



## Articles of Faith - What we believe.

### 1) **Of the Holy Scriptures.**

We believe the Holy Bible is the Word of God, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is inerrant in the original languages, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...and is the only true source of salvation through Jesus Christ. The Word of God instructs us about our fallen world, God's salvation plan, the truth, the human sin condition, the beginning and end of the age. It is true theologically and historically from the very first verse to the last. The Bible is the rule of our faith and contains all we need to know about God's will for our lives, His grace and mercy, His justice and holiness, and His revelation to Humanity. We believe that God has marked the Bible as authentic by the many thorough, accurate, and historically provable Prophecies contained in almost every book of the Bible. Furthermore, we believe that a second authenticating phenomenon is the miracles, signs, and wonders contained in the scriptures performed by the prophets and especially Jesus Christ. No other book contains such proofs of God's hand in its writing, in its message, and in its central figure—Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (66 books) contain all that we need to know of God's plan of salvation—there is no need for another. (II Tim. 3:16; John 14:6; Luke 4:4; Rom. 3:4; John 21:24,24; John 4:48; Acts 2:43; Matt. 16:16)

### 2) **Of Faith in God.**

We believe that God is, and is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. God is Spirit and is revealed in scripture as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—The Trinity. We believe that the Godhead is co-equal, co-eternal, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. We believe that God has always been, is, and will always be. We believe that God is love, holy, just, is the source of all things, creator, sustainer, and redeemer of mankind. Only God knows from the beginning what the end will be. Only God can perform true signs, wonders, and miracles to intervene in the life of humanity. (Heb. 11:6; John 4:24; I John 4:2; I John 5:6; Heb. 13:8; Isa. 46:10; Job 19:28; Isa. 41:14; Isa. 45:21)

### 3) **Of the Word of God, the Son of God.**

We believe that God sent His Son into the World not to condemn it but to save it. That whosoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. We believe that the Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us—Emmanuel. We believe that Jesus Christ fulfilled what no one else could do, the prophecies concerning the Messiah. He was born of the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Jesse, David; He was born in Bethlehem, of the virgin Mary, of the time revealed to Daniel for the anointed one to come and atone for sin. Jesus fulfilled over three hundred prophecies centered on His life, ministry, death and resurrection. We believe that Jesus Christ is wholly God and man together in one person. We believe that the Word of God is perfect, holy, eternal, all-powerful, the same yesterday, today, and forever. (John 3:16; John 1:1-5; John 14:11; John 10:38; Dan. 9:24-26; Matt. 2:6; Matt. 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38; Matt. 5:17; Matt. 1:18)

**4) Of the Resurrection of Christ.**

We believe that Jesus Christ is risen after he had descended into hell; that His resurrection defeated death and Hades obtaining the keys of both. We believe He died for our sins, was buried and rose again on the third day according to the scriptures. Jesus was seen by the Apostles and after that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, after forty days ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father. We believe in His total resurrection of Spirit, Soul, and body. Jesus was touched, ate food, walked and talked among the disciples, revealing to them that he was no ghost, but had a flesh and bone glorified body. He became the first fruits to arise from the dead for the many that are to follow. (Luke 24; Rev. 1:18; I Cor. 15:6-8; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 2:27; Luke 24:39; I Cor. 16:25)

**5) Of the Holy Ghost (Spirit).**

We believe that the Holy Spirit conceives, gives birth, and manifests the Word of God. The Holy Spirit anoints, empowers, encourages, teaches, admonishes, nurtures, advocates, never leaves nor forsakes the believer. The new birth is accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit to implant the Word of God into our hearts. The Holy Spirit is the comforter sent from heaven by the Son when He sat down at the right hand of the Father. The Holy Spirit convicts, convinces, and converts all who are repentant. Unless the Holy Spirit draws us we can neither see nor understand our need for salvation. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit is to reveal the Son and glorify the Father. (Luke 1:35; John 16:14; Luke 4:18; Acts 1:8; I John 2:27; John 14:18; Heb. 13:5; John 3:6; John 14:25; John 16:8-11; John 6:44)

**6) Of the Fall and Original Sin.**

The Fall of mankind occurred in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve rebelled against God's rule and command. Sin nature, selfishness, and the absolute desire to rule one self, corrupted humanity and everyone fathered by man is born into sin. Sin nature is manifest in the world by the many evils. Evil is treating someone else in a way he or she would not want to be treated. Sin falls far short of God's love: love thy neighbor as thy self. The standard of God's nature and love is seen and understood through Jesus Christ. (Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12; Matt. 19:19; Rom. 3:9-18; Col. 1:15; John 15:13; I John 4:7,8)

**7) Of Free Will.**

God in His divine sovereignty predetermined that Man would have free will. God's desire for us to choose His Kingdom is manifest in allowing Humanity to choose evil. From the foundation of the world, knowing beforehand that Adam and Eve would fall provided salvation through His Son. The destiny of every human being is determined by his or her decision concerning Jesus Christ. God offers to us through His grace the opportunity to come to Him in repentance. The grace of God awakens us to our need for salvation. Without God's intervention we would all be lost in trespasses and sins. For there is no one who is righteous, everyone has gone after his or her own ways. For anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8,9; Deut. 30:19; Eph. 1:4; Rev. 13:8; I John 5:11,12; John 15:13; Rom. 5:8; Rom. 10:13)

**8) Of Good Works.**

We believe that no one can earn their salvation by the accumulation of good works. Salvation is offered to us based upon the sacrifice and atonement of Christ. To ignore Christ's passion

and offering is to reject God's grace on our behalf. All of us sin by our very nature against the will of God. Our good works are like filthy rags to a Holy God until we come to Him. First then, come to Christ, repenting of our rebellion towards His rule in our life; then, being born again of the Spirit of God, do good works in keeping with that salvation. We cannot work for our salvation; but because of our salvation we can do good works. "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." (James 2:17; Gal. 2:16; Heb. 10:11-14; Isa. 64:6; John 3:3; James 2:14-26)

**9) Of the Sin Nature and the New Nature.**

We believe that all must be born again as Jesus testified in John 3:3; however, we do not lose the sin nature until we die. Therefore, the daily struggle within every believer is to pick up their cross of denying the self rule, resisting temptation, denying the flesh, and remaining obedient to the Word of God. If we walk after the Spirit we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. This spiritual battle will rage within us all the days of our life and to he or she "...who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." (Rev. 2:7)

We believe that we are sinners being saved by grace and that if any one sins we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9) Therefore, the daily walk of believers is a daily practice of repentance and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. (Phil. 2:5-8; Rom. 7,8; Eph. 4:22-24; Gal. 5:16,17; Matt. 16:24)

**10) Of the Church.**

The Church of Christ is the body of believers worldwide—The true and invisible Church of God. Christ is the head of the Church and every believer members of it. Christ has ordained some to be Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers for the equipping of the saints to do ministry. The Church of Christ is open to all who are earnestly seeking to find God and repent of their sins. The Church of Christ is under authority of the Word of God and is to operate in the Spirit of love, order, and discipline. The Church is to protect the sheep and the little children of God from false teachers and teachings. The Church is the body of Christ, both men and women, working, functioning, and leading, side by side (See *Women & Men together in Leadership*). The local head of the Church is the pastor, working hand in hand with its governing body and structure. The Church is not to forget the assembling of itself together as some are in the habit of doing (Heb.10:25). It functions to provide sanctuary from the world, training for believers, a place of worship, teaching, serving, and community for the faithful. The Church provides for the sacraments of Baptism and Communion. The Church provides for the worship of God in tithes, offerings, and gifts. The purpose of the Church is to reach the lost, provide community for its members, and help find each their place to serve. (Matt. 16:18; I Cor. 12:28; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:15 & 24; I Tim. 3; Titus 2; Acts 2:42; I Cor. 14:26-; I Cor. 11:23; Mal. 3:8-12; Matt. 23:23; I Pet. 5:5; Eph. 5:19-21; Jer. 3:15; Jer. 12:10)

**11) Of the Priesthood of All Believers.**

The anointing of God rests upon all believers who are pursuing the Will of God in their lives. There is only one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. There is no need of any other mediation to pray, confess sin, worship, praise, and be in the presence of God. Worship is a lifestyle of continual offering as we offer ourselves as living sacrifices unto God. Worship and prayer is both individual and corporate, private and public, we are to come

together as often as we do to present ourselves before Him. Then, in our daily lives practice the presence of God in prayers and conversations that never cease. As a priesthood we are to live lives that are pleasing to God. We are to avoid the appearance of evil; we do not provide for the flesh; we are to be beyond reproach; we are to do what Christ would do in every opportunity of life. We are to grow up in the Spirit of Christ who is the author and finisher of our faith. (I Joh. 2:27; I Tim. 2:5; Rom. 12:1; Matt. 6:6; Heb. 10:25; I Cor. 14:26; I Thes. 5:17; I Pet. 2: 5 & 9; I Thes. 5:22; I Tim. 3:7; Gal. 5:13; Rom. 13:14; Heb. 12:2)

#### **12) Of the Sacraments.**

We believe there are two sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion. The distinction arises in four ways: 1) They were both ordained and instituted by Christ. 2) They are for everyone to practice and participate. 3) There are visible elements involved such as water, juice (wine), and bread. 4) We believe that God's grace is involved in the obedient observance of these sacraments. We do not believe that believers must participate in the sacraments in order to be saved; however, a growing maturing Christian understands the need to follow the Lord in Baptism and participate in the Lord's Supper in remembrance of His death and resurrection until He comes again. (Matt. 26:26-29; Matt. 28:19,20; John 6:53; Mark 1:8; Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Eph. 2:8; I Cor. 11:23-26)

#### **13) Of Baptism.**

Holy Baptism is instituted by Christ and taught by the Apostles for a sign of repentance and commitment to the faith. Baptism is a washing of water by faith for a visible sign of an inward grace for the forgiveness of sins. It is a sign of dying to the old nature and living to the new one. Believer's baptism is practiced for those who have become Christians as young persons or adults and wish to follow the Lord and be baptized. The scripture admonishes: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16) Infant Baptism is practiced for those who embrace the sanctification of the family (I Cor. 7:14), the covenant of the family (Gen. 17:7) and believe that children are included in the household of faith (Acts 16: 15 & Acts 16:33). All three modes of Baptism: immersion, pouring, and sprinkling will be honored. For those who believe in Infant Dedication in order to allow their children to choose Baptism for him or her self, this too will be embraced and practiced in the Church. (Matt. 26:26-29; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:4; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12; Acts 13:24)

#### **14) Of Christ being the Only Way.**

The offering of Jesus Christ was once and for all time sufficient to satisfy the law and the judgment against mankind. There is no need for any other sacrifice, penance, or self-recrimination. There is no other way to the Father except by the Son (John 14:6). The ultimate sacrifice and offering of the only begotten Son is complete to take away sins. There is no other name, religion, or so-called truth by which we can be saved. The embracing of any other form, person, or truth is an abomination. Let anyone who teaches another gospel be accursed. (Heb. 10: 10-18; Gal. 3:1-13; John 3:16; I John 5:12; John 10:9; John 15:5; John 16:33; John 6:48; John 8:12; John 11:25; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Gal. 1:8)

#### **15) Of Worship Styles or Practices.**

It is not right to pronounce as doctrine those things that are truly preferences in the Church. Whether our services are traditional or contemporary or some blended effort is a matter of consideration for the likes and dislikes of the congregation. That which is called sacred or true worship by one may not be for another. What is sacred is the heart's response to prayer,

meditation, liturgy, rites, singing, preaching, etc. What is sacred is a reverence by which we all enter worship. The practicing of varying kinds of responses such as the Bible describes will be encouraged, tolerated, and appreciated. Biblical practices such as laying on of hands, anointing with oil, altar calls, raising of hands, clapping, kneeling, shouting, being silent, standing, laying prostrate, will be accepted as long as they are done decently and in order. What is encouraged is an open heart to allow the freedom of conscience to participate in the things that one does like, and endure the things one does not like for the good of the Church as a whole. (Heb. 6:2; James 5: 14,15; Ps. 47:1; Ps. 63:4; Ps. 95:6; Ps. 35:27; Ps. 135:2; Acts 8:18; I Cor. 14)

**16) Of Respect to Governing Authorities.**

It is the teaching of Paul the Apostle that we are to be subject to governing authorities at all times except where such authorities violate the Word of God (Romans 13:1). We will render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and render unto God what is God's (Matt. 22:21).

**17) Of Tithes, Offerings and Gifts.**

The Bible teaching on Tithing is found in the Law of Moses (Num. 18:28 & De 12) and especially the Prophet of Malachi chapter 3:8-12. Jesus Himself validated its practice in Mathew 23:23 when He rebuked the scribes and Pharisees, for having tithe in every way but neglecting the weightier matters of the Law, when he said, "These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone."

Tithing is ten percent of our income, which are the first-fruits that belong to God. Offerings are for specific days, issues, or spiritual disciplines and gifts are from our heart in thanksgiving, gratitude, and appreciation for God's supply. Certainly, leadership in the Church would be expected to tithe, give offerings and gifts. Membership would also be expected to follow the Word of God in this matter.

**18) Of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.**

We believe that the Holy Spirit manifests the gifts of the Spirit in every believer as we surrender to God's Will (I Cor. 12:11). The fruit of the Holy Spirit are evidenced within the maturing, spirit-filled life (Gal. 5:22). It is the duty of every believer to pursue God's grace and be continually being filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18)

**19) Of the Second Coming of Christ.**

We believe in the immanent return of Christ with the armies of the Lord (the saints) as described in the Gospels, Epistles, and Revelations 19. His return will be to destroy the armies of the antichrist and set up the millennial reign of Christ.

Jesus Christ is coming to prevent the world from destroying itself at the end of the Great Tribulation period. We believe that the "rapture" of the Church will take place prior to this Great Tribulation period (I Cor. 15:52 & Mathew 24:36-44) whereby the Church of Christ, the Bride, will enter into the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9).

**20) Of the Community of the Body of Christ.**

We believe that our community is based not upon our strengths but our mutual need for God's grace. It is in our weaknesses that our faith is shared. We believe in compassion, consideration, and integrity—treating others like we would want to be treated. We believe in forgiveness, forbearance, and accepting each other according to the Word of God. We judge

not persons; but we do judge behavior. Jesus said in Luke 17:3 “Take heed to yourselves, if your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.” Everyone sins but not everyone repents. Therefore, we hold to account in order to bring peace and reconciliation in truth. We love the sinner but deal with the sin in order to provide a safe haven for all. We believe in resolving conflict according to the principles Jesus taught in Matthew 18:15-18. Our themes for community are: We are a Hospital for sinners; we are a training ground for saints; we are a lighthouse for the lost. We seek to provide a place where friendship is fostered; but where cliques are denounced. Where emotional blackmail is disciplined; but where we agree to disagree. We seek to eliminate slander and gossip but encourage and provoke one another to love and good works. We embrace John Wesley’s emphasis: In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity. We are not a perfect community; but we are striving to do the best we can under God’s inspiration. (II Cor. 12:9; Matt. 22:39; Heb. 10:24; Matt. 7:1; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 4:2,3 & 13; Prov. 10:18; Rom. 14)

### **21) Of the Nature of Healing.**

We believe that God has provided for our healing through the atonement of Christ (Isa. 53:4-5). This healing provision is first spiritual in that our spirits are recreated and born again (John 3:3; II Cor. 5:17), second, that our souls are restored and renewed according to the promises of scripture (Ps. 23; Rom. 9), third, that our bodies are healed through the stripes and suffering of Christ, divine healing is inclusive of physical healing (Mark 16:17-18). We believe in the laying on of hands and anointing with oil for all who are sick (James 5:14-15). Not all are saved even though it is the will of God for all to come to Him in Christ Jesus for He is not willing that any should perish. Not all are healed even though it is the will of God in His atonement. We pursue God’s will and expect with faith the manifestation of healing. We do not condemn anyone’s lack of faith to receive for we are all weak, (the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak). We seek to glorify God, to avail ourselves of God’s promises according to scripture, and to encourage the Body of Christ that God will grant us signs, wonders, and miracles—such as healing our bodies, our loved ones, neighbors, by the mercy and blood of Christ. (Acts 4:29,30; II Pet. 3:9; James 5:16; I Pet. 2:24; Ps. 107:20; Ps. 103:3; Ps. 147:3; I Cor. 12:9 & 28; Acts 10:38)

### **22) Confirmation.**

Confirmation shall be retained in our church for the purposes of confirming our youth’s personal relationship to Christ. It will be for children graduating sixth grade or higher. Confirmation will affirm for each youth the faith that was promised on their behalf at their baptism (If infant baptized), or at their dedication. Confirmation will also be a time to acknowledge a youth’s step of faith, coming of age in the Church, and personal choice to be baptized. All confirmants must have been baptized or be baptized. It is a time of teaching about the history of the Church, Salvation, Major tenets of the faith, Disciplines of the Christian life such as: devotions, witnessing, prayer, fellowship, giving and serving. Membership into the Church is not a part of the confirmation event. If a youth desires to become a member he/she must attend membership classes and be willing to fulfill its requirements.