

FORT GEORGE BAPTIST
CHURCH
CONSTITUTION and
BY-LAWS

FEBRUARY 2017

CONSTITUTION OF THE FORT GEORGE BAPTIST CHURCH

1. NAME

The name of the society is FORT GEORGE BAPTIST CHURCH.

2. Purposes

The objects of the society are to act in affiliation with the North American Baptist Conference of Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois, USA:

- a) To promote the New Testament Christian Life in the local church through the fellowship of the believer as well as among individual members.
- b) To proclaim the Word of God according to the Scriptures (II Timothy 3:16-17).
- c) To lead the unconverted in our community to Christ as Savior and Lord.
- d) To dedicate our lives and resources willingly, and sacrificially in the support of home and overseas missions.
- e) To cooperate in the promotion of Christian missionary, educational and benevolent objectives.
- f) To bring together as members of the society, persons who believe in the following statement of faith:

“We as New Testament Baptists, affirm our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation and believe in those great distinctive principles for which Baptists have lived and died, such as:

 - i) Freedom of worship according to a man’s conscience.
 - ii) The verbally inspired scriptures as contained in the original autographs of the Old and New Testament.
 - iii) The separation of church and state.
 - iv) The revelation of God through Jesus Christ as only Savior and Lord.
 - v) Regenerated church membership.
 - vi) Believer’s baptism by immersion.
 - vii) The congregational form of church government.
 - viii) The proclamation of the Gospel throughout the world.

BY-LAWS OF THE FORT GEORGE BAPTIST CHURCH
Adopted at the Congregational Budget Meeting, February 05, 2017

ARTICLE 1: MEMBERSHIP

A. NEW MEMBERS

Any person may become a member of this church who;

1. Has accepted Jesus Christ as personal Saviour.
2. Has been baptized by immersion upon their confession of their faith in Jesus Christ.
3. Has either:
 - a) Been recommended by letter of membership by another Baptist church or church of like faith.
 - b) Presented a verbal statement of Christian experience to the Deacon's Board.
4. Has been recommended for membership by the Deacon's Board.
5. Has been accepted for membership by a vote of the church.

B. PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION

The right hand of fellowship will be extended to new members at the Sunday service. This is to be an indication of welcome and admission into full membership rights, privileges, and responsibilities in the church.

C. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

1. Death
2. Letter

Any member in good standing shall, on their request, be granted a letter of transfer to any evangelical church. Such letter shall be sent to the pastor or clerk of the church to which the member plans to join.

3. Absentee

When the deacons have been made aware of an absentee member, a representative of the deacons will contact the member and remind them of their personal responsibilities to the church. If the said member does not participate

in the worship services of the church for two years, their membership shall be terminated.

4. Unchristian Behaviour

Should a member become an offense to the church because of immoral or unchristian conduct, or repeated breach of New Testament teaching, as outlined in the Statement of Faith, the church may terminate membership. However, this action may be taken only after the member concerned has been informed by the Deacon's Board, and has been given an honest hearing, and faithful efforts have been made to lead such a member to repentance and amendment. The Deacon's board shall then bring a recommendation to the church congregation.

5. Dismissal

The membership of no person shall be terminated at the same meeting when the recommendation for such action has been made, unless at the request of the member. There shall be at least a one-week interval between the two meetings.

D. REINSTATEMENT

A person who is baptized by immersion on confession of their faith in Jesus Christ as personal saviour, and who has in any way, or for certain reasons, lost their membership in the local church, or any recognized church, after having given a satisfactory testimony in the presence of the Deacon's Board and upon the Deacon's Board recommendation and vote of the church, may be reinstated to the fellowship of believers.

ARTICLE 2: DUTIES OF MEMBERS

A. CONDUCT

The members are expected to walk worthy of the high calling of God in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 4:1 and Colossians 1:10)

B. MEETINGS AND WORSHIP SERVICES

Members are expected to attend services regularly as circumstances permit. (Hebrews 10:25)

C. CHURCH SUPPORT

Members are expected to support the work of the church with contributions for local purposes, missions, and Christian benevolence as called for in the word of God and by the dictates of their conscience. (1 Corinthians 16:2)

D. CHURCH EXTENSION

Every member is expected to cooperate in the building up of the membership and the promotion of the Kingdom of God.

E. LORD'S SUPPER

Every member is expected to participate regularly in the Lord's supper, if in right relationship with God and the church, and if physically able to do so.
(1 Corinthians 11:27-29)

F. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

All members moving from the vicinity of the church have the following responsibilities:

1. To notify the pastor or the church clerk concerning their move as soon as possible.
2. To have their church membership transferred. This transfer is to be made by written request from another evangelical church as soon as possible. (Hebrews 10:25)

ARTICLE 3: BUSINESS MEETINGS

A. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The fiscal year shall terminate December 31, and the annual general meeting of the church shall be held not more than 90 days after that. This meeting will be to approve the financials for the previous year and annual reports will be presented at this meeting.

B. YEAR END CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The year-end congregational meeting must be held within 90 days before December 31. At this meeting, the budget for the upcoming fiscal year shall be approved, and elections for church offices shall be conducted.

C. NOTICES

Notice of all meetings shall be announced from the pulpit on two consecutive Sundays immediately before the date scheduled for said meeting. The notice shall be posted on the church bulletin board at least 14 days before the date of such meeting.

D. QUORUM

A quorum of the church for the transaction of business shall consist of 33% of the voting resident church membership. If within thirty minutes from the time appointed for a general meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting shall be adjourned to another appointed time. A quorum of any committee shall consist of a majority of that committee.

E. VOTING PRIVILEGES

Members who have reached the age of 16 years shall have one vote each at all business meetings.

F. NOMINATIONS

All nominations must be presented to the nominating committee at least two weeks before the congregational business meeting where elections will take place. The nominated person must give their permission to stand before their name is presented to the church. The deacons shall approve the list of nominees before their names are presented to the church to ensure that the individual is qualified for the position they are being nominated for. If a nominee is absent but has given consent beforehand, they shall be eligible for election. The chairperson of the nominating committee shall inform the elected person.

G. RULES OF ORDER

The parliamentary procedure as outlined in *Roberts Rules of Order* shall be observed at all business meetings unless the bylaws specify otherwise.

H. ORDER OF BUSINESS

Minor routine matters of business, the granting of church letters, and acceptance of new members may be conducted at business meetings.

Congregational business meetings shall consist of the following:

- Reading of the minutes of previous meetings.
- Reports by the treasurer, pastor(s), and committees.
- Unfinished business.
- New business.

I. MAJORITY VOTE

A majority vote shall be deemed to be 50% plus one of the members in attendance at a church meeting.

J. SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

1. Either the pastor or the moderator, with the consent of the church committee, may call a special business meeting of the church. The purpose of any such meeting shall be stated in the notice and the announcement of such meeting.
2. The moderator shall call a special business meeting for the church within two weeks of receiving a written request for such meeting, indicating the purposes of such meeting and signed by ten members of the church.

K. SPECIAL RESOLUTION

The church committee shall be the sole authority as to the status of a resolution being special. The intent to consider any special resolution at a business meeting must be announced at two consecutive Sunday services and recorded in the church bulletin for the services. Notice of any special resolution shall be posted on the church bulletin board at least 14 days before the date of such a meeting. A special resolution shall require an affirmative vote of 75% of those present to pass.

ARTICLE 4: CHURCH STAFF

A. SENIOR PASTOR

1. CALL

The pastor shall be called for an indefinite period by a vote of the membership, at the recommendation of the search committee. The election shall be by ballot. An affirmative vote of 75% of those present is necessary. It is recommended the call then be made unanimous.

2. DUTIES

The pastor shall give general oversight of the entire work of the church. He should conduct regular worship services, administer the ordinance of baptism and the Lord's supper, and shall watch over, guide and direct the spiritual life of the church. The moderator, senior pastor, treasurer, chairperson of the trustees, chairperson of the deacons, and financial secretary shall be responsible for setting the annual budget.

3. EVALUATION

On an annual basis, the Church will strike a pastoral evaluation committee. This committee shall be comprised of the church moderator, chairperson of the deacons, the church treasurer, and one additional deacon. The pastoral evaluation committee shall review the pastoral performance, vacation, and remuneration.

4. VACATION

The pastor shall have an annual vacation.

5. TERMINATION

The relationship between pastor and church membership may be terminated by two months notice by either the pastor or church members. The relationship may be terminated at any time by mutual consent. If the church members desire to terminate the relationship, such action shall take place by an affirmative vote of 75% of those present.

6. MEMBER OF COMMITTEES

The senior pastor is member ex-officio of all organizations and committees of the church.

B. ADDITIONAL PASTORAL STAFF

1. CALL

Additional pastoral staff persons may be called by the vote of the church at the recommendation of the search committee. The election shall be by ballot. An affirmation vote of 75% of those present is necessary. It is recommended the call then be made unanimous.

2. DUTIES

Each additional pastoral staff person shall carry out his or her function under the direction of the senior pastor as set out in the job description. The job description shall be written by the deacon's board in consultation with the senior pastor and the church committee.

3. EVALUATION

Each additional pastoral staff person will be under the leadership of the senior pastor. They will be evaluated annually by the senior pastor and a member of the deacon's board in regards to performance, vacation, and remuneration. The deacon's board and church committee will receive all recommendations and make final decisions.

4. VACATION

Each additional pastoral staff person shall have an annual vacation.

5. TERMINATION

The relationship between a pastor and church members may be terminated by two months notice either by the pastor, church members or at the recommendation of the senior pastor. The relationship may be terminated at any time by mutual consent. If the church members desire to terminate the relationship, such action shall take place by an affirmative vote of 75% of those present.

6. MEMBER OF COMMITTEES

Additional pastoral staff may be asked to sit as ex-officio members on any organization or committee of the church.

C. SUPPORT STAFF

1. HIRING

Support staff can be hired by the church committee in consultation with the senior pastor. New support staff positions must be ratified by the church members through a majority vote.

2. DUTIES

The staff member shall carry out his or her functions under the direction of the senior pastor as set out in the job description. The job description shall be written by the senior pastor in consultation with the church committee.

3. EVALUATIONS

All support staff will be evaluated annually by the senior pastor or a member of the church committee in regards to performance, vacation, and remuneration. The church committee will receive all evaluations and make final decisions.

4. TERMINATION

The relationship between a support staff person and the church may be terminated with two weeks notice given by either the staff member or the senior pastor, in conjunction with the church committee.

ARTICLE 5: ADMINISTRATION

A. MODERATOR

1. ELECTION

A church member shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected to serve as moderator. The member shall be elected for a two-year term with a maximum of six consecutive years. After serving three consecutive terms, the moderator is ineligible for election to any office for at least one year. Pastoral staff shall not be eligible to serve as moderator.

2. SIGNING AUTHORITY

The moderator shall be one of four signing authorities for legal documents of the church.

3. DUTIES

The Moderator shall perform the duties as outlined in the job descriptions located in the appendix to the church bylaws.

4. EX-OFFICIO

The moderator has ex-officio status on all standing church committees.

B. DEACONS/DEACONESSES

1. NUMBER

A minimum of three church members shall be elected to serve the church membership as deacons. The nominating committee must nominate all deacons. Their names will be presented to the church for election.

2. ELECTION

Three Deacons shall be elected for three-year terms. The terms shall be staggered so that one deacon is elected in succeeding years. Additional deacons may be elected for one-year terms. After serving for six consecutive years, a deacon is not eligible for election to any office, other than the office of moderator, for one year.

3. ORGANIZATION

The deacons shall elect one of their members each year to serve as chairperson. The chairperson shall sit on the church committee.

4. SIGNING AUTHORITY

The chairperson shall be one of the four signing authorities on legal documents of the church.

5. DUTIES

The deacons shall perform the duties as outlined in the job descriptions located in the appendix to the church bylaws.

C. TRUSTEES

1. NUMBER

A minimum of two persons shall be elected to serve as trustees. At least one of the trustees must be a church member.

2. ELECTION

A church member or adherent shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected for a two-year term. After serving for six consecutive years, a trustee

is not eligible for election to any office, other than the office of moderator, for one year.

3. ORGANIZATION

The trustees shall elect one of the church members each year to serve as a chairperson. The chairperson shall sit on the church committee.

4. DUTIES

The trustees shall perform the duties as outlined in the job descriptions located in the appendix to the church bylaws.

D. CHURCH CLERK

1. ELECTION

A church member shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected to serve as church clerk. The member shall be elected for a two-year term with a maximum of six consecutive years. After serving for six consecutive years, the church clerk is not eligible for election to any office, other than the office of moderator, for one year.

2. DUTIES

The church clerk shall perform the duties as outlined in the job descriptions located in the appendix to the church bylaws.

E. CHURCH TREASURER

1. ELECTION

A church member shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected to serve as treasurer. The term shall be for two consecutive years commencing with an odd numbered year. After serving for six consecutive years, the treasurer is not eligible for election to any office, other than the office of moderator, for one year.

2. SIGNING AUTHORITY

The church treasurer shall be one of four signing authorities for legal documents of the church.

3. DUTIES

The church treasurer shall perform the duties as outlined in the job descriptions located in the appendix to the church bylaws.

F. FINANCIAL SECRETARY

1. ELECTION

A church member shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected to serve as the financial secretary. The term shall be for two years commencing with an even numbered year. After serving for six consecutive years, the financial secretary is not eligible for election to any office, other than the office of moderator, for one year.

2. SIGNING AUTHORITY

The financial secretary shall be one of four signing authorities for legal documents of the church.

3. DUTIES

The financial secretary shall perform the duties as outlined in the job descriptions located in the appendix to the church bylaws.

G. MUSIC CHAIRPERSON

1. ELECTION

A church member shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected to serve as music chairperson. The member shall be elected for a two-year term with a maximum of six consecutive years. After serving for six consecutive years, the music chairperson is not eligible for election to any office, other than the office of moderator, for one-year.

2. DUTIES

The music chairperson shall perform the duties as outlined in the job descriptions located in the appendix to the church bylaws.

H. MEMBER AT LARGE

1. ELECTION

A church member shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected to serve as member at large on the church committee. The member shall be elected for a two-year term with a maximum of six consecutive years. After serving for six consecutive years, the member at large is not eligible for election to any office, other than the office of moderator, for one year.

2. DUTIES

The member at large shall perform the duties as outlined in the job descriptions located in the appendix to the church bylaws.

I. CHIEF USHER

1. ELECTION

A church member shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected to serve as the chief usher. The member shall be elected for a two-year term with a maximum of six consecutive years. After serving for six consecutive years, the chief usher is not eligible for election to any office, other than the office of moderator, for one year.

2. DUTIES

The chief usher shall perform the duties as outlined in the job descriptions located in the appendix to the church bylaws.

J. SOCIAL CONVENOR

1. ELECTION

A church member shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected to serve as social convenor. The member shall be elected for a two-year term with a maximum of six consecutive years. After serving for six consecutive years, the social convenor is not eligible for election to any office, other than the office of moderator, for one year.

2. DUTIES

The social convenor shall perform the duties as outlined in the job descriptions located in the appendix to the church bylaws.

K. SUNDAY SCHOOL COORDINATOR

1. ELECTION

A church member shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected to serve as the Sunday school coordinator. The member shall be elected for a two-year term with a maximum of six consecutive years. After serving for six consecutive years, the Sunday school coordinator is not eligible for election to any office, other than the office of moderator, for one year.

2. DUTIES

The Sunday school coordinator shall perform the duties as outlined in the job descriptions located in the appendix to the church bylaws.

L. YOUTH MINISTRIES COORDINATOR

1. ELECTION

In the event the church does not have a youth pastor, a church member shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected to serve as the youth ministries coordinator. The member shall be elected for a two-year term with a maximum of six consecutive years. After serving for six consecutive years, the youth ministries coordinator is not eligible for election to any office, other than the office of moderator, for one year.

2. DUTIES

The youth ministries coordinator shall perform the duties as outlined in the job descriptions located in the appendix to the church bylaws.

M. NURSERY SUPERVISOR

1. ELECTION

A church member or adherent shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected to serve as the nursery supervisor. The person shall be elected for a two-year term, with a maximum of six consecutive years. After serving for six consecutive years, the nursery supervisor is not eligible for election to any office, other than the office of Moderator, for one year.

2. DUTIES

The nursery supervisor shall perform the duties as outlined in the job descriptions located in the appendix to the church bylaws.

If one of the above positions is vacated during the term of office, the Deacons shall appoint an interim placement until the next congregational meeting.

ARTICLE 6: COMMITTEES

A. CHURCH COMMITTEE

1. MEMBERS

The church committee shall consist of the senior pastor, moderator, chairperson of the deacons, chairperson of the trustees, church clerk, treasurer, financial secretary, music chairperson, member at large, chief usher, social convenor, Sunday school coordinator, and youth ministries coordinator.

2. DUTIES

The church committee shall meet once a month. They shall attend to the regular business of the church. They shall make recommendations to and refer to the church all major business matters, which shall be brought before the church at church business meetings.

B. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

1. MEMBERS

The nominating committee shall consist of at least three church members who shall serve for one year. The moderator will recommend names for these positions at the year end congregational meeting. The church will elect the nominating committee at that meeting.

2. DUTIES

The church committee and congregation shall make recommendations to the nominating committee. All nominations must be given to the nominating committee a minimum of two weeks in advance of the church elections. The nominated person must give their permission to stand before their name is

presented to the church. The deacons shall approve the final list of nominees before the names are presented.

ARTICLE 7: CHURCH SERVICES

SUNDAY

The church shall meet regularly on the Lord's Day for the worship of God.

WEEKDAY

Bible studies, care groups, and prayer and praise services shall be conducted for the spiritual growth and edification of the church family.

LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper shall be commemorated at least once per month

PULPIT SUPPLY

The deacons, in conjunction with the senior pastor, shall be responsible for the pulpit supply. If the church is without a pastor, the deacons shall be responsible for the worship services.

OFFERINGS

No individual or group shall be given the privilege of receiving an offering, or solicitation of the membership, without prior approval of the church committee.

ARTICLE 8: BORROWING POWERS

The church committee may borrow up to \$5000.00 as needed. The borrowing funds over \$5000.00 is subject to approval by a special resolution of the church.

ARTICLE 9: AUDITORS

The accountants appointed by the church shall review the treasurer's records annually, or at any time as required by the church committee. The church committee and/or the treasurer have the right to demand an audit at any time that the records are brought into

question, and such audit shall be mandatory. The auditor's report shall be given at the following business meeting or upon the request of the church committee.

ARTICLE 10: BOOKS AND RECORDS

The books and records of the church may be inspected by the members at any time upon reasonable notice being given to the church clerk or the treasurer.

ARTICLE 11: AMENDMENTS

The bylaws may be amended or repealed at a church business meeting by recommendation of the church committee. The intent to consider amendments at a business meeting must be announced at two consecutive Sunday services and recorded in the church bulletin for the services. Notice of the proposed amendments shall be posted on the church bulletin board at least 14 days before the date of such meeting. Amendments to the Bylaws shall require an affirmative vote of 75% of those present.

ARTICLE 12: REMOVAL OF ELECTED ADMINISTRATORS

The church members may, by special resolution, remove elected administrators before the expiration of the term of office, and may make a recommendation to the nominating committee for a successor to complete the term of office.

ARTICLE 13: DISSOLUTION

In the event of the dissolution of this society for any reason, all remaining assets of the society shall, after payment of liabilities, be distributed to the North American Baptist Inc. Canada.

ARTICLE 14: STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

Baptists, since their beginnings, repeatedly have composed confessions, which expressed doctrinal consensus among related churches. In principle, however, Baptists have always insisted that no statement of faith can be considered creedally binding even upon concerning congregations. The purpose of their doctrinal summaries was to explain to other Christians and to the larger society what Baptists believed and practiced. Within and

among Baptist churches, statements of faith also provided a standard for instruction, counsel and fellowship.

We, as North American Baptists, presently feel the need to state more fully our Baptist understanding of the Christian faith. The purpose that guided us in writing and the use that we intend for this declaration are:

1. To further the sense of identity and the spirit of unity within our North American Baptist Conference by declaring our common doctrinal understandings;
2. To provide a basis for doctrinal instruction within our conference;
3. To provide a basis for doctrinal discussions in the hiring of conference personnel;
4. To serve as a reference point when opinions differ;
5. To provide a basis for our doctrinal discussion in admitting new churches and new pastors into our various associations;
6. To provide a doctrinal guide for new churches: and
7. To give a doctrinal witness beyond our Conference.

In continuity with our immediate forefathers and the fellowship of Baptists throughout history, we seek to practice and propagate by God's grace the following convictions:

1. THE BIBLE

We believe the Bible is God's Word given by divine inspiration, the record of God's revelation of Himself to humanity (II Timothy 3:16). It is trustworthy, sufficient, without error—the supreme authority and guide for all doctrine and conduct (I Peter 1:23-25, John 17:17, II Timothy 3:16-17). It is the truth by which God brings people into a saving relationship with Himself and leads them to Christian maturity (John 20:31, I John 5:9-12, Matthew 4:4, I Peter 2:2).

2. GOD

We believe in the one living and true God, perfect in wisdom, sovereignty, holiness, justice, mercy and love (I Timothy 1:17, Psalm 86:15, Deuteronomy 32:3-4). He

exists eternally in three coequal persons who act together in creation, providence, and redemption (Genesis 1:26, 1 Peter 1:2, Hebrews 1:1-3).

A. THE FATHER

The Father reigns with providential care over all life and history in the created universe. He hears and answers prayer (I Chronicles 29:11-13, Matthew 7:11). He initiated salvation by sending His Son, and He is Father to those who by faith accept His Son as Lord and Savior (I John 4:9-10, John 3:16, John 1:12, Acts 16:31)

B. THE SON

The Son became a man, Jesus Christ, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary (John 1:14, Matthew 1:18). Being fully God and fully man, He revealed God through His sinless life, miracles and teaching (John 14:9, Hebrews 4:15, Matthew 4:23-24). He provided salvation through his atoning death in our place and by His bodily resurrection (I Corinthians 15:3-4, II Corinthians 5:21, Romans 4:23-25). He ascended into heaven where He rules over all creation (Philippians 2:5-11). He intercedes for all believers and dwells in them as their ever present Lord (Romans 8:34, John 14:23).

C. THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit inspired men to write the Scriptures (II Peter 1:21). Through this Word, He convicts individuals of their sinfulness and of the righteousness of Christ, draws them to the Savior, and bears witness to their new birth (James 1:18, John 16:7-11, I Thessalonians 1:5-6, Romans 8:16).

At regeneration and conversion, the believer is baptized in the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). The Spirit indwells, seals and gives spiritual gifts to all believers for ministry in the church and society (Romans 8:9-11, Ephesians 1:13-14, Romans 12:5-8, I Peter 4:10). He empowers, guides, teaches, fills, sanctifies and produces the fruit of Christlikeness in all who yield to Him

(Acts 4:31, Romans 8:14, I Corinthians 2:10-13, Ephesians 5:18, II Thessalonians 2:13, Galatians 5:16, 22-23).

3. ANGELS

We believe God created an order of spiritual beings, called angels, to serve Him and do His will (Psalm 148:1-5, Colossians 1:16). The Holy angels are obedient spirits, ministering to their heirs of salvation and glorifying God (Hebrews 1:6-7, 13-14). Certain angels, called demons, Satan being their chief, through deliberate choice revolted and fell from their exalted position (Revelation 12:7-9). They now tempt individuals to rebel against God (I Timothy 4:1, I Peter 5:8). Their destiny in hell has been sealed by Christ's victory over sin and death (Hebrews 2:14, Revelations 20:10).

4. MAN

We believe God created man in His own image to have fellowship with Himself and to steward over His creation (Genesis 1:26-28). As a result, each person is unique, possesses dignity and is worthy of respect (Psalm 139:13-17). Through the temptation of Satan, Adam chose to disobey God; this brought sin and death to the human race and suffering to all creation (Genesis 3, Romans 5:12-21, 8:22). Therefore, everyone is born with a sinful nature and needs to be reconciled to God (Romans 3:9-18, 23). Satan tempts people to rebel against God, even those who love Him (Ephesians 4:27, II Corinthians 2:11, Matthew 16:23). Nonetheless everyone is personally responsible to God for thoughts, actions, and beliefs and has the right to approach Him directly through Jesus Christ, the only mediator (Romans 14:12, I Timothy 2:5)

5. SALVATION

We believe salvation is redemption by Christ of the whole person from sin and death (II Timothy 1:9-10, I Thessalonians 5:23). It is offered as a free gift by God to all and must be received personally through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (I Timothy 2:4, Ephesians 2:8-9, Acts 20:21). An individual is united to Christ by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 2:20, Colossians 1:27) As a child of God, the believer is

acquitted of all guilt, and brought into a new relationship of peace (Romans 5:1). Christians grow as the Holy Spirit enables them to understand and obey the Word of God (II Peter 3:18, Ephesians 4:15, I Thessalonians 3:12).

6. THE CHURCH

We believe the Church is the body of which Christ is the head and all who believe in him are members (Ephesians 1:22-23, Romans 12:4-5). Christians are commanded to be baptized upon profession of faith and to unite with a local church for mutual encouragement and growth in discipleship through worship, nurture, service, and the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world (Acts 2:41-42,47, Luke 24:45-48). Each church is a self-governing body under the Lordship of Christ with all members sharing responsibility (Acts 13:1-2,14:26-28). The form of government is understood to be congregational (Matthew 18:17, Acts 6:3-6, 15:22-23). The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20). It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's identification with the death, burial and resurrection of the Savior, Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-5). The Lord's Supper is the partaking of the bread and of the cup by believers together as a continuing memorial of the broken body and shed blood of Christ. It is an act of thankful dedication to Him and serves to unite His people until He returns (I Corinthians 11:23-26).

To express unity in Christ, local churches form associations and a conference for mutual counsel, fellowship and more effective fulfillment of Christ's commission (Acts 15, I Corinthians 6:1-3).

7. CHURCH AND STATE

We believe religious liberty, rooted in Scripture, is the inalienable right of all individuals to freedom of conscience with ultimate accountability to God (Genesis 1:27, John 8:32, II Corinthians 3:17, Romans 8:21, Acts 5:29). Church and state exist by the will of God. Each has distinctive concerns and responsibilities, free from control by the other

(Matthew 22:21). Christians should pray for civil leaders and obey and support government in matters not contrary to Scripture (I Timothy 2:1-4, Romans 13:1-7, I Peter 2:13-16). The state should guarantee religious liberty to all persons and groups regardless of their religious preferences, consistent with the common good.

8. CHRISTIAN DUTY

We believe Christians, individually and collectively, are salt and light in society (Matthew 5:13-16). In a Christ like spirit, they oppose greed, selfishness and vice; they promote truth, justice and peace; they aid the needy and preserve the dignity of people of all races and conditions (Hebrews 13:5, Luke 9:23, Titus 2:12, Philippians 4:8-9, I John 3:16-17, James 2:1-4).

We affirm the family as the basic unit of society and seek to preserve its integrity and stability (Genesis 2:21-25, Ephesians 6:1-4).

9. END TIMES

We believe God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring all things to their appropriate end and establish the new heaven and the new earth (Ephesians 1:9-10, Revelation 21:1). The certain hope of the Christian is that Jesus Christ will return to the earth suddenly, personally and visibly in glory according to His promise (Titus 2:13, Revelation 1:7, 3:11, John 14:1-3). The dead will be raised, and Christ will judge mankind in righteousness (John 5:28-29). The unrighteous will be consigned to the everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41, 46, Revelation 20:10). The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies, will receive their reward and dwell forever with the Lord (Philippians 3:20-21, II Corinthians 5:10, I Thessalonians 4:13-18).