



Foundation Class

LSC's foundation verses:

As you come to Him (*Jesus Christ*), a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:4-5

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Introduction

The ordinary Christian life is **not** the opposite of the radical Christian life. The ordinary Christian life **is** a radical life. It is a life of trusting Christ daily; repenting of our sins daily; abiding in Christ daily; loving Christ daily; dying to self each day; taking up our cross and following Christ daily; loving God and neighbor daily; and proclaiming the Gospel to whoever God puts before us wherever we are every day. Every Christian is both ordinary and radical. The ordinary Christian is not complacent, passionless, nominal or casual. On the contrary, if people around you don't know you are a child of God, you're probably not living like one.

Not every Christian is given the radical call to foreign missions, but every Christian has been given a mission. Our mission is not just when we walk into our church each Sunday, but when we roll out of bed each morning. As Christ followers, we are on mission when we go across the globe, across the street, when we sit at the kitchen table with our family, when we enter the workplace or classroom, and when we kneel to pray at the bedsides of our children or at the hospital with someone who is sick or injured. We are on our mission every day and everywhere because Jesus sent us as He sent the disciples who were with Him (John 17:18).

Although not every Christian is called to serve God in a foreign country, every Christian is a foreigner in his own country – a citizen of heaven and ambassador of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). We have been called out of darkness into the light, and then called to go back into the darkness to light up the darkness wherever God places us.

The darkness can never overcome the light if we continue to be the light. It's only when we hide the light that the darkness grows. We are called to be radically faithful and diligent to shine in a dark world. We do this with the same commitment and passion as when we serve alongside one another.

Throughout history, God has done extraordinary things through ordinary people. The ordinary Christian will forever fight the status quo of “lukewarm” Christianity (Revelation 3:15-16). God hates it! We will always fight against nominal or passionless Christianity. We are called to do all things as unto God and for His glory. As followers and proclaimers of Jesus Christ, we are to be on mission to make disciples of all nations, in whatever place God has called us to live and serve. For us at LSC, the place is here, and the time is now.

This class is about how and why we do that. It’s about who we are *in* Christ Jesus, and how God empowers us to *live* that out in the normal activities of our life. We do this apart from and alongside other believers, on mission with the Gospel, to the everlasting glory of God. God has ordained the local church to be His people to represent Him to the world. In order to do this well, we need a good foundation which includes an accurate understanding of the Gospel, doctrinal clarity, and who we are as His church.

May God’s Spirit and blessing rest upon you and the conversations we are about to have.

Living Stone Church History

In 1889, when Washington Territory became a State, a notice was published in Chelan on July 4 inviting all to gather for singing on the next Lord's Day. On August 8 a Sunday school was organized, and on August 18 the first vote to become organized as a local church was made. The First Congregational Church of Chelan was established.

Through the years our church witnessed the growth of America, WWI, the Depression and WWII. It was in August 1941, just before the attack on Pearl Harbor, that the church became independent and non-denominational. It was renamed "The Little Stone Church of Chelan" with Norman Simpson as its first pastor.

From these early beginnings, The Little Stone Church of Chelan has survived and contributed to the community. On November 23, 2003, we celebrated our 100th anniversary.

On June 8, 2014, the congregation took a vote, and the manner of governance of the church was changed to the Biblical structure of elder leadership, and a new constitution was instituted.

On December 7, 2014, the church name was changed to Living Stone Church to reflect 1 Peter 2:4-5 and who we are as a church body, living stones who have as their head The Living Stone, Jesus Christ.

Is Church Membership a Big Deal or Not?

Many people have the idea that Christians should be involved in a local church but don't think it's the most important thing in the world. Therefore, they think or say we shouldn't make such a big deal about membership. According to them, when people church hop every few years, it's just fine. We don't agree.

Church membership in the Bible is a reality. If we can grab hold of how the Bible views church membership, it just might change our lives and the shape of our Christianity.

Western societies lump churches into the same category as clubs and charity organizations. Churches are regarded as a service provider that fills up our spiritual tanks or checks a box in a person's life. These organizations exist by permission of the state but not so The Church. It exists by the express authorization of Jesus Himself and is comprised of all who truly believe in who Jesus is and what He did.

To be a Christian is to know this: Jesus is where the buck ultimately stops. He is the authority to which all other authorities must answer. He will judge the nations. He has final power over life and death. The state exists by His permission and not the other way around (John 19:11).

The local church is also one of Jesus' agents, and He gave it an authority that you and I, as individual Christians, don't have. This has radical implications for what the local church is and what it means to be a church member.

Many underestimate, belittle or mischaracterize local churches. They are not businesses; they are families. We need to start thinking of them as such.

What a church is not!

The local church is not a club. It's not a voluntary organization where membership is optional. It's not a friendly group of people who share an interest in religious things and gather once a week to talk about the Divine.

The local church is not a service provider where the customer has all the authority. Here are examples of the **wrong thinking so-called Christians have** about the local church:

- It's fine to attend indefinitely without joining.
- The Lord's Supper is personal; isolated from being a member in Christ's body.
- Sunday is when I show my Christianity, and Monday-Saturday doesn't matter.
- Being absent from the Sunday gathering a few times a month is not a problem.
- My personal life decisions don't affect my ability to serve the local church.
- I'm not responsible for the spiritual and physical well-being of the other members.

The basic error behind all these examples is the assumption that I have the authority to conduct my Christian life on my own and that I'm not subject to the authority of any church.

What is the local church?

The local church is the authority on earth that Jesus has instituted to affirm and give shape to all Christian lives, including yours. Jesus instituted governments, and He instituted the local church.

The Bible establishes governments of nations as highest authority on earth when it comes to citizenship in a nation. It also establishes the local church as our highest authority on earth when it comes to representing Christ and our citizenship in His present and heavenly Kingdom.

Is church membership in the Bible? Look for words like body, family, flock, temple, etc. A local church is not the Kingdom; it's more like an embassy of the Kingdom – an institution that represents one nation inside another nation.

The word membership isn't used regarding a government or a nation. We don't say things like, "I am a member of America." We say I am a citizen or resident of America. As Christians we say we are members of the Body of Christ, or citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom. Agree or not, as a believer in Christ, you are a member of the Church which is represented by the local church of which we should be members.

Clubs have a common interest. Service providers have a common desire. Churches have all this but more; the King of Kings who requires obedience by His people. The Church begins with this: Jesus is Savior and Lord. He has died on the cross for the sins of everyone who would believe and follow Him.

Therefore, the Bible doesn't talk about church membership the way you might expect. Instead, it talks about how *God's people gather under His supreme rule*. **It is interested in the citizens of the Kingdom, not club members.**

Churches represent Christ's rule now. They affirm and protect His citizens now. They proclaim His laws now. They bow before Him as King now and call all people who believe to do the same.

Once you belong to Christ, you belong to His people too. It's a package deal. If you belong to the Father and the Son, you belong to the whole family, of which the local church is a part. Matthew 20:25-28 says we are not "to lord it over them" but to serve them. Christian authority works by tender, effective and heart-changing power of the Word and Spirit, not the manipulative powers of persuasion by men. Still, Jesus calls for submission to the local church.

The local church is the place that both affirms us as believers and helps give direction to our Christian lives. It guards the reputation of Christ by sorting out true believers from false. It is where those with saving faith in Christ, true Christians, work and worship together in the name of King Jesus to proclaim His Kingdom to mankind's lost.

About the local church

A church is both organic and structural. We can look at the flesh as being the organic part and the bones as the structure of a church. In the organic sense it's all about what a church does, its ministries and activities. Structurally it's about the "day-to-day stuff", the biblical rules that govern it. The world likes the activities but not the rules. They want the wine without the wineglass, and the result is that things can get messy without the vessel.

Both have been ordained by God: the flesh and the bones – and so it is with the local church.

The institutional definition of a local church is the following: It is a group of Christians who regularly gather in Christ's name to officially affirm and oversee one another's membership in Jesus Christ and His Kingdom through gospel preaching and ordinances (sacraments).

The Founder and functions of the local church

Jesus gave authority to the church to bind and loose (Matthew 16:18-19). This is the first time Jesus uses the word church. He is talking about the universal Church, the assembly of all Christians of all time periods. Jesus gives authority to represent what's bound and loosed in heaven, by binding and loosing on earth. In other words, the apostles had the authority for declaring who on earth is a Kingdom citizen and therefore represents Heaven. Here Jesus indisputably established the Church (which is its membership), and He gave it the authority and the keys to continue building itself – effectively the authority to receive and dismiss members. Two chapters later, Jesus uses the word church a second time, putting those keys into action. Read Matthew 18:15-20, **where we see the institution of Church discipline by Christ Himself.**

- Stage 1 Confrontation is kept private. If the sinner repents, then his confession of faith regains credibility.
- Stage 2 Confrontation expands to two or three witnesses.
- Stage 3 Confrontation expands to the Board of Elders
- Stage 4 Confrontation expands to the entire church.
- Stage 5 Involves removing the person from the covenant community and treating him or her like an outsider.

When it comes to a Christian's discipleship to Christ, the local church is the Christian's highest authority on earth. It is not the absolute authority, the Bible is, but Christ does mean for Christians to submit to the oversight of the local church by virtue of their citizenship in His Kingdom. The church will be an imperfect representation of His end-time gathering; but as long as Scripture leads the process, justice should be served in the rare circumstances when discipline is required.

The purpose of discipline

The underlying purpose in every act of corrective discipline is restoration through love – love for the individual, love for the church, love for the watching world, and love for Christ. God does, after all, discipline those He loves (Hebrews 12:6).

There are at least five different purposes and arguably more:

1. **Expose** sin. Sin, like cancer, loves to hide itself.
2. **Warn** the person of the sin.
3. **Save** the person from taking a path that leads to death.
4. **Protect** the church. Like cancer, sin spreads if left untreated.
5. **Present a good witness for Jesus.** It preserves the attractive distinctiveness of God's people (1 Corinthians 5:1). Churches are to be salt and light in a tasteless and dark world (Matthew 5:13).

Discipline gives us life, growth and health. When does discipline take place? The short answer is when someone sins. This does not mean the church is to lower the hammer for the slightest infraction. We all commit sins every day. Often it's best to say nothing; but when you do, begin by asking questions to make sure you have all the facts right, looking for opportunities to bring reconciliation through grace, mercy and love.

Churches should cultivate the kinds of relationships where informal correction is invited and received as an act of love and concern.

Formal church discipline from the entire congregation is reserved for sins of such significance that the church believes it can no longer affirm a person's profession of faith and there is a risk of defaming the name of Jesus. This is where sin continues unrepentant and in denial or rejection of prior admonitions.

What the church does

It gathers publicly, giving a face to God's Kingdom here on earth. It is where we bow before our King. We call it worship. **The gathering is where and how the King enacts His rule through *preaching of the Word*, care of believers and non-believers, the *sacraments* and *church discipline*. These are the marks of a true church!**

The gospel sermon (preaching the Word) explains the "law," declares the name of our King and explains the sacrifice He made for us. It teaches us His ways and confronts us in our disobedience. It assures us of His imminent return.

Care comes in many forms and many places.

The Ordinances or Sacraments are two: The Lord's Supper (or communion) and baptism. Christ Himself instituted both. Both are instruments of God's grace giving to believers, a visible representation of an invisible reality. In baptism we identify our union with Christ in His death and resurrection. The Lord's Supper proclaims His death and our membership in His body until He comes.

A church is its members!

Members are true Christians, in fellowship with others in the Body of Christ. No one gets saved and then wanders around alone thinking about whether to join a church. People in Scripture repent and are then baptized into the fellowship of a church. "Barnabas and Saul met with the church" in Acts 11:26. "They gathered the church together" in Acts 14:27.

A member of the local church is a member of The Church. A church member, therefore, is someone formally recognized as a Christian and a part of Christ's universal body, that Augustine called the "invisible church."

Jesus instituted local churches with authority over individuals; therefore, we submit to them as we do to governments. Christians don't join churches – they submit to them as the representation of Christ's Kingdom on earth. Pastors, elders and church leaders must also submit to the church in this way.

What is membership in the local church?

It is a declaration of citizenship in Christ's Kingdom. It's a declaration that you are an official, and bona fide, ambassador of Jesus. A more official definition might be that church membership is a relationship between a church and a Christian, characterized by the church's affirmation and supervision of a Christian's discipleship, and the Christian's submission to living out his or her discipleship in the care of the church. Here we see the church *affirms* and gives *supervision by discipleship*. The individual *submits* to discipleship.

The church says, "We recognize your saving faith in Christ alone, and we affirm publicly that you belong to Christ and accept the responsibility to provide supervision of your discipleship in our fellowship." The individual says, "Insofar as I recognize you as a faithful gospel-declaring church, I submit my presence and my discipleship to your love and supervision." Church membership, then, is about a church taking responsibility for you, and you for a church.

It's true a Christian must choose to join a church. However, we are obligated to choose a church, just as we are obligated to repent and believe in Jesus to be a Christian.

Why does membership matter (a summary)?

1. Membership in the worldwide Church is for all true believers in Christ.
2. Membership in a local church is biblical.
3. Membership in a local church helps assure proper celebration of the Lord's return until He comes (communion).
4. Membership in a local church declares allegiance to Jesus.
5. Membership in a local church allows Christians to serve one another.
6. Membership in a local church provides Christian leaders a place to fulfill their calling.
7. Membership in a local church helps Christians become biblically sound leaders.
8. Membership in a local church gives structure to a Christian life in discipleship.
9. Membership in a local church builds a visible witness and invites the nations.
10. Membership in a local church provides biblical discipline when needed.

Who gets in to LSC as a member?

The simple answer is Christians. The standard for membership is no higher or any lower than it is for being a true Christian – a believer in Jesus Christ as the one whose name is the only name under heaven given among mankind by which we must be saved.

People must understand and believe the Gospel to join LSC. People may not always be able to explain the Gospel well, but in one way or another, they must be able to explain it. LSC uses a Statement of Faith to ensure we all have the same conversation about what we say we believe.

What is submission in the local church?

The word *submit* scares people, partly because we have seen it abused so much in all kinds of leadership, including the church. First, it is supposed to be a picture of unity in the local church. This picture of unity is a picture of mutual submission, not abuse of or lording over other members. This is a picture of lives devoted to submissive love, and humble unity among Christ's people.

A second picture looks like the Gospel – Christ becoming man, being crucified, and rising from the dead bodily. By submitting to the local church, we are submitting to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

What Exactly Is the Gospel?

The Gospel of Jesus Christ has been confused, misunderstood, clouded and ill-defined within the Evangelical community. There is only one Gospel and no other. It is the Gospel of Scripture. It alone has the power to change the heart of a person. It is the only **means** by which God redeems and saves His people from the consequence of sin, eternal separation from Him.

What does the Gospel do?

Romans 1:16-17 – “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for **salvation to everyone who believes...**”

1. It saved (past) us from the penalty of sin (justification).
2. It saves (present) us from the power of sin (sanctification).
3. It will save (future) us from the presence of sin (glorification).

The Gospel is at the center, the very heart, of Christianity. The Gospel is truth and as such it is:

1. Divine
2. Absolute
3. Objective
4. Singular
5. Immutable
6. Authoritative
7. Powerful

It is the central message of the Holy Scriptures and the true key to understanding them. It is the truth by which all truth is measured and defined. It begins in Genesis Chapter 3 and continues throughout each book of the Bible.

The Gospel tells us we are broken and sinful beyond belief and yet more loved and cared for than we could ever imagine. It tells us that God, through the Person and work of Jesus Christ, giftwrapped our redemption, totally and everlastingly, in the grace of Almighty God.

The Gospel Story: From Genesis to Revelation

God – Holy, righteous, just, good, infinite, eternal, all powerful and creator

Christ / Messiah – God the Son incarnates as Jesus, a killable human being, to die as a substitutionary sacrifice for the penalty of humanity's sins.

Holy Spirit – The Gospel demands a response. It is applied by the Spirit to our hearts and lives that we might respond to His Gospel invitation. God commands us "to repent and believe." By faith alone, and not by our own effort or work, we are forgiven and saved from the eternal punishment that awaits the unrepentant.

Mankind – Sinful, fallen, enslaved, broken, captive, finite, limited and dead. He has chosen self-rule (idolatry) over submission (belief) to God's authority. The penalty for this is eternal death for idolatry and unbelief.

Another way to look at the four principal players in God's plan of redemption:

1. God the Father – **Authored and instituted the plan of redemption**
2. God the Son – **Accomplished the plan of redemption**
3. God the Holy Spirit – **Applies the plan of redemption to our hearts**
4. Mankind – **Responds:** Either remaining in rebellion against God, or by recognizing the need for a Savior and believing that the Son was sent by the Father for each individual's sins.
 Remaining = eternal suffering in Hell.
 Believing = eternal life in God's presence.

God's gift of grace is that each one is saved:

1. ***By grace alone,***
2. ***through faith alone,***
3. ***because of Christ alone***

The Gospel is offensive and foolishness to the world and culture we live in today, and so it always has been. There are not many ways to God: only one. Jesus is the one and only **Son** of the Father and the one and only **way** to the Father. John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Me."

Key Texts:

Romans 1:16-17, 3:23, 6:23; Colossians 1:5-6; 2:6; 1 Corinthians 15:1-5; 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Ephesians 2:1-10; Luke :11-32; Galatians 2:14-16

God's Kingdom has a King, who is Jesus. His mission was to redeem a people for Himself, the Church.

The Church and its members' mission is witnessing to the *message* of the *Gospel* story and *glorifying* God.

Questions to Think About:

- Do I believe in what the Bible says is the Gospel?
- Am I looking for the answer to my sin problem anywhere other than in the Person and work of Jesus Christ?
- Do I have any idols? (i.e., Do I love anything or anyone more than Jesus?)
- Have I repented for my sin?
- Do I come before the throne of God with a broken spirit and contrite heart?

God's Gospel Purpose

The purpose of the Gospel is the reason God saves His people. We must understand that the Gospel is the focus of the Bible and all of history.

Creation – Fall – Redemption – Restoration

God saves us from the guilt and destruction of sin and ushers us into His family. All those who believe in the Son have the right to become the children of God with a new purpose (John 1:12). We are now a new creation in Christ Jesus, made to serve and glorify Him (2 Corinthians 5:17-20). One day, at the end of the age, He will gather to Himself the host of redeemed humanity to glorify and worship Him for all of eternity.

We are saved **by** God's work, **for** God's work (Ephesians 2:10).

When we did not believe we all had our story, or false gospel, and those who still do not believe have them as well. All these false gospels contain the same four parts:

Part 1: Searching for identity and purpose (the creation part of the story). They ask where did we come from, and why are we here?

Part 2: Most realize that the world and their lives are broken and not as they should be. We know things are not right, and we ask where the justice is in the world (the fall part of the story.) What's wrong in the world and in my life, and who's to blame?

Part 3: They look in all the wrong places for a solution to the problems (the redemption part of the story). Who or what can redeem or fix what is broken?

Part 4: We all imagine what life could and should be like if we had a solution (the restoration part). Where is my life going? Is there any hope for me? What would the world and my life look like if I could find a solution?

Because of the fall and resulting sin, all people live out a false gospel or storyline that is in need of correction with the true Gospel or God's story. The Church is the instrument God uses to accomplish this task. This task can be difficult because people today are not interested in God's big story, only their own story. After all, haven't we been taught that it's "all about me"?

So how can we undo this?

1. We ask God to help us listen and understand their story.
2. We find common ground with them in the fall since we are sinners too.
3. We ask for God's help to lovingly correct inconsistencies in their story.
4. We complete their story by relating God's story.

The Holy Spirit working in and through His people, who are the Church, accomplishes God's Gospel purpose. Believers are called to make disciples, by the Holy Spirit's power, and support all churches that understand His redemption purpose.

Some possible *false gospel* story lines:

1. Environmental – go green
2. Financial – debt helps
3. Body image – what one looks like
4. Possessions – "the one who dies with the most toys wins"
5. Knowledge – education is the answer
6. Morality – If I can only be good enough or help enough people
7. Government / political – Society has the answers, people are basically good
8. Cultural – Art etc., what I create will give me eternal recognition
9. Spiritual – other than the One true God
10. Recreation – Having more experiences will bring me satisfaction

People seek success, happiness, peace and joy, from all the wrong places. It can only be found in the carpenter from Nazareth.

Key Texts:

Isaiah 49:6; Matthew 28:18-20; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:3-14, 2:10;
2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-5.

Questions:

- What is my gospel story?
- Is my identity found in Christ? If not, what?
- What were/are my false gospel narratives?
- How am I seeking fulfillment and peace?

LSC's Foundation Stones of Faith

(to be believed in *unity*; see Statement of Faith in Constitution)

1. Salvation is by Grace **alone**, through Faith **alone**, because of Christ **alone** (Ephesians 2:8-10)
2. Substitutionary Atonement of Christ, the crucifixion of Jesus, for all who believe (Philippians 3:9; Romans 5:8)
3. The Bodily Resurrection of our Lord Jesus (Luke 24:39)
4. The Deity of Christ and the Humanity of Christ – Fully God and fully man (John 1:14; 1 John 4:9,10)
5. The Trinity as seen in the Triune Godhead (Matthew 28:18,19; Jude 20,21)
6. The Virgin Birth of our Lord in the Incarnation (Luke 1:26-38)
7. The Holy Spirit is God and the Divine Agent of our justification (John 3:5; 14:17; Romans 8:9, 16; 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 8; 1 John 4:13)

These seven are non-negotiable. One cannot deny them and be a Christian! Each of these essential doctrines or stones form the very foundation of the Christian faith of which Christ is the Cornerstone.

Believers were first called Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:26). Followers of Christ are the people of God who have come to saving faith by the work of the Holy Spirit in faith and because of the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Followers of Christ follow His example of baptism. It is an outward expression that they personally identify with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Therefore, believer's baptism is a requirement for membership at LSC.

(Secondary issues that are to be given *liberty*)

1. Modes of baptism
2. Eschatological (end times) opinions
3. Spiritual gifts
4. Church government

(Tertiaries are to be given *charity*)

1. The material world
2. The church building
3. Type of music
4. Styles of worship
5. Pastoral robes

Unity is vital to a healthy church and the most important aspect of attaining that end is **humility** on the part of each member, especially the pastor, elders and deacons.

Key Texts:

Psalm 147:6; James 4:6,10; 1 Peter 3:8; 5:5,6

Mission and Values

LSC has one primary mission based in Ephesians 4:11-13

Equipping believers in Christ to reach the lost of the world with the Gospel.

LSC holds to seven basic core values which guide us.

1. **We value the Bible** as God's authoritative, complete, and accurate source for salvation and Christian living.
2. **We value prayer** as communication with God exemplified by Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit.
3. **We value biblical discipleship** that is focused on spiritual growth to develop the next generation of leaders.
4. **We value outreach** that touches lives physically and spiritually, and extends to our community and the world beyond.
5. **We value fellowship** that is grace-oriented, sacrificial and encouraging, leading to accountable relationships, resulting in unity.
6. **We value genuine worship** that glorifies God and reflects the joy of being part of His Family, as individuals and when gathered as the body of Christ – biblical and sincere.
7. **We value intentional Spirit-led** ministry that is innovative, creative and strategic.



Constitution for Living Stone Church
Chelan, WA 98816

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this church shall be Living Stone Church.

ARTICLE II – STATEMENT OF INTENT, PURPOSE AND GOALS

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

The intent of Living Stone Church (hereinafter LSC) is to provide for the orderly performance of God's work through Christian believers as set forth in the Bible. This constitution is intended to provide a framework that will allow the functioning of this church according to Biblical principles. The Scriptures will always serve as the ultimate authority in all issues and decisions. The constitution must be in conformity to God's Word or changed to achieve conformity.

2. PURPOSE AND GOALS

Living Stone Church exists to equip believers to reach the lost of the world to carry out the commands found in Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Ephesians 4:11-13; and to make disciples who emulate our Savior to further spread the Gospel to all peoples. This is accomplished through teaching and equipping one another in love and the true knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to develop a body of mature believers focused upon worshiping God in Spirit and in truth through love and good deeds. In everything God is to be glorified. All of the articles are for this intent.

ARTICLE III – STATEMENT OF FAITH

Preamble

The following statement, we believe, is taken from the doctrinal teachings of our most Holy Scripture, the Bible. The Statement of Faith is not Divinely inspired nor is this statement equal with Scripture. The purpose of this statement of faith is to define the essential doctrines of the faith, those pertaining to salvation, and LSC's stance on those doctrines. Regarding non-essential doctrines not pertaining to salvation, LSC will preach and teach the Word of God and establish Biblical boundaries for discussion and belief. As stated by Augustine of Hippo, "In essentials, unity; in doubtful matters, liberty; in all things, charity." This statement is intended only as a summary and outline of the doctrinal standards that are embraced at Living Stone Church, approved by the church Board on the 9th of May of 2014 and implemented by the church in June of 2014.

Statement 1: The Bible

We believe that the Scriptures are God's revelation to humankind through the words of human authors under the supernatural authority, direction and guidance of the Holy Spirit. We believe that only the 66 books of both the Old and New Testaments are Divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit, and they are inerrant and infallible in the original writings. We believe that the Scriptures are the final authority in all teachings for faith and life and contain all that is necessary for salvation and living in Jesus Christ. It is the truth against which all truth is measured. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises. 2 Tim 3:16; Rom 1:16; John 17:17; 2 Pet 1:20-21; 1 Thes 2:13

Statement 2: God

We believe in one God, the Creator of all things, holy, perfect, eternally existing in loving unity of three equally Divine Persons referred to as the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God, having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory. Deut 6:4; Isa 48:16; Jer 10:10; Ps 90:2; 1 Cor 8:6; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 1:4-11; 1Tim 1:17; 1 Pet 1:2, 2:9-10; John 1:1, 17:3; Acts 5:3-4

Statement 3: Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God the Son incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person with these two natures in perfect union. We believe Jesus was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary according to His humanity. We believe He lived a sinless life, performed miracles, was crucified under Pontius Pilate for our sin, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our eternal High Priest and Advocate. He is the only Mediator between God and man. Isa 9:6; John 1:1; Rom 9:5; Col 2:9; Titus 2:11-13; Luke 1:26-38, 23:23-24; Acts 1:9; Heb 1:3, 4:14-15, 5:5-6; 1 Tim 2:5

Statement 4: God the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment. He regenerates sinners, and by Him they are brought into union with Christ and adopted as heirs into the family of God. We believe that He also indwells believers and instructs and guides them according to the Scriptures. He equips and empowers them for ministry and Christ-like living and service. John 14:26; Rom 8:16-17, 15:13, 16; Eph 1:13; 2 Tim 1:14; Titus 3:5; 2 Cor 5:17; John 16:8-11

Statement 5: The Human Condition

We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they rebelled against God when tempted by Satan – the author of sin, the father of lies and a fallen angel. We believe that all human beings inherited a sinful nature from Adam and are sinful by choice. They are alienated from God and under His judgment. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed. Gen 1:27; 3:1-6; Rom 5:6-12; 6:23; John 3:16; Eph 2:1-10

Statement 6: The Work of Christ

We believe in the active work of Jesus Christ in that He lived a life without sin and His passive work on the cross where He was our representative and substitute, shedding His blood as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. We believe that His sinless life, atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only grounds for our salvation. 1 Pet 1:18-19, 2:22; Heb 4:15; Rom 5:8-11; 1 Cor 15:3-4, 20, 54-57

Statement 7: Justification

We believe God justifies sinners on the basis of Christ's righteousness alone. We believe Christ's imputed righteousness to sinners is by grace alone and received by faith alone. We believe that in the justification of the repenting and believing sinner, God by His grace forgives the sinner and declares him righteous on the grounds of the active and passive work of Jesus Christ alone. Rom 3:20, 22-28; 5:9, 17-21; 1 Cor 6:11; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8-9; Phil 3:9

Statement 8: Sanctification

We believe sanctification is the gracious and continuing activity of the Holy Spirit in the justified believer, perfecting his repentance, nurturing the new creation in Christ Jesus, transforming him into Christ's image, and enabling him to do good works which God prepared beforehand. This is a joint work between the Holy Spirit and the believer; it is accomplished in the believer through God's Word, the Spirit's power and fervent prayer in Christ's name. 2 Thes 2:13; 1 Pet 1:2; Rom 8:13-14, Rom 8:26-29; Eph 2:4-10

Statement 9: The Security and Assurance of the Believer

We believe that all the saved are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word. However, Scripture clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; 1 Pet 1:5; 1 Cor 1:4-8; Rom 13:13-14; Gal 5:13; Titus 2:11-15

Statement 10: The Church

We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone because of Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. In obedience to Christ's commission, the church is commanded to equip the believers for service and to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed. Eph 1:22, 4:11-13, 5:23; Col 1:18; 1 Cor 12:12-27; Matt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Tim 3:15

Statement 11: Ordinances

We believe in two ordinances or sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, both of which were instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ and are visible and tangible expressions of the gospel. Though they are not a means of salvation, when celebrated in genuine faith and repentance, they impart grace and nourish the believer. Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12; Luke 22:14-21; 1 Cor 10:6, 11:23-34; Matt 28:19-20

Statement 12: Christ's Return

We believe in the personal bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe the second coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, will raise the dead bodily and judge the world. He will assign the unbeliever to the resurrection of condemnation and eternal conscious punishment. He will assign the believer to the resurrection of eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Acts 1:10-11; Mark 13:32; Acts 10:42; 2 Tim 4:1; John 5:28-29; Rev 20:11-15, 21:1-3

Statement 13: Biblical Definition of Marriage

Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man and a woman, and Himself, Living Stone Church will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further the pastors and elders and staff of Living Stone

Church shall only participate in weddings and sanctify marriages between one man and one woman. Finally, the facilities and property of Living Stone Church shall only host weddings between one man and one woman. (Gen. 2:21-24; Eph. 5:31-33; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6)

ARTICLE IV – LEADERSHIP

1. LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH

Each local church is autonomous and ultimately led by Jesus. Within the congregation, the care and leadership of the flock is entrusted to Elders who are affirmed by the church membership. Assisting the Elders are Deacons/Deaconesses who are affirmed by the church membership and who perform organizational duties in support of the church and the Elders.

2. NON-VOCATIONAL ELDERS (UNPAID)

The Elders are men who aspire to provide Biblically based spiritual direction for the church and be the governing board and corporate officers of the church. I Tim 3:1

A. Qualifications:

- 1) Blameless (above reproach) as God's steward I Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6-7
- 2) Morally and sexually pure I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6
- 3) Sober-minded (prudent) I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8
- 4) Respected by those inside and outside of the church I Tim. 3:2, 7
- 5) Given to hospitality I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8
- 6) Desire and ability to teach I Tim. 3:2
- 7) Able to exhort believers and refute false teaching with sound doctrine Titus 1:9
- 8) Not being under the control of any substance or behavior I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7
- 9) Not violent (pugnacious) but patient (moderate, forbearing, gentle) I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7
- 10) Not prone to physical violence (contentious) but a peacemaker I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7
- 11) Not covetous (lover of money) I Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7
- 12) Manages his own household well I Tim. 3:4-5; Titus 1:6
- 13) Not a novice (new convert) I Tim. 3:6
- 14) Not self-willed (selfish) Titus 1:7
- 15) Loves righteousness Titus 1:8
- 16) Just (fair) Titus 1:8
- 17) Devout (holy) Titus 1:8
- 18) Self-controlled (emotional restraint) Titus 1:8
- 19) Be an Active Member of LSC

B. Responsibilities:

- 1) Shepherd I Peter 5:2-3
 - a) Lead (serve, feed, protect, warn) Ps 23:2; Matt 20:25-28
 - b) Oversee I Tim. 3:1-7; Heb. 13:7,17
 - c) Be an example to the flock I Tim 4:12; Tit 2:7-8; Gal 5:22-24
- 2) Teach and equip the saints (mentor future Elders and Deacons/Deaconesses) Eph 4:11-12
- 3) Be devoted to prayer and ministry of the Word Acts 6:4

C. Term of Office: The term of an Active Elder is up to three years. They may serve consecutive terms to a maximum of six years, after which they must become inactive for a period of at least one year. Appointment in accordance with Article IV.6 to the office of Elder

shall be for life. Any Elder may be called upon to provide any of the responsibilities identified in Article IV.2.B above in an Active or Inactive capacity as deemed necessary by the Elder Board. The lifetime appointment may end in the case of:

- 1) Resignation
- 2) Dismissal by remainder of Elder Board
- 3) Biblical disqualification (i.e., doctrinal error or not meeting qualifications listed)
I Tim 3:1-7, 5:19-21; Titus 1:5-9; Ezekiel 34:1-10
- 4) Sabbatical – An Active Elder may desire to take a leave of absence temporarily from the Elder Board for personal matters.

3. VOCATIONAL ELDERS (PAID)

A. Teaching Elder is a man who is ordained by God for the purpose of preaching and teaching, and is gifted in equipping the saints for the work of the ministry for building up the Body of Christ. Eph. 4:11-12

- 1) Calling: Following the selection of the Teaching Elder by the Elder Board, his name shall be submitted to the church members for the opportunity to determine if there are any Biblical disqualifiers (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). The confirmation by the Elder Board must be unanimous. A congregational meeting will be held, and the teaching elder will be affirmed in accordance with Article VIII.3.
- 2) Responsibilities:
 - a) Systematically teaching and preaching the Word of God. I Tim. 4:13
 - b) Laboring in the Word and doctrine. I Tim. 5:17
 - c) All Elder Responsibilities (see Article IV.2.B.)

B. Staff Elders: Existing non-vocational Elders may be added to the Vocational Elders as deemed necessary by the Elder Board (in accordance with Article IV.6). A report shall be submitted to the members expressing the physical and spiritual need as well as financial feasibility. The members will have 30 days to submit questions and/or concerns regarding the report to the Chairman of the Elder Board.

C. Tenure: Vocational Elders shall remain for an indefinite period of time subject to the following reservations:

- 1) The Vocational Elder must give two months written notice if he intends to resign.
- 2) The Elders reserve the right to dismiss a Vocational Elder when deemed necessary due to Biblical disqualification or loss of physical, spiritual need or financial feasibility. The Elder Board must give him two months written notice of its intention to dismiss unless immediate dismissal is warranted due to Biblical disqualification.
- 3) The Elder Board may determine a lesser time for final duty date concerning resignation or dismissal of the Vocational Elder if deemed necessary.
- 4) If dismissal is initiated by the Elder Board and it is NOT for cause of Biblical disqualification, pay will be provided for 60 days from the date of written notice.

4. ELDER BOARD

This congregation functions as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the Elder Board. Decisions related to the internal affairs of this church shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures. The Elder Board shall be responsible for making decisions in all spiritual and temporal matters, and is constituted of Vocational Elders and Active non-vocational (unpaid) Elders.

- A. The number of non-vocational Elders will always exceed the number of vocational Elders; the total shall not be fewer than five.
- B. Active Elders are defined as those who have met the qualifications of Elder, have been appointed according to the process described in Article IV.6 and are currently serving on the Elder Board.
- C. Inactive Elders are Elders that continue to meet the qualifications of Elder, have been appointed to the position of Elder but are not currently serving on the Elder Board. After a period of one year as an Inactive Elder, an Elder may indicate a desire to serve once again as an Active Elder to fill a vacancy on the Elder Board. The current Elder Board may choose to identify an Inactive Elder to become an Active Elder, but must maintain the limits identified in Article IV.4.A.
- D. The Elder Board will approve the Budget for the church annually.
- E. The Elder Board shall make available quarterly financial statements to the congregation and provide information regarding fiscal proceedings.
- F. The Elder Board shall elect the corporate officers of the church under civil law from amongst the Active Elders, and the Chairman shall act as Moderator of all Congregational Meetings.
 - 1) All officers shall prepare a written report of their work for the annual church administration meeting and shall surrender all records in their possession to the church secretary at the close of their term of office to be filed as a permanent record of the work of the church. All records are the property of the church and must be kept in the church office.
 - 2) Any officer who neglects his duties as outlined in the constitution for a period of three months may be removed from his office, at the discretion of the Elder Board, and another may be appointed from the Inactive Elders to serve the unexpired term.
- G. The Elder Board may appoint persons and/or committees to assist Elders:
 - 1) Procedures for any committee or special project shall be established by the Elder Board prior to the beginning of the committee or special project.
 - 2) Temporary Appointments for Special Projects that have a limited time frame.
 - 3) Permanent Appointments for Deacon/Deaconess roles:
 - a) Finance
 - b) Christian Education (Children, Youth, Adults)
 - c) Facilities
 - d) Church Membership
 - e) Other as deemed necessary by the Elder Board
 - 4) Actions of Committees

Committees, whether standing or special, have no authority to enter binding contracts on behalf of the corporation.

- H. The Elder Board shall be the final committee for screening the proposed Elders and Deacons/Deaconesses. (Recommendations shall be submitted by the congregation for the Elder Board's careful consideration at least once a year.)
- I. The Elder Board shall approve or disapprove any applications from non-members for facility use.
 - 1) The Living Stone Church facilities were provided by God's benevolence and sacrificial generosity of church members. Living Stone Church desires these facilities be used only for the fellowship of the church body and approved non-members as they are in agreement with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and sound Biblical principles.
 - 2) The Living Stone Church facility will NOT be used by persons or organizations holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices in conflict with our Statement of Faith or moral teachings, which are found in the Living Stone Church Constitution, Membership Covenant, and Board Policies. The church facilities also will NOT be used for activities that contradict, are inconsistent with, or contrary to the moral teachings of the Bible. The Chairman of the Elder Board, his designee or the Elder Board are the final arbiters concerning the use of Living Stone Church facilities. The policy applies to all church facilities, regardless of whether the facilities in question are connected to the church's sanctuary, because all of Living Stone Church's property is considered holy and set apart to worship God. Colossians 3:17
- J. Meetings of the Elder Board
 - 1) Active Elder Meeting
 - a) These meetings shall be held at least once a quarter.
 - b) An agenda of these meetings shall be posted at least two weeks prior to the meeting.
 - i. Suggestions and concerns may be submitted for consideration to any Active Elder in accordance with Article V.2.F.2.
 - c) Minutes of the meetings will be taken and posted.
 - d) Elders shall give an account of their designated responsibilities received from the Elder Board at each regular meeting.
 - e) A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Elder Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any Elder Board meeting.
 - f) The act of this two-thirds (2/3) of the Elders shall be the act of the Elder Board.
 - g) All decisions by the Elder Board must be unanimous.
 - h) Elders do not have to be physically present to attend these meetings. They may attend by using conference calling or video chat depending on resources available.
 - 2) Special Meetings may be called at the request of the Chairman of the Elder Board.
 - a) If votes are held during a Special Meeting, minutes will be recorded.
 - b) The Chairman of the Elder Board will determine if minutes should be taken during a Special Meeting and a report prepared for the congregation and posted. For example, Special Meetings that are Executive Sessions, prayer times or Bible studies shall have no minutes recorded.

- 3) Executive Sessions
 - a) All Elder Board meetings shall have the privilege of moving into Executive Sessions; the absence of any of the members, including the Teaching Elder, may be requested to discuss necessary business.
 - b) Spring and Fall business meetings are designated to include Executive Sessions; after the regular meeting, the Pastor shall be asked to excuse himself so that constructive evaluation and pertinent executive business may be discussed.
- K. Officers (must be non-vocational Elders)
 - 1) Chairman:
 - a) Calls and presides over all Board, Deacon/Deaconess and congregational meetings.
 - b) The term of the Chairman is limited to one year with no consecutive terms.
 - c) The Chairman determines agendas for all meetings.
 - d) The Chairman may invite any member or faithful supporter to attend any Leadership or Special Meetings of the Elder Board.
 - 2) Vice Chairman: Back-up to chairman in absence thereof.
 - 3) Secretary: Shall keep the minutes of all meetings called by the Elder Board.
 - 4) Treasurer: Shall be overseer of the Finance Committee, the Deacon of Finance and the corporate representative to financial institutions.

5. DEACONS AND DEACONESSES

They shall be the temporal servants of the church assisting the Elders. The number of them shall be determined from the membership of any who desire the office and meet the Biblical qualifications of 1 Tim. 3:8-13.

A. Qualifications:

- 1) Person of dignity
- 2) Not double-tongued James 5:12
- 3) Not under the control of any substance or behavior
- 4) Not desiring dishonest gain (greedy)
- 5) Holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience (a life that reflects the knowledge of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ) 1 Cor 4:1
- 6) Blameless (above reproach)
- 7) Examined by a minimum of three Active Elders and approved unanimously by the current Elder Board
- 8) Be an Active Member

B. Responsibilities:

- 1) Assist the Elders in shepherding the saints
- 2) Assist the Elders at communion and baptismal services
- 3) Oversight of greeting and ushering at church services and events
- 4) Oversight of general maintenance of all church property
- 5) Other duties as assigned by the Elder Board

- C. Term of Office: The active term of office is up to three years. They may serve consecutive terms to a maximum of six years, after which they must become inactive for a period of at least one year. The appointment in accordance to Article IV.6 to the office of Deacon/Deaconess shall be for life. A Deacon/Deaconess may be called upon to provide

any of the responsibilities identified in Article IV.5.B above, whether or not currently serving on a specific committee or project, as deemed necessary by the Elder Board. The lifetime appointment may end in the case of:

- 1) For qualified men, appointment to the position of Elder
- 2) Resignation
- 3) Dismissal by unanimous decision by Elder Board
- 4) Biblical disqualification
- 5) Sabbatical: A Deacon/Deaconess may desire to take a leave of absence temporarily for personal matters with consent of the Elder Board.

- D. Previously appointed (according to IV.6) but currently unassigned Deacons/Deaconesses are available to be assigned to either a standing committee or special project by the Elder Board.
- E. Deacon/Deaconess Meetings: Shall be held at a minimum quarterly or at the request of the Chairman of the Elder Board.
 - 1) These meetings shall give the Active Elders an opportunity to inform and update the Deacons/Deaconesses of how they believe LSC is meeting the Intent, Purpose and Goals as stated in Article II of the Constitution.
 - 2) These meetings shall be an opportunity for the Deacons/Deaconesses to provide input to the Active Elders about ministry successes and challenges and interact with other committees on how to better encourage and pray for other LSC ministries.

6. IDENTIFICATION AND APPOINTMENT OF LEADERSHIP

- A. At least annually or more frequently if deemed necessary by the Elder Board, the church members shall be asked to submit names of men they view as qualified to be Elders or men and women as Deacons/Deaconesses who are already serving the church.
- B. All name(s) received will be contacted by the Elder Board within 30 days.
- C. These shall be thoroughly examined, evaluated and reviewed by the Elder Board according to the qualifications as listed above for Elders and Deacons/Deaconesses.
- D. After unanimous agreement by the Elder Board, the prospective names shall be posted, along with existing Elders and Deacons/Deaconesses, in an easily accessible location at the church so that church members may view the list of proposed names. This period shall be a minimum of two weeks to allow the church members to present Biblical reason(s) for disqualification.
- E. Any potential Biblical disqualifications must be submitted by a person who is identified in writing. The Elder Board shall review these submissions to determine validity and provide the candidate an opportunity for rebuttal.
- F. After the two-week period and Elder Board reviews, names of all qualifying persons will be presented to the church membership for a vote.
- G. A positive vote as in defined Article VIII.3.A will result in those people being publicly appointed as Elders, Deacons or Deaconesses.
- H. If the number of Elders affirmed exceeds the current need as determined by the Chairman of the Elder Board then some of the newly affirmed Elders shall be part of the Inactive Elders until such time as the Chairman of the Elder Board determines the need for additional Active Elders or replacement of Active Elders. Since the appointment of these

Elders has been affirmed by the members, there will not be a need for another vote to begin their term as an Active Elder. However, a notification of their change of status from Inactive to Active will be posted 30 days prior to their activation in accordance with Article IV.2.A and 6.D and E above.

7. STAFF TO SUPPORT LEADERSHIP

Other personnel may be added to the vocational (paid) staff as deemed necessary by the Elder Board. A report shall be submitted to the members expressing the physical and spiritual need as well as the financial feasibility. The members will have 30 days to submit questions and/or concerns regarding the report.

ARTICLE V – CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Church membership is comprised of all those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God, have put their trust in Him alone for salvation and have entered into a covenant relationship with God and the membership of LSC. A covenant is a promise by which we obligate ourselves to one another in such a way that the obligation of one party is not dependent on the faithfulness of the other. The LSC Member Agreement includes a statement of personal faith, a statement of Biblical doctrine, the obligations of LSC to its members, and the obligations of members to LSC. Though the agreement defines the relationship between members and the church, it is first and foremost a promise made to God as a commitment to His glory and His bride the church. Ezek 20:44, 36:22; Ps. 76:11; Hos 2:19-20, 3:1; 2 Tim 2:13; Eph 5:25

1. REQUIREMENTS FOR ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

- A. Anyone who was an active member of LSC prior to the establishment of this Constitution shall be grandfathered as an active member of LSC, and the following requirements do not apply. All are encouraged to attend an LSC Membership Class and read and sign the LSC Member Agreement.
- B. Attend an LSC Membership Class
- C. Meet with Elders
- D. Sign LSC's Member Agreement

2. ACTIVE MEMBERS ARE EXHORTED TO

- A. Faithfully attend the services and support the ministries of LSC because of their love for Christ and with the objective to edify (build up) the entire body. Heb 10:24-25
- B. Grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ through the regular reading and studying of the Word of God.
- C. Continually affirm the Statement of Faith and support the Constitution.
- D. Faithfully and systematically support the cause of Christ through tithes and offerings.
- E. Use their spiritual gifts, talents and time in the ministries of the church.
- F. Communicate regularly with the Elders concerning:
 - 1) Spiritual needs, prayer, edification
 - 2) Concerns or suggestions (see Article IV.4.J.1.b.i)

3. ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP ROLL

The active roll shall consist of all persons accepted into church membership in accordance with Article V.1 and maintained by the Deacon/Deaconess of Membership.

- A. All who are on the roll may exercise certain privileges as long as they are 18 years of age or older
- B. Privileges are as follows:
 - 1) Vote in person or by proxy as stipulated in Article VIII.3.A.1 & 2.
 - 2) A member may inspect or copy the prepared financial statements of the church and the minutes of the proceedings of church and committee meetings, provided he shall have made a written request upon the church and the church has received the written request at least five business days before the requested inspection date. Executive Sessions are exempt from this provision and are not subject to inspection or copy.
 - a) A member may not, under any circumstances, inspect or copy any record relating to individual contributions to the church, the list of names and addresses of the church members, or the accounting books and financial records of the church.
 - b) The church may impose a reasonable charge, covering the costs of labor and material, for copies of any documents provided to the member before releasing the copies to the member.
- C. Membership in this church does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The pastor (or in his absence, an individual designated by the Elder Board) has the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property. If, after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on church property, the person may, in the discretion of the pastor, (or in his absence, an individual designated by the Elder Board), be treated as a trespasser.

4. INACTIVE MEMBERSHIP ROLL

- A. Members who have permanently moved out of the area shall automatically be placed on the inactive roll for a period of six months and then removed from all membership rolls completely.
- B. Members who fail to be present at regular church services for a period of six months, without good and sufficient reason, may be placed on the inactive roll by the Elder Board and will be notified by the Deacon/Deaconess of Membership.
- C. Church members on the inactive roll shall have no voting privileges.
- D. After resumption of regular church participation, the church member on the inactive roll shall be considered for placement on the active role by the Elder Board.

5. VOLUNTARY TERMINATION

- A. Letters of recommendation shall be granted upon request to church members in good standing for the purpose of uniting with another church of like faith and practice.
- B. Any church member in good standing and not under church discipline as described in Article VI.2 desiring to be dropped from the membership roll may do so.

6. INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION

- A. Membership will automatically terminate upon his or her death.
- B. As described in Article VI.2.D (Church Discipline Stage 4)

ARTICLE VI – CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Church discipline is a means of grace given for helping one another, the end of which is reconciliation and unity in the Body of Christ, growth in faith and conformity to the image of Christ.

1. PURPOSE OF THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS – to glorify God by:

- A. Conforming believers more and more to the image of Christ both individually and corporately. Col 1:20; Eph 4:1-6; 1 Cor 10:31; Gal 2:11-16
- B. Fostering and maintaining unity and the bond of peace within the body. Heb 12:11, 14; Eph 4:1-16; 1 Cor 3:17, 6:1-11; Eph 5:25-27
- C. Restoring a wayward brother or sister. 1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 2:6-7,10; Gal 6:1; 2 Thes 3:14-15; Matt 18:15; Gal 2:11-16
- D. Warning and deterring others from sin. 1 Tim 5:20
- E. Keeping sin from spreading to the rest of the body. 1 Cor 5:6-8; Deut 17:13; 19:20; 21:21
- F. Protecting the church from false teachers and deceivers who bring division. Acts 20:25-31; Titus 1:10-14; 3:9-10
- G. Protecting the purity of the church and honoring Christ. 1 Cor 5:1-5; Rom 2:24
- H. Averting corporate discipline. Joshua 7:10-26; 1 Cor 11:27-34; Rev 2:14-23

2. STAGES OF THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

Members of this church **and** faithful supporters (professing Christians who hold to LSC's Statement of Faith as stated above and regularly attend or fellowship with this church) who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the Elder Board, shall be subject to church discipline, including dismissal according to Matthew 18:15-18. Before such dismissal five stages must be overcome. All but the last involve only one to a few individuals who know the one violating Scripture. If Stage 1 and Stage 2 discover the one warned is unrepentant, then the Elder Board is involved and only after Stage 4 the entire congregation.

The Stages are as follows:

- A. Stage 1 – It shall be the duty of any member or faithful supporter of this church who has knowledge of the erring individual's heresy or misconduct to warn and correct such erring individual **in private**, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring individual does not heed this warning, then...
- B. Stage 2 – The warning member or faithful supporter shall again go to the erring individual, seeking his or her repentance, but accompanied by one or two members, at least one of whom is an Elder (Active or Inactive), who shall confirm that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur, and/or that the erring individual has been appropriately confronted and has refused to repent. If the erring individual still refuses to heed this warning, then...
- C. Stage 3 – It shall be brought to the attention of the Elder Board. If the Elder Board determines, after thorough investigation in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture (including Matt 18:15-18; I Tim 5:19; Titus 3:10), that there is evidence the erring individual has sinned or is continuing to sin, he or she has been appropriately confronted, and he or she has refused to repent, then...
- D. Stage 4 – The Chairman of the Elder Board shall call a special congregational meeting in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance. The erring individual will be given a written invitation to attend. If the erring individual demonstrates repentance, then notice to that effect may be given to the membership. If, however, the erring individual does not repent in response to the church in its collective call to repentance or does not attend the special congregational meeting then...
- E. Stage 5 – He or she during the congregational meeting shall be removed from the fellowship and/or membership of the church and the congregation thereof. If the erring individual, after such removal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement before the Elder Board, then he or she shall be restored during regular Sunday services to all the rights, duties, privileges and responsibilities of fellowship and/or membership.

3. SUBMISSION TO THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

The members and faithful supporters of this church agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of the dismissal or because of statements to the congregation during a congregational meeting at the fourth or fifth stages of church discipline. A member who is under discipline by the church, as defined in the previous paragraph, forfeits and no longer qualifies for Voluntary Termination, Article V.5.A & B, from this church. Voluntary Terminations from church membership are possible only by members who are not under any disciplinary action.

ARTICLE VII – ORDINANCES (SACRAMENTS)

The Lord Jesus gave the church two ordinances to be observed: Baptism and Communion. These two ordinances shall be conducted at the discretion of the Elder Board. Baptism shall be performed by a person authorized by the Elder Board. The mode of baptism practiced at LSC is by immersion after salvation, unless circumstances indicate otherwise and are approved by the Elder Board. Communion will be overseen by an Elder and served by Deacons/Deaconesses.

ARTICLE VIII – CHURCH MEETINGS

1. ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The annual membership meeting of the church shall be held during the fourth calendar quarter of each year. Notice of the annual membership meeting shall be published four weeks prior to the meeting.

2. CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

These meetings shall be held as deemed necessary by the Chairman of the Elder Board for the purpose of discussing financial matters, visionary goals, church discipline, general communication to or from the congregation and any other purpose. Notice of congregational meetings shall be published two weeks prior to the meeting.

- A. A quorum at any congregational meeting during which a vote shall be taken will consist of those active members present and proxies submitted by active members.
- B. The Moderator shall determine the rules of procedure according to his sense of fairness and common sense, giving all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator is the final authority on questions of procedure, and his decision is final and controlling. The following order shall be observed at the regular church administration meetings:
 - 1) Devotions and prayer
 - 2) Reading of minutes
 - 3) Reception of members
 - 4) Dismissal of members
 - 5) Report of Elders/Deacons/Deaconesses
 - 6) Reports of standing committees
- C. For any meeting under this article, the moderator, in his sole discretion, shall have full and unilateral authority to require nonmembers to leave the meeting room and to order the immediate removal of any member or other person present who is deemed by the moderator to be disruptive to the proceedings by act or presence. The moderator shall have full authority to order the removal of all children (ages to be determined by the moderator) if the moderator determines, in his sole discretion, that circumstances so warrant. If the moderator determines that compliance with his order of removal is unsatisfactory, the moderator may, in his sole discretion, revoke the disruptive person's right to remain on the premises in accordance with Article V.3.C and treat the person as a trespasser.

3. VOTES

- A. Votes for Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses can take place at either Annual or Congregational Meetings.
 - 1) All votes require a 75% affirmative majority of the votes cast by active church members present or represented by proxies held by either the Elder Board or another active church member.
 - 2) Proxies of an active church member must be submitted in writing on a Living Stone Church Proxy form to the Elder Board by the active member directly or by a substitute active church member holding the proxy prior to the beginning of the meeting during which the vote is held. Proxies must be signed and dated by the church member. If the Elder Board is not selected to hold and vote the Proxy, then the substitute active member's name must be clearly printed on the signed and dated Proxy form.
 - 3) Each Elder, Deacon and Deaconess will be voted on individually, except as noted below in Article VIII.3.B.3.
- B. Other Votes – Votes being cast by those active church members present or represented by proxies held by either the Elder Board or another active church member:
 - 1) Financial Votes will be held for any single expenditure that exceeds 10% of the current year's annual budget and will require a simple majority of the votes being cast.
 - 2) Constitutional Amendment Votes require a 75% majority of the votes cast by active church members present or represented by proxies held by either the Elder Board or another active church member.
 - 3) The initial vote by the congregation to approve this constitution shall include approval of a slate of Elders, thereafter as stipulated in Article IV.6.A-H.
 - a) The current Board shall continue in place for a period sufficient to allow the Elder Board time to fully implement this constitution.
 - b) After the constitution has been approved the initial group of Deacons/Deaconesses presented by the initial Elder Board shall be voted on as a slate, thereafter as stipulated in Article IV.6.A-H.

ARTICLE IX – CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

LSC's Constitution exists to serve and support the mission and vision of the church, rather than the mission and vision being in submission to the Constitution. Amendments to the Constitution may be made as deemed necessary by the Elder Board. A report shall be submitted to the members expressing the necessity for the amendment. The members will have 30 days to submit questions and/or concerns regarding the amendment. A congregational meeting will be held and a vote cast in accordance with Article VIII.3.B.2. (Amendments are located in Appendix A.)

ARTICLE X – INDEMNIFICATION

1. ACTIONS SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION

The church may indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals (other than an action by or in the right of the church) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding; and if that person acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or on a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful. This determination of good-faith intent shall be made (a) by a majority vote of the Elder Board who were not and are not parties to or threatened with the action, suit, or proceeding; (b) if the described quorum is not obtainable or if a majority vote of a quorum of disinterested elders so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or (c) by a majority vote of the members of the church.

2. TIMING OF INDEMNIFICATION

Expenses of each person seeking indemnification under this Article may be paid by the church as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding, as authorized by the Elder Board in the specific case, so long as the pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent agrees to repay the amount if it is ultimately determined that he or she is not qualified to be indemnified by the church.

3. EXTENT OF INDEMNIFICATION

The indemnification provided by this Article shall be deemed to be discretionary unless otherwise required as a matter of law or under any agreement or provided by insurance purchased by the church, both as to action of each person seeking indemnification under this Article in his official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding that office, and may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent and may inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of that person.

4. INSURANCE

The church may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in that capacity, or arising out of his status in that capacity, whether or not the church would have the power to indemnify him against liability under the provisions of this Article.

ARTICLE XI – NOTICES

Except as may otherwise be required by law, any notice to any member or director may be delivered personally or by mail. If mailed, the notice shall be deemed to have been delivered when deposited in the United States mail, addressed to the addressee at his or her last known address in the records of the corporation, postage prepaid.

ARTICLE XII – CONFLICT OF INTEREST

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this conflict of interest policy is to protect the church's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the church or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state or federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

2. DEFINITIONS

- A. Interested Person: Any director or officer who has a direct or indirect financial interest.
- B. Financial interest: A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
 - 1) An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the church has a transaction or arrangement,
 - 2) A compensation arrangement with the church or with any individual or entity with which the church has a transaction or arrangement, or
 - 3) A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the church is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.
 - 4) A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. A person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the board of directors decides that a conflict of interest exists.
- C. Compensation: Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.
- D. Board of Directors: The term "Board of Directors" refers to the corporate officers of the church.

3. PROCEDURES

- A. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- B. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, including any presentations by and discussion with the interested person, he shall leave the board meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest involving the transaction or

arrangement is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists by a majority vote.

- 1) The chairman of the board shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
 - 2) After exercising due diligence, the board or committee shall determine whether the church can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
 - 3) If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the board shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the best interests of the church, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.
- C. If the board has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
- D. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the board determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

4. RECORDS OF PROCEEDINGS

- A. The minutes of the board shall contain the names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the board's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- B. The minutes of the board also shall contain the names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

5. COMPENSATION

A voting member of the board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the church for services rendered may not vote on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

ARTICLE XIII – DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. All contributions to these funds shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature and shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the pastor and the elder board. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article II.1.

ARTICLE XIV - DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH

If the above named corporation ceases at any time to exist as a valid entity in the state of Washington, its assets shall be distributed by the Elder Board in place at the time of dissolution to Christian organization(s) or group(s) determined to be of like faith and practice such as Camas Meadows Bible Camp of Cashmere, WA or N.I.C.E.

APPENDIX A- Amendments to the Constitution

Congregation Vote Regarding Constitutional Amendment on December 7, 2014, Approved by a Positive Vote Greater than 75%

Proposed Church Name Change

The name of this church shall be changed from Little Stone Church to Living Stone Church.

Congregation Vote Regarding Constitutional Amendment on October 11, 2015, Approved by a Positive Vote Greater than 75%

Statement of Policy Regarding Marriage (Change to Statement of Faith)

Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man and a woman, and Himself, Living Stone Church will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further the pastors and elders and staff of Living Stone Church shall only participate in weddings and sanctify marriages between one man and one woman. Finally, the facilities and property of Living Stone Church shall only host weddings between one man and one woman. (Gen. 2:21-24; Eph. 5:31-33; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6)

Statement of Policy Regarding Use of Facility (Building) and change to the Living Stone Church Constitution:

The Living Stone Church facilities were provided by God's benevolence and sacrificial generosity of church members. Living Stone Church desires these facilities be used only for the fellowship of the church body and approved non-members as they are in agreement with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and sound Biblical principles.

The Living Stone Church facility will NOT be used by persons or organizations holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices in conflict with our Statement of Faith or moral teachings, which are found in the Living Stone Church Constitution, Membership Covenant, and Board Policies. The church facilities also will NOT be used for activities that contradict, are inconsistent with, or contrary to the moral teachings of the Bible. The Chairman of the Elder Board, his designee or the Elder Board are the final arbiters concerning the use of Living Stone Church facilities. The policy applies to all church facilities, regardless of whether the facilities in question are connected to the church's sanctuary, because all of Living Stone Church's property is considered holy and set apart to worship God. (Colossians 3:17)

Why Do We Give and Why Should We Budget?

INTRODUCTION: LSC publishes a planned budget for ministry activities and other costs with the intention to serve God here in Chelan, Chelan Valley and support those who are reaching the lost in the uttermost parts of the earth.

It seems appropriate to present the whys of giving and budgeting.

PURPOSE of this document: Provide members and faithful supporters of LSC information about why a budget is established and the biblical basis for supporting all that goes on in and through LSC. Scripture references are ESV unless noted otherwise.

PREFACE: The Apostle Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:15 that because Christ died for us that “...those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” We are to take the gifts and talents God has given us and pour them out as a sacrifice in service to Him and our fellow man. Stewardship implies a full commitment to God: “Even if I am to be poured out as a **drink offering** upon the sacrificial **offering** of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.” Philippians 2:17.

Stewardship is one of the most important and practical themes laid out in the Bible, yet it is often overlooked or minimized by Christians. The Bible says a great deal about stewardship. This concept touches every area of our lives. Webster’s dictionary defines a steward as a person whose job it is to manage the money, land and property of another person.

David writes in Psalm 24:1 (NASB) “The earth is the LORD’s, and all it contains. The world, and those who dwell in it.” So, we have been given, with God’s command to Adam¹ and Noah², the responsibility to be stewards of all creation. This includes our time, talents and resources that God has given each of us.

The balance of this document will focus on the resources (financial and physical) God has given us. However, we must not forget our other responsibility to steward the time and talent we have been given when the opportunities arise for us to be physically present to serve others.

WHY GIVE? First and foremost, we are called to do so by Scripture. The Holy Spirit says through Paul in 2 Corinthians 9:7 “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” “**Must**” in this verse does not leave an option; Scripture tells us we must give.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE? Many choose to apply the concept of “tithe” (10%) to the amount of giving for two reasons:

1. This is the amount established by God in the Law, but we are no longer under the Law.
2. Jesus in Matthew 23:23 and Luke 11:42 referenced the tithe as something that should have been done by the Pharisees, which they did, but they forgot the “weightier matters of the law – justice and mercy and faithfulness.” One could argue that he was applying this to those who were still under the Law, which would again not apply to Christians.

Considering these two points, where does that leave us? We are back in 2 Corinthians 9:7 “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart...” WOW, that sounds easy. Is it really? What is giving all about? As said earlier, we are stewards of what God has given us. It doesn’t belong to us; it belongs to God. So, how should we approach giving back to God what is already His? If we consider the money or possessions we have as ours, even though they came from God, we might find it difficult to be cheerful when we give. What does that passage say? “...God loves a cheerful giver.” That puts a different perspective on it. When we give cheerfully, we should be sensing God’s love in the giving.

The bottom line is, get together with the Lord in prayer. Ask Him to give you His wisdom to decide what your heart is for giving to LSC and elsewhere. Once that is done, then do it cheerfully, praising and thanking God for all his blessings and His love (Psalm 103:2³).

WHERE SHOULD THE TITHE GO? Malachi 3:10 gives us the answer. “Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.” The storehouse was the Temple; now it is the local church.

WHAT ABOUT ALL THOSE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE? HOW DO I GIVE TO THOSE? If we call what you give to LSC the “tithe” God has put on your heart, then these other things are offerings or alms. What if God shows you a need or a way to fulfill a need, how should I think about those?

The biblical concept of “alms” is specifically showing benefit to the poor or needy (maybe even unbelievers locally or internationally). Alms were “over and above” the tithe. A person recognized that God had blessed them more than the one needing help. If God moves your heart to help someone in need specifically, you could just do it directly. This keeps it between you, God and the person in need.

It **may not** be in your power to help someone's need directly. You could do it through contributions you make to the Benevolence Fund, Food Bank or other organizations you know that support those in need. These contributions are "over and above" what you and God have determined is your heart for your tithe to support the ministries and activities of LSC. The 10% some so legalistically hold to may be for you 20%, 30% or more.

LSC leadership has specifically budgeted amounts to fully fund many ministry areas. Previously, some members and faithful supporters made directed gifts to support them because there wasn't clarity that the LSC General Fund already funds those areas.

If you want a ministry to receive more, then it is time get back together with God and ask Him how much over and above He is putting on your heart. Ask Him to use His Word to help you understand what your heart is for giving both to LSC and other God-honoring activities. Here are a couple of verses that might help inform your thinking on this issue – Philippians 4:11 and 1Timothy 6:8.

WHY BUDGET? It is quite simple. Jesus explained in a parable the foolishness of not planning or recognizing that everything must be put into God's hands for His will to be revealed. Luke 14:25-30, 33⁴ emphasizes the need to plan, as well as the requirement to recognize that it must be left on God's altar, because He is sovereign over all creation.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Genesis 1:28 KJV ²⁸ And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.
2. Genesis 9:1 KJV And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.
3. Psalm 103:2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,
4. Luke 14:25-33 ²⁵ Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, ²⁶ "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹ Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' ³³ So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

What's next?

What's next? The next step is to pray, for the next 28 days, asking God daily about where and how you can serve Him and the family of God at LSC.

We know that we always receive more in return than we give. We are *warned* in Scripture to "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling" in Psalm 2:11. We are *exhorted* to "Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into His presence with singing!" in Psalm 100:2, and we are indeed *commanded* to "...serve the Lord" in Romans 12:11. There are many admonitions in God's Word to serve the Lord.

These Scriptures and others make it clear that it isn't a matter of should we, it is that we must, to show we are being changed. Luke 3:8 "Therefore produce fruits that are consistent with repentance..." and Ephesians 5:8-9 "for you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light *consists* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ..."

How do we do that? It happens when we are serving others. In Matthew 25:40 Jesus says, "...truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, my brothers, you did it to me." We begin here at the local church, which is the family of God. The word "brothers" refers to fellow believers, Christians.

What kinds of opportunities are available for service? Here is a short list of some possibilities for you to consider:

1. Mercy and care – calls, cards, visits, prayer, benevolence (screening and submission)
2. Children's ministry – children's church, mid-week programs, VBS
3. Finance – budgeting, accounting help, benevolence (evaluation and disbursement)
4. Facilities & Grounds– maintenance and repair, lawn, weeds, snow removal
5. Worship – music, setup, sound system, prayer, disinfecting, communion prep/clean
6. Missions (foreign/domestic) / Outreach – Local opportunities with adults/youth/children
7. Office –supplies, copying, special events, etc.
8. Prayer – receiving requests, distribution, organize/lead meetings

The Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is news, good news: the best and most important news that any human being ever hears.

This Gospel declares the only way to know God in peace, love, and joy is through the reconciling death of Jesus Christ the risen Lord.

This Gospel is the central message of the Holy Scriptures, and it is the true key to understanding them.

This Gospel identifies Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel, as the Son of God and God the Son, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, whose incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension fulfilled the Father's saving will. His death for sins and His resurrection from the dead were promised beforehand by the prophets and attested by eyewitnesses. In God's own time and in God's own way, Jesus Christ shall return as glorious Lord and Judge of all (1 Thess. 4:13-18; Matt. 25:31-32). He is now giving the Holy Spirit from the Father to all those who are truly His. The three Persons of the Trinity thus combine in the work of saving sinners.

This Gospel is the only Gospel: there is no other; and to change its substance is to pervert and indeed destroy it. This Gospel is so simple that small children can understand it, and it is so profound that studies by the wisest theologians will never exhaust its riches.

The Bible declares that all who truly trust in Christ and His Gospel are sons and daughters of God through grace, and hence are our brothers and sisters in Christ.

All who are justified experience reconciliation with the Father, full remission of sins, transition from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, the reality of being a new creature in Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

The Gospel requires worship of all believers, which means constant praise to God, giving of thanks to Him, submission to all that He has revealed in His written word, prayerful dependence on Him, and vigilance lest His truth be even inadvertently compromised or obscured.

Sharing the joy and hope of this Gospel is a supreme privilege. It is also an abiding obligation because the Great Commission of Jesus Christ still stands: Proclaim the Gospel everywhere, He said, teaching, baptizing, and making disciples.

Appendix I

This Gospel of Jesus Christ which God sets forth in the infallible Scriptures combines Jesus' own declaration of the present reality of the kingdom of God with the apostles' account of the person, place, and work of Christ, and how sinful humans benefit from it.

The heart of the Gospel is that our holy, loving Creator, confronted with human hostility and rebellion, has chosen in His own freedom and faithfulness to become our holy, loving Redeemer and Restorer. The Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14): it is through His one and only Son that God's one and only plan of salvation is implemented. Peter announced, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) And Christ himself taught, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)

The Father sent the Son to free us from the dominion of sin and Satan, and to make us God's children and friends. Jesus paid our penalty in our place on His cross, satisfying the retributive demands of Divine justice by shedding His blood in sacrifice and so making possible justification for all who trust in Him (Rom. 3:25-26). The Bible describes this mighty substitutionary transaction as the achieving of ransom, reconciliation, redemption, propitiation and conquest of evil powers (Matt. 20:28; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Rom. 3:23-25; John 12:31; Col. 2:15). It secures for us a restored relationship with God that brings pardon and peace, acceptance and access, and adoption into God's family (Col. 1:20, 2:13-14; Rom. 5:1-2; Gal. 4:4-7; 1 Pet. 3:18). The faith in God and in Christ to which the Gospel calls us is a trustful outgoing of our hearts to lay hold of these promised and offered benefits.

This Gospel further proclaims the bodily resurrection, ascension and enthronement of Jesus as evidence of the efficacy of His once-for-all sacrifice for us, of the reality of His present personal ministry to us, and of the certainty of His future return to glorify us (1 Cor. 15; Heb. 1:1-4, 2:1-18, 4:14-16, 7:1-10:25). In the life of faith as the Gospel presents it, believers are united with their risen Lord, communing with Him, and looking to Him in repentance and hope for empowering through the Holy Spirit so that henceforth they may not sin but serve Him truly.

God's justification of those who trust Him, according to the Gospel, is a decisive transition, here and now, from a state of condemnation and wrath because of their sins to one of acceptance and favor by virtue of Jesus' flawless obedience culminating in His voluntary sin-bearing death. God "justifies the wicked" (ungodly: Rom. 4:5) by imputing (reckoning, crediting, counting, accounting) righteousness to them and ceasing to count their sins against them (Rom. 4:1-8). Sinners receive through faith in Christ alone "the gift of righteousness" (Rom. 1:17, 5:17; Phil. 3:9) and thus become "the righteousness of God" in Him Who was "made sin" for them (2 Cor. 5:21).

Appendix I

As our sins were reckoned to Christ, so Christ's righteousness is reckoned to us. This is justification by the imputation of Christ's righteousness. All we bring to the transaction is our need of it. Our faith in the God Who bestows it (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) is itself the fruit of God's grace. Faith links us savingly to Jesus, but inasmuch as it involves an acknowledgment that we have no merit of our own, it is confessedly not a meritorious work.

The Gospel assures us that all who have entrusted their lives to Jesus Christ are born-again children of God (John 1:12), indwelt, empowered, and assured of their status and hope by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 7:6, 8:9-17). The moment we truly believe in Christ, the Father declares us righteous in Him and begins conforming us to His likeness. Genuine faith acknowledges and depends upon Jesus as Lord and shows itself in growing obedience to the Divine commands, though this contributes nothing to the grounds of our justification (James 2:14-26; Heb. 6:1-12).

By His sanctifying grace, Christ works within us through faith, renewing our fallen nature and leading us to real maturity, that measure of development which is meant by "the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). The Gospel calls us to live as obedient servants of Christ and as His emissaries in the world, doing justice, loving mercy, and helping all in need, thus seeking to bear witness to the kingdom of Christ. At death, Christ takes the believer to Himself (Phil. 1:21) for unimaginable joy in the ceaseless worship of God (Rev. 22:1-5).

Salvation in its full sense is from the guilt of sin in the past, the power of sin in the present, and the presence of sin in the future. Thus, while in foretaste believers enjoy salvation now, they still await its fullness (Mark 14:61-62; Heb. 9:28). Salvation is a Trinitarian reality, initiated by the Father, implemented by the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit. It has a global dimension, for God's plan is to save believers out of every tribe and tongue (Rev. 5:9) to be His Church, a new humanity, the people of God, the body and bride of Christ, and the community of the Holy Spirit. All the heirs of final salvation are called here and now to serve their Lord and each other in love, to share in the fellowship of Jesus' sufferings, and to work together to make Christ known to the whole world.

We learn from the Gospel that, as all have sinned, so all who do not receive Christ will be judged according to their just rewards as measured by God's holy law, and face eternal retributive punishment.

**Excerpts taken from The Gospel Unity Document. The Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Evangelical Celebration, 1999*