

We teach that, out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us, and because our glorious God is so worthy of our total consecration, all the saved should live in such a manner as to demonstrate our adoring love to God and so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior. We also teach that separation from all religious apostasy and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God (Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

We teach that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; Hebrews 12:1-2) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness that reflects the teaching of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:2-12) and a continual pursuit of holiness (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 3:1-10).

Security

We teach that all the redeemed, once regenerated by the Spirit of God, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-

10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24).

We teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality (Romans 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

5. *What We Teach About the Church*

We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13), of which Christ is the Head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18).

We teach that the formation of the church, the Body of Christ, began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the Rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We teach that the church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Ephesians 2:11-3:6). The church is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6; 5:32).

We teach that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1) and that the members of the one spiritual Body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).

We teach that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ are elders (also called overseers, bishops, pastors, and pastor/teachers) (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11) and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

We teach that the elders lead or rule as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17-22) and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7, 17). At the same time, the elders are accountable to the congregation (1 Timothy 5:19-20; Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1).

We teach that the deacons lead in the service ministries of the church, particularly focused on the meeting of the physical needs of the body of Christ (Acts 6:1-6).

We teach the mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matthew 18:5- 14), as well as the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matthew 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16).

We teach the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5).

We teach that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation (spreading abroad) of the faith. Each local church, however, through its elders and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. The elders should determine all other matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government as well (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 13; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

We teach that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (2 Timothy 2:2, 15; 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42) and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42). We also teach the importance of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:2).

We teach the calling of all saints to the work of service (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; Revelation 22:12).

We teach the responsibility of the church to align with God as He accomplishes His purpose in the world. To that end, He gives the church spiritual gifts. Men chosen by God for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of service and ministry are gifted accordingly to enable that work. (Ephesians 4:11-12) He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each member of the Body of Christ (Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

We teach that there were two kinds of gifts given the early church: 1) miraculous gifts of divine revelation and healing, given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the apostles' message (Hebrews 2:3-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12); 2) ministering gifts, given to equip believers for edifying one another. With the New Testament revelation now complete, Scripture becomes the sole test of the authenticity of a man's message, and confirming gifts of a miraculous nature are no longer necessary to validate a man or his message (1 Corinthians 13:8-12). Miraculous gifts can even be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers (1 Corinthians 13:13-14; Revelation 13:13-14). The only gifts in operation today are the ministering gifts given for edification (Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-13).

We teach that no one possesses the gift of healing today, but that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the

sick, suffering, and afflicted (Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; 2 Corinthians 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15). We teach that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Romans 6:1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible Body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42). We teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of Christ's death until He returns, and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28-32). We also teach that, whereas the elements of Communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, participation in the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ, who indwells every believer, and so is present, fellowshiping with His people (1 Corinthians 10:16).