**ARTICLE IV**

**ARTICLES OF FAITH**

**Article IV. 01 – Statement of Faith.**

**Section 1.**

 **(A) Of The Scriptures.**

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men supernaturally inspired. It has truth without any admixture of error for its matter. Therefore It is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

 By the “Holy Bible,” we mean that collection of sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation, which, as originally written does not only contain and convey the Word of God, but IS the very Word of God.

 By “inspiration,” we mean that the books of the Bible were written by holy men of old as they were moved by the Holy Spirit in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally and verbally inspired and free from error as no other writings have ever been or ever will be inspired.

Psalms 19:7-11, 119:89, 105, 130, 160; Proverbs 30:5-6; Isaiah 8:20; Luke 16:31, 24:25-27, 44-45; John 5:39, 45-47, 12:48, 17:17;

Acts 1:16, 28:25; Romans 3:4, 15:4; Ephesians 6:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Revelation 22:19

 **(B) Of Dispensationalism.**

We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life that define man’s responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather are divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these dispensations--the law, the church, and the kingdom--are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture.

Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 9:17; 2 Corinthians 3:9-18; Galatians 3:13-25; Ephesians 1:10, 3:2-10; Colossians 1:24-25, 27; Revelation 20:2-6

**Section 2 – Of The True God.**

 We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God. He is an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth. He is inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love. In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. They are equal in every divine perfection and execute distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

Genesis 17:1; Exodus 15:11, 20:2-3; Psalms 83:18, 90:2, 147:5; Jeremiah 10:10; Matthew 28:19; Mark 12:30; John 4:24, 10:30, 15:26, 17:5;

1 Corinthians 2:10-11, 8:6, 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 2:18, 4:6; Philippians 2:5-6; 1 Timothy 1:17; 1 John 5:7; Revelation 4:11

**Section 3 – Of The Holy Spirit.**

 We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature. He was active in the creation. In His relation to the unbelieving world, He restrains the evil one until God’s purpose is fulfilled. He convicts of sin, of judgment, and of righteousness. He bears witness to the Truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony. He is the agent in the New Birth. He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, and helps the believer.

 We believe that He is the divine Teacher who assists believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit.

 We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. We also believe that no one gift is more important than any other gift. Speaking in tongues was never a common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit. Ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, although God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing.

Genesis 1:1-3; Matthew 3:11, 28:19; Mark 1:8; Luke 1:35, 3:16, 24:49; John 1:33, 3:5-6, 14:16-17, 26, 15:26-27, 16:8-11, 13;

Acts 5:30-32, 11:16; Romans 8:14, 16, 26-27, 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28, 14:21-22;

Ephesians 1:13-14, 17-18, 4:7-12, 5:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 2:20, 27

**Section 4 – Of The Devil, Or Satan.**

 We believe that Satan was once an angelic being and enjoyed heavenly honors. Through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, he fell and drew after him a host of angels. He is now the malignant prince of the power of the air and the unholy god of this world. We hold him to be man’s great tempter, the enemy of God and His Christ, the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religions, the chief power back of the present apostasy, the lord of the antichrist, and the author of all the powers of darkness. He is destined to final defeat at the hands of God’s own Son and to the judgment of an eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels.

Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:14-17; Matthew 4:1-3, 13:39, 25:41; Mark 13:21-22; Luke 22:3-4; John 14:30;

Ephesians 2:2; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 1 Thessalonians 3:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-11; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 2:4;

1 John 2:22, 3:8, 4:3; 2 John 7; Jude 6; Revelation 12:7-10, 13:13-14, 19:11, 16, 20, 20:1-3, 10

**Section 5 – Of The Creation.**

 We believe in the Genesis account of creation and that it is to be accepted literally and not allegorically or figuratively. Man was created directly in God’s own image and after His own likeness. Man’s creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher forms. All animal and vegetable life was made directly and God’s established law was that they should bring forth only “after their kind.”

Genesis 1:1, 11, 24, 26-27; 2:21-24; Exodus 20:11; Nehemiah 9:6; Jeremiah 10:12; John 1:3;

Acts 4:24, 17:23-26; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 10:6

**Section 6 – Of The Fall Of Man.**

 We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God. However, in Adam’s voluntary sin, the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. Man is totally depraved and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition.

Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:22-23, 5:12, 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3, 4:17-19

**Section 7 – Of The Person And Work Of Christ.**

 **(A) Of The Virgin Birth.**

 We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Ghost in a miraculous manner. He was born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can ever be born of woman. He is both the Son of God and God, the Son.

Genesis 3:15; Psalms 2:7; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Mark 1:1; Luke 1:35; John 1:14; Galatians 4:4; 1 Corinthians 15:47; 1 John 5:20

 **(B) Of The Atonement For Sin.**

 We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, Who by appointment of the Father, freely took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience. Through His death, He made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins. His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner’s place - the Just dying for the unjust, Christ, the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. Having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection. He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all sufficient Savior.

Isaiah 53:4-7, 11-12; Matthew 18:11; John 3:16, 10:18; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24-25; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 20; 2 Corinthians 5:21;

Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 2:8; Philippians 2:7-8; Hebrews 2:14, 7:25, 9:12-15, 12:2; 1 Peter 2:24, 3:18; 1 John 2:2, 4:10

 **(C) Of Justification.**

 We believe that the great Gospel blessing that Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification. Justification includes the pardon of sin and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness. It is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness, which we have done, but solely through faith in Christ’s blood is His righteousness imputed unto us.

 Isaiah 53:11; Habakkuk 2:4; Zechariah 13:1; Acts 13:39; Romans 1:17, 4:1-8, 5:1, 9, 8:1;

 Galatians 3:11; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7; Hebrews 10:38

**(D) Of The Resurrection And Return Of Christ And Related Events.**

 We believe in and accept the sacred Scriptures upon these subjects at their face and full value. Of the resurrection, we believe that Christ rose bodily “the third day according to the Scriptures.” He ascended “to the right hand of the throne of God.” He alone is our “merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God.” “This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven” - bodily, personally, and visibly. The “dead in Christ shall rise first.” The living saints “shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.” “The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David.” “Christ shall reign a thousand years in righteousness until He hath put all enemies under His feet.”

Psalms 72:8; Isaiah 11:4-5; Matthew 24:27, 42, 28:6-7; Mark 16:6, 19; Luke 1:32, 24:2-7, 39, 51; John 14:3, 20:27;

Acts 1:9, 11; 1 Corinthians 15:4, 25, 42-44, 51-53; Philippians 4:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 1 Timothy 2:5;

Hebrews 2:17, 5:9-10, 8:1, 6, 9:28, 12:2; Revelation 3:21, 20:1-4, 6

**Section 8 – Of The Grace In The New Creation.**

 We believe that in order to be saved from sin and eternal damnation, sinners must experience what the Bible calls the New Birth. The New Birth involves a person understanding their sinful nature, acknowledging their sinfulness and their total inability to enter Heaven by human merit. A person who experiences the New Birth understands that we are saved from the power of sin and eternal damnation by personal faith in Christ Jesus. Therefore, the New Birth involves an understanding and acknowledgement of sinfulness along with a willingness to turn from that sinfulness to Christ as the one and only means of salvation. Salvation is a free gift which must be received. Nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel. Such rejection results in eternal condemnation in a literal place the Bible calls hell.

 We believe that the New Birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus. It is instantaneous and not a process. In the New Birth, the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God. The new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension - not by culture, not by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth. This secures our voluntary obedience to the Gospel. Its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.

Isaiah 55:1, 6-7; Matthew 11:28; Luke 5:27; John 1:12-13, 3:3, 6-7, 15-16, 18, 36, 5:40, 6:37; Acts 2:38, 41;

Romans 6:23, 8:29-30, 10:13; 1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17, 19; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 2:1, 4-5, 5:9;

Colossians 2:13, 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Timothy 1:15; Titus 1:1; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 5:1; Revelation 22:17

**Section 9 – Of Repentance And Faith.**

 We believe that repentance and faith are solemn obligations and also inseparable graces wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God. As we are deeply convicted of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy. At the same time, we heartily receive the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confess Him as our only and all-sufficient Savior.

Psalms 51:1-4, 7; Isaiah 55:6-7; Mark 1:15; Luke 12:8, 18:13; Acts 2:37-38, 20:21; Romans 10:9-11, 13

**Section 10 – Of The Church.**

 **(A)** We believe that the church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is solely made up of born-again believers.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:25-27

  **(B)** We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament.

Acts 14:27, 20:17, 28-32; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11

 **(C)** We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or controls. Any affiliations, societies, organizations, associations, or agencies this church affiliates with to further the objectives stated in the Purpose Statement are not authoritative in matters of church practice or belief.

Matthew 18:15-17; Acts 6:1-7, 13:1-4, 14:26-27; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 12-13; 2 Corinthians 2:5-7

 **(D)** We recognize water baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper as the Scriptural ordinances of obedience for the church in this age.

Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42, 8:36-38; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

**Section 11 – Of Baptism And The Lord’s Supper.**

 We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, with the authority of the local church. This shows forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life. It is a prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation and to the Lord’s Supper, in which the members of the church, by the sacred use of bread and the fruit of the vine are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ. This is always preceded by solemn self-examination.

Matthew 3:6, 16, 28:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42, 8:36-39; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28; Colossians 2:12

**Section 12 – Of The Perseverance Of The Saints.**

 We believe that real believers endure until the end. This persevering differentiates them from false professors of faith. We believe that God watches over their welfare and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation.

 We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word; which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to sin.

John 8:31-32, 10:28-29; Romans 8:28, 35-39, 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13; Philippians 1:6;

Colossians 1:21-23; Titus 2:11-15; 1 Peter 1:5; 1 John 2:19

**Section 13 – Of The Righteous And The Wicked.**

 We believe that there is an essential difference between the righteous and the wicked. The righteous are those justified by faith in the name of the Lord Jesus and sanctified by the Spirit of our God. The wicked are those who continue in rebellion and unbelief, are wicked in His sight, and remain under the curse. This distinction remains after death and throughout eternity.

Genesis 18:23; Proverbs 11:31, 14:32; Malachi 3:18; Matthew 7:13-14, 25:34, 41; Luke 9:26, 16:25; John 8:21, 12:25;

Acts 10:34-35; Romans 1:17, 6:16-18, 23, 7:6; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Galatians 3:10; 1 Peter 4:18; 1 John 2:29, 5:19

**Section 14 – Of Civil Government.**

 We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society. Government authorities are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Exodus 18:21-22; 2 Samuel 23:3; Psalm 72:11; Daniel 3:17-18; Matthew 10:28, 22:21, 23:10;

Acts 4:19-20, 23:5; Romans 13:7; Philippians 2:10-11; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14, 17

**Section 15 – Of Missions.**

 We believe the command to give the Gospel to the world is clear and unmistakable and that this Commission was given to all believers. The true mission of the church is not a program of mere social reform, but rather a Commission to proclaim the Gospel to every person, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. This Commission also includes teaching them to observe all things that Christ has commanded through the organization of the local church.

Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:13-15

**Section 16 – Of The Grace Of Giving.**

 We believe that giving is one of the fundamentals of the faith. As good stewards, we recognize God’s ownership over all. The first essential is the giving of one’s self to the Lord. The area of God’s ownership includes our time, talents, and treasures. Though stewardship is not restricted to just giving of money, our giving ought not to be by coercion, compulsion, nor manipulation, but willingly, cheerfully, and sacrificially.

 We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to financially support his local church. We believe that God has established the tithe (ten percent of income) as a basis for giving, but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of his tithe or offering once the gift has been made.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30; Proverbs 3:9-10; Malachi 3:10; Matthew 23:23, 25:14-30; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Corinthians 16:2;

2 Corinthians 8:3, 5, 7, 11-12, 19, 9:6-8; Galatians 6:6; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17

**Section 17 – Of Separation.**

 We believe that believers should maintain a godly testimony and live in such a way that their lives do not bring reproach upon their Savior. We stand against any and all worldly philosophies that seek to destroy or undermine the truth of Biblical Christianity. Believers should consider, with the leading of the Holy Spirit, their personal appearance.

Romans 12:1-2, 14:13; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11

**Section 18 – Of Human Sexuality.**

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's properly determined gender by surgery or appearance.

Genesis 2:24, 19:5, 13, 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1: 26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1, 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4

 We believe that the term "marriage" has only one, legitimate meaning, and that is marriage sanctioned by God, which joins one man and one woman in a single, covenantal union, as delineated by Scripture. Marriage ceremonies performed in any facility owned, leased, or rented by this church will only be those ceremonies sanctioned by God, joining one man with one woman as those genders were properly determined at birth.

Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:22-23

**Section 19 – Of Family Relationships.**

We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (Pastors and Deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for ordination by the church.

Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:8-15, 3:4-5, 12

 We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are an heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction.

Genesis 1:26-28; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalms 127:3-5; Proverbs 19:18, 22:15, 23:13-14;

Mark 10:6-12; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33, 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7

**Section 20 – Of Divorce And Remarriage.**

We believe that God disapproves of and hates divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery except on the grounds of fornication.

Malachi 2:14-17; Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 7:1-3

**Section 21 – Of The Sanctity Of Life.**

 **(A) Of Abortion.**

We believe that human life begins at conception and that an unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the taking of that life. In extreme and very rare situations such as the life of the mother, an individual could be faced with no other alternative. All possible options should be considered as much better than aborting the child.

Job 3:16; Psalms 51:5, 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24, 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5, 20:15-18; Luke 1:44

 **(B) Of Euthanasia.**

We believe that the direct taking of a human life is wrong. Life is a gift from God and must be respected from conception until death. As with abortion, in only extreme and rare situations and considering the medically expected outcome should the removal of life supporting procedures be discussed and carried out.

Exodus 20:13, 23:7; Matthew 5:21; Acts 17:28

**Section 22 – Of Love.**

We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions.

Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35;

Romans 12:9-10, 17-21, 13:8-10; Philippians 2:2-4; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 John 3:17-18

**Section 23 – Of Lawsuits Between Believers.**

We believe the Bible greatly discourages Christians from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe that Christians possess all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members.

1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31-32

**Article IV. 02 – Summary Statement.**

This Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We believe that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teachings of the Bible. All teachings presented in the church shall be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith.

**Article IV. 03 – Church Covenant.**

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

 We engage therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this Church, in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to give it a sacred pre-eminence over all institutions of human origin; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

 We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the truth of God’s Word; to seek the salvation of our families, acquaintances, and all others; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid gossip, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the abuse of drugs and intoxicating drink; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

 We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rule of our Savior to secure it without delay.