

AMENDED AND RESTATED BY-LAWS

AUBURN CHRISTIAN CHURCH

I. Preamble:

We, the members of the Auburn Christian Church, recognizing our privilege by God's grace to be members of the body of Christ, do hereby establish these By-Laws to be the working plan of our local assembly.

II. Name:

The name of this organization shall be called the "Auburn Christian Church," hereby referred to as the Church, or ACC.

III. Affiliation:

This Church, voluntarily and of its own right, free will, and accord is independent and nondenominational.

IV. People:

A. The Lord - Jesus Christ is the undisputed and supreme Head of the Church. All members of the Church should submit to Him as Lord and Savior of their lives. With that in mind, all Church decisions should be prayerfully made, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in accordance with the Word of God, to the glory of God the Father and Jesus the Son.

B. The Board:

1. Composition – The Board will be comprised of voting members (Elders), and non-voting members (Diaconate, Staff).
2. Duties – The Board will be the primary policy and decision-making board within the Church. The Elders shall have regular meetings to seek the Lord's guidance for the Church and to make administrative decisions. The Board representative for each committee or the Pastor shall bring before the Board any requests or recommendations from the committees of the Church. The Board shall then make decisions by consensus in a prayerful spirit.

C. The Elders - Recognizing the authority of God's Word, this Church shall select a group of men to serve as Elders (for legal purposes, the Elders are also called the Board of Directors) as overseers to shepherd, guide, protect, and lead the congregation as a whole. They shall do so as servants of Christ and shall serve as those who will give an account to their Lord (Hebrews 13:17).

1. Number: Not to exceed eight (8) elected members, three (3) of which will be Trustees, and the Senior Pastor, for a total of 9 members.

2. Term: Two years, with half the membership being elected at the annual congregational meeting, not to exceed three (3) consecutive terms.
3. Qualifications of Elders: With God's Word as our authority on all matters of faith and practice, Elders shall be selected using the Biblical qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
4. Duties:
 - a. Spiritual - In cooperation with the Pastor, the Elders shall serve as shepherds of the flock. They shall provide spiritual leadership and pastoral care, promote Church unity, and protect the Church from false teaching.
 - b. Supervisory - On the congregation's behalf, the Elders as a group shall serve as an overseeing board for the Pastor in all matters of employment and compensation. They shall delegate to the Pastor the role of daily supervision of all other pastoral staff and Church personnel.
5. Elder Offices: All offices shall be elected by the Elders and consist of the following:
 - a. Chairman – The chairman shall schedule regular meetings and offer basic spiritual leadership to the elders. He shall oversee the regular business portion of the meeting and offer administrative leadership to the elders.
 - b. Secretary – The secretary shall keep minutes of the meeting for Church records.
6. Selection of Elders: At the time of the annual election of officers (refer to section V. below); the Elders shall submit a list of names to serve as Elders for the coming year to be voted upon by the congregation.

D. The Trustees:

1. Duties – The Trustees shall act as the legal agents of the Church in all external business matters Pursuant to §21 of the Revised Statutes of Nebraska. The trustees shall hold legal title to all Church property and handle all business transactions related thereto, and perform such duties as are required by the laws of the State of Nebraska.
2. Membership – The trustees will be selected from the Eldership.

E. The Senior Pastor - Recognizing that God calls some men from within the body of Christ to serve as a vocational shepherd of a local flock; we shall seek to always have one serve as the Senior Pastor of the congregation.

1. Qualifications: With God's Word as our authority on all matters of faith and practice, the Pastor shall be selected using the Biblical qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The Senior Pastor shall serve on the board (non-elected member) as an Elder of the Church.

2. Duties: In addition to being an Elder, he shall also be responsible for overseeing and leading the daily operations of the Church. The Senior Pastor shall be the primary teacher of the Church through weekly preaching and shall be the spiritual leader of the Church through prayer and pastoral care. While serving as Senior Pastor to the congregation, he shall be accountable to the Eldership as a group and shall submit a monthly written report to the Eldership.
3. Staff Covenant Terms: The Senior Pastor shall serve in this roll indefinitely as long as the relationship is mutually satisfactory. Either party (the Senior Pastor or the Eldership) should give not less than sixty days' notice when the relationship is to be dissolved. However, this may be negotiated, if agreeable by both parties. All arrangements between the Senior Pastor and the Church shall be mutually agreed upon and shall be made known to all members. At the time a new Senior Pastor is called, a written statement should be prepared by the Eldership setting forth such details of the call as responsibility for moving expenses, and reporting date. In addition, the statement should cover such items as the compensation package, vacation time, conventions, youth camps and conferences, education opportunities, sabbaticals, and time for conducting revivals outside of the local Church. A copy of these statements should be made part of the Church records, and a copy should be delivered to the Senior Pastor.
 - a. There are three (3) primary reasons a member of the Professional Staff might be terminated by the Elders.
 - i. **MORAL or CHARACTER FAILURE** - In the event a member of the professional staff fails to maintain the basic Christian integrity essential for spiritual leadership, according to scripture, every effort will be made to restore the fallen brother spiritually. However, **SWIFT** action will be taken to remove the staff member from leadership for the sake of the church and her witness. Character related issues which could result in immediate termination include, but are not limited to the following:
 1. Failure to report to work or notice of absence,
 2. Breach of confidentiality (The nature of our work involves many sensitive areas relative to both members and non-members of ACC. If an employee is found to have improperly disclosed information, termination could result.),
 3. Theft (In the event an employee mishandles funds entrusted to him or her, termination may result and the church may pursue prosecution.),
 4. Insubordination (Including negligence or refusal to carry out instructions.),
 5. Failure to honor and comply with the staff covenant.
 - ii. **DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES** - The Restoration Movement has a long tradition of tolerating differences of opinion in many areas of Christian

doctrine, “in non-essentials freedom”. However, in the event that a staff member cannot support a doctrine deemed essential by the local Eldership, or in the event that a staff member feels compelled to propagate a doctrine that the Elders feel is dangerous or divisive, a **PROCESS** will begin which could lead to the staff member’s dismissal. This process will proceed as follows.

1. Actual positions will be clarified. (Listening),
2. A thorough and prayerful re-study of scripture, our final authority and only rule for faith and practice; will be conducted together by all parties.
3. The Elders shall then determine on the basis of THEIR perception of the danger or divisiveness of the issue, whether a compromise in understanding or practice is possible.
4. If the Elders conclude that such a compromise is not possible, the staff member will be encouraged to seek another place of service or possibly be dismissed immediately according to the terms described above.

iii. **PROLONGED MINISTRY INEFFECTIVENESS**- We are committed to success and to helping each member of our staff be successful. In the event that the church or ministry of the church under the leadership of a staff member seems to be perpetually floundering and falling short of its objectives, the Senior Pastor and/or the Elders will conduct an evaluation and develop recommendations. Every effort will be made to help each staff member acquire the understanding, education, experience, and skills needed to be successful. However, if after an extended period of time the Senior Pastor and/or Elders feels that a particular staff member is incapable or unwilling to make the changes or develop the abilities critical for ministry success, he may be dismissed according to the terms stated above.

- b. As servants of Christ, our desire is to minister to our employees and reconcile problem areas wherever possible, however the church reserves the right in its discretion to terminate immediately any employee whose conduct threatens to seriously compromise the morale of other employees or the reputation of the church.

F. The Associate Pastor - The Church may call a man to serve as an Associate Pastor, responsible to the Senior Pastor.

1. **Qualifications:** With God’s Word as our authority on all matters of faith and practice, the Associate Pastor shall be selected using the Biblical qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The Associate Pastor shall serve on the board (non-voting member) as an Elder of the Church.
2. **Relationship to the Elders:** While the Associate Pastor must meet the qualifications to be selected as an elder, he will not be considered an Elder of the Church.

However, he will be a non-voting member of the Board, and he shall attend Board meetings to give and receive counsel.

3. **Duties:** The Associate Pastor shall report directly to the Senior Pastor as his immediate supervisor, and will be responsible for assisting in overseeing and leading the daily operations of the Church. The Associate Pastor shall be the primary coordinator and leader of the youth programs. While serving as Associate Pastor he shall be accountable to the Eldership as a group and shall submit a monthly written report to the Eldership.
4. **Staff Covenant Terms:** The Associate Pastor shall serve in this roll indefinitely as long as the relationship is mutually satisfactory. Either party (the Associate Pastor or the Eldership) should give not less than sixty days' notice when the relationship is to be dissolved. However, this may be negotiated, if agreeable by both parties. All arrangements between the Associate Pastor and the Church shall be mutually agreed upon and shall be made known to all members. At the time a new Associate Pastor is called, a written statement should be prepared by the Eldership setting forth such details of the call as responsibility for moving expenses, and reporting date. In addition, the statement should cover such items as the compensation package, vacation time, conventions, youth camps and conferences, education opportunities, sabbaticals, and time for conducting revivals outside of the local Church. A copy of these statements should be made part of the Church records, and a copy should be delivered to the Associate Pastor.
 - a. There are three (3) primary reasons a member of the Professional Staff might be terminated by the Elders.
 - i. **MORAL or CHARACTER FAILURE** - In the event a member of the professional staff fails to maintain the basic Christian integrity essential for spiritual leadership, according to scripture, every effort will be made to restore the fallen brother spiritually. However, **SWIFT** action will be taken to remove the staff member from leadership for the sake of the church and her witness. Character related issues which could result in immediate termination include, but are not limited to the following:
 1. Failure to report to work or notice of absence,
 2. Breach of confidentiality (The nature of our work involves many sensitive areas relative to both members and non-members of ACC. If an employee is found to have improperly disclosed information, termination could result.),
 3. Theft (In the event an employee mishandles funds entrusted to him or her, termination may result and the church may pursue prosecution.),
 4. Insubordination (Including negligence or refusal to carry out instructions.),
 5. Failure to honor and comply with the staff covenant

ii. **DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES** - The Restoration Movement has a long tradition of tolerating differences of opinion in many areas of Christian doctrine, “in non-essentials freedom”. However, in the event that a staff member cannot support a doctrine deemed essential by the local Eldership, or in the event that a staff member feels compelled to propagate a doctrine that the Elders feel is dangerous or divisive, a **PROCESS** will begin which could lead to the staff member’s dismissal. This process will proceed as follows.

1. Actual positions will be clarified. (Listening),
2. A thorough and prayerful re-study of scripture, our final authority and only rule for faith and practice; will be conducted together by all parties.
3. The Elders shall then determine on the basis of THEIR perception of the danger or divisiveness of the issue, whether a compromise in understanding or practice is possible.
4. If the Elders conclude that such a compromise is not possible, the staff member will be encouraged to seek another place of service or possibly be dismissed immediately according to the terms described above.

iii. **PROLONGED MINISTRY INEFFECTIVENESS**- We are committed to success and to helping each member of our staff be successful. In the event that the church or ministry of the church under the leadership of a staff member seems to be perpetually floundering and falling short of its objectives, the Senior Pastor and/or the Elders will conduct an evaluation and develop recommendations. Every effort will be made to help each staff member acquire the understanding, education, experience, and skills needed to be successful. However, if after an extended period of time the Senior Pastor and/or Elders feels that a particular staff member is incapable or unwilling to make the changes or develop the abilities critical for ministry success, he may be dismissed according to the terms stated above.

c. As servants of Christ, our desire is to minister to our employees and reconcile problem areas wherever possible, however the church reserves the right in its discretion to terminate immediately any employee whose conduct threatens to seriously compromise the morale of other employees or the reputation of the church.

G. The Diaconate (Deacons and Deaconesses):

1. Number: Not to exceed twenty five.
2. Term: One year, not to exceed 3 consecutive years.

3. Qualifications: With God's Word as our authority on all matters of faith and practice, this Church shall select individuals to serve as the Diaconate using the Biblical qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
4. Duties: In cooperation with the committees, members of the Diaconate shall promote the growth and welfare of the Church and shall assist in the following activities: greeting and ushering the worshipers, distributing the Lord's Supper and receiving the offering, visitation projects, physical preparation of the candidates for baptism, giving counsel and serving in the business affairs of the Church, serving on at least one regular committee of the Church (as discussed below), and performing such other duties as may be assigned by the Elders.

H. The Congregation:

1. Candidacy for Membership:
 - a. Any person may present themselves as a candidate for membership at any worship service.
 - b. Prior to being officially received into membership, the candidate for membership must meet with the Senior Pastor, or any number of the Elders, as a means to get to know the candidate and determine, insofar as possible, satisfactory Christian experience. Satisfactory Christian experience as defined by the New Testament is:
 - i. The belief that Jesus is the Christ, the only begotten Son of the living God (John 1:14, 1 John 4:1-3).
 - ii. A decision to turn from sin to an active obedience to the commands of God recorded in the New Testament (Acts 2:38, 17:30).
 - iii. A verbal confession of belief that Jesus is the Christ, the only begotten Son of the living God, before adult witnesses (Roman 10:9-10).
 - iv. Baptism by immersion in water in obedience to Christ (Acts 2:38).
 - c. Candidates who meet approval for membership may be officially introduced and received at any worship service.
2. Constitution of Membership: The membership of the Church shall be consist of the following:
 - a. Those who are presently members of the congregation.
 - b. Those that unite with the congregation by a public confession of repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, giving expression to their repentance and faith through baptism by immersion.
 - c. Those who unite with the congregation by transfer of membership from another denomination of like faith and order, as determined by the Elders.

- d. Those who are called by the Church to serve as pastoral staff shall be members upon their acceptance of the call.
3. Classification of Membership:
 - a. Active Members – Active members are those members who regularly and consistently attend the regularly scheduled worship services, fellowships, ministries, and other activities of the Church.
 - b. Inactive Members – Inactive members are those members who do not fulfill the requirements of active members for any given six-month period. Members are not considered to be inactive due to extended illness of themselves or an immediate family member, military duty, school, mission trips, vacations, temporary duty assignments by their employer, or other just cause.
 - c. Determination of Membership Classification
 - i. The final authority and responsibility for determining membership classification rests with the Elders.
 - ii. The Elders and Diaconate shall review and update the church membership roll quarterly, maintaining a current list of active and inactive members.
4. Termination of Membership: A member shall be removed from the church rolls upon the following conditions:
 - a. Death of the member
 - b. Personal request of the member
 - c. Notification of membership in another church
 - d. Evidence of membership or active involvement in another church
 - e. Permanent move out of the local area
 - f. In the case of items d. and e. above, this Church will contact the member in question after six months' absence to determine his/her intentions regarding membership. If no response is received within one month, the member in question shall be removed from the membership roll.
5. Membership Covenants - As a member committed to pursuing the vision and mission of Auburn Christian Church before God and with God's people, I make these covenants:
 - a. I will be faithful to protect the church's unity by my personal practice of Matthew 18 and submission to the biblical shepherding of the church's leadership (Heb13:17).
 - b. I will be faithful to participate in corporate worship (Heb 10:24-25).

- c. I will be faithful to pursue biblical community through the personal accountability and mutual ministry with the congregation (Acts 2:42).
- d. I will be faithful to honor God and support the mission of His church through my gifts and giving (1 Peter 4:10 & Proverbs 3:9-10).
- e. I will be faithful in my personal witness for Christ and His church by practicing both lifestyle and team evangelism (Matt 5:16).

V. Congregational Meetings and Voting:

A. Types of Meetings

1. Announcement of Officers: Two (2) weeks prior to a scheduled meeting.
2. Annual Financial and Business Meeting: A Sunday in January.
3. Special Meetings: Business meetings of the Church may be transacted in conjunction with any regular Sunday morning worship service or at a called meeting of the congregation provided:
 - a. Notice has been given at least two consecutive Sunday mornings preceding the congregational meeting. This notice should state the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.
 - b. Minutes of the congregational meeting will be available following their review and approval at the next scheduled board meeting.

B. Voting for the Congregational Election of Officers - In an effort to promote prayerful consideration of candidates and ensure privacy, the following procedure shall be used for the Congregational Election of Officers:

1. The Nominations Committee shall prepare a ballot and deliver it to the members of the congregation two (2) Sundays prior to the congregational meeting.
2. Ballots will be cast and tallied at the congregational meeting.
3. Binding decisions shall be made by majority vote of those active members present and voting.
4. Absentee ballots will be made available only by approval of the Eldership.

C. Voting at Other Meetings:

1. Voting privileges shall be accorded to all active members who are 18 years of age and older.
2. Binding decisions shall be made by majority vote of those active members present and voting.

VI. Other Church Officers:

A. Church Treasurer

1. Number: As specified by the Eldership.
2. Term: One year with eligibility for re-election, but not to exceed three consecutive terms.
3. Qualifications: Shall have been an active member of the Church for at least one year.
4. Duties - To perform or oversee the following:
 - a. Shall receive, safeguard, and pay out church funds
 - b. Shall deposit all Church money in the bank and keep records of all deposits.
 - c. Shall give a report to the Elders each month and submit accounts to audit each year.
 - d. Shall pay budgeted items when due and money is available; all other items shall be paid on order of the Board.

VII. Committees – Committees are normally established by the board at the first board meeting of each year.

1. A committee will be comprised of:
 - a. A minimum of one Elder
 - b. One or more deacons
 - c. Congregational members or associates
2. The scope of the committee will be defined by the board, and regular reports will be provided by the committee to the board.
3. The general committees will be (1) Worship, (2) Church Growth, (3) Missions, (4) Building and Grounds, (5) Youth, and (6) Nursery. These committees and any additional committees are created or disbanded as identified by the board.

VIII. Discipline:

A. Purpose:

Discipline is an exercise of scriptural authority for which the church is responsible (Matthew 16:19; 18:15-20; Luke 17:3; John 20:23; Acts 16:4; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 5:20; 2 Timothy 4:2; Hebrews 13:17).

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to (1) glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (I Corinthians 5:6), (2) to edify believers by deterring sin (I Timothy 5:20), and (3) to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1). It is to be redemptive in nature as well as corrective. Any member of the assembly is subject to discipline on the basis of unscriptural conduct or doctrinal departure, up to and including excommunication (expulsion), as determined in the sole discretion of the Eldership.

B. Process:

The membership will follow the disciplinary procedure set forth in Matthew 18:15-20, and I Corinthians 5:1-13.

1. It is the duty of any member of this Church who has knowledge of an individual's misconduct to warn and correct the individual in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration.
2. If the individual does not heed this warning, then the warning member shall again go to the individual, seeking their repentance, but accompanied by one or two individuals who shall confirm that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur and/or that the individual has been appropriately confronted and has refused to repent.
3. If the individual still refuses to heed this warning, then it shall be brought to the attention of the Eldership. If the Eldership determines after thorough investigation in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent scripture, including (Matthew 18:15-18, I Timothy 5:19 and Titus 3:10) that there is corroborating evidence that the individual has sinned or is continuing to sin, that they have been appropriately confronted, and that they have refused to repent, then the Eldership shall inform the church and the congregation of this matter at a special congregational meeting in order that the church may call the individual to repentance with an attitude of love and humility following the council of the Lord prescribed in (Matthew 7:1-5). If the individual demonstrates repentance, then notice to that effect may be given at a regularly scheduled worship service.
4. If, however, the individual does not repent in response to the church in its collective call to repentance, then they shall be dismissed from the fellowship and/or membership of the church and congregation.
5. If the individual, after such dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement before the Eldership then they shall be publicly restored to the fellowship and/or membership of the church and congregation. Notwithstanding the above, the Eldership in the exercise of their discretion may proceed directly to the third stage of Church discipline (i.e. the informing of the congregation at a regularly scheduled worship service in order that the church may call the individual to repentance) and then to the fourth stage of church discipline (i.e. the dismissal from the fellowship and/or membership of the church) when one or more of the following have occurred.

- a. Where the transgression and the refusal to repent have been public (openly) and to the offense of the whole church (I Corinthians 5:1-5), or
- b. Where the first and second stages of church discipline have effectively occurred simultaneously, or
- c. Where the disciplined party has taught or otherwise disseminated doctrine deemed false and erroneous by the Eldership in accord with scripture, then chosen after being warned to disregard the direction and reproof of the Elders (Romans 16:17), or
- d. Where the disciplined party has been warned once by the Elders, to cease from factious and divisive conduct and has chosen to disregard that warning (Titus 3:10-11)

The members of this Church agree that there shall be no appeal to any secular Court of Law because of their dismissal or because of public statements made to the congregation at the third and fourth stages of church discipline.

C. No Trespassing

Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of the Elders, a member, non-member regular attendee, or other individual may be notified that he or she is not to be present upon church premises for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety and well-being of others on church premises. Such required absence may need not be concurrent with church discipline of that person.

IX. Marriage and Sexuality:

We believe that term “marriage” has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:1-11; Eph. 5:22-33).

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:23-25; Ps. 127:3-5; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 7:1-5, 10).

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, or any attempt to change one’s gender, or disagreement with one’s biological gender, is sinful and offensive to God (Lev. 18:22-23; Deut. 22:25; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the Church.

X. Miscellaneous Provisions:

D. Amendments, Additions, Repeals - This Bylaws may be amended, added to, or repealed Pursuant to §21-19, 114 of the Revised Statutes of Nebraska.

Any changes that require approval by the congregation will be done at any scheduled meeting of the congregation, provided the following:

1. All proposed changes have been submitted to the Board in writing for consideration.
2. All proposed changes have been provided to the congregation in writing two (2) weeks prior to being voted on.
3. The congregational meeting shall be announced at least two (2) weeks in advance.
4. A two-thirds majority of the membership present is required for acceptance.

E. Review of The Bylaws - These Bylaws shall be reviewed at least every four (4) years, and needed changes, if any, recommended to the Board for their action and later consideration by the congregation at the next scheduled congregational Meeting.

F. Nullification - When adopted by the congregation, these By-Laws will repeal and make null and void all other By-Laws of this congregation, known or unknown.

G. Adoption - Since these By-Laws are an agreement amongst the membership of the congregation; they must be approved by the congregation in an assembled congregational meeting.

XI. Statement of Faith:

A. God: We believe in the one true God of the Bible, who, though He is one, exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Gen. 1:1, 26; Deut. 6:4; Isa. 44:6; Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19-20; John 10:30; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; 13:14).

1. God the Father is the supreme, sovereign, holy, all-powerful, all-knowing Creator, infinitely glorious in all ways (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 19:1-6; 139:1-18; Isa. 6:1-3; 46:9-10; 64:8; Luke 1:37; Rom. 11:33-36; Eph. 4:6; Rev. 4:8).
2. God the Son is one with God the Father and divine in nature (John 10:30; Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:6; Col. 2:9; Titus 2:13; Heb. 1:3). He is eternal and co-equal with the Father (John 1:1; 8:58; 17:5) and served as the co-Creator of all things (John 1:3; Col. 1:15-17). He was conceived by the Holy Spirit at the incarnation and birthed by the Virgin

Mary (Matt. 1:18). Jesus Christ is God, who became a man, yet never sinned (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15). He voluntarily died on the cross in our place as the payment and propitiation for our sin (Matt. 20:28; Gal. 2:20; 1 John 2:2) and rose from the dead in bodily form (Luke 24:1-12; 1 Cor. 15:3-5). He is now seated at the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19; Heb. 1:3), and will one day return to Earth physically and visibly to gather His people and to judge His enemies in God's own unknown time (Matt. 24:27, 30-31, 36; Mark 13:26-27, 32; Luke 21:27-28; Acts 1:7, 9-11; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; 2 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 19:11-21).

3. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, co-eternal, co-equal, and co-Creator with the Father and the Son (Gen. 1:2, 26; Job 34:14-15; Ps. 104:29-30). He divinely inspired the human authors of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). By means of His power, sinners are convicted (John 16:7-11) and regenerated (John 3:5-6; Titus 3:5). He lives inside of all true followers of Christ (John 14:16-17; Acts 2:38; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6) and serves to convict them of sin and guide them into righteousness (Ps. 143:10; Rom. 8:12-16; Gal. 5:16-17, 22-25); to assist them in knowledge and proclamation of the word of God (John 14:26; 16:13; Matt. 10:19-20); to comfort them (Acts 9:31; Rom. 8:26-27), and to assure them of salvation (Rom. 8:14-16; Gal. 4:6; 1 John 4:13). He brings unity to the body of Christ and imparts spiritual gifts to each believer for service (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-7; Eph. 4:3; Heb. 2:4).

B. Scriptures - We believe that the Bible is made up of the sixty-six (66) books of the Protestant Old and New Testaments. Furthermore, we believe that the Bible is the holy word of God. Because of the divine nature of the Bible it is sufficient for guidance in all matters of life (Ps. 19:7-8; 119:97-105, 160; 2 Pet. 1:3) and is to be our final authority on all matters of faith and church practice (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Pet. 3:16).

C. Salvation - We believe that salvation can only be achieved by the grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealed to us in the Bible (Eph. 2:8-9).

1. Sin – We believe that man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), yet fell in sinful disobedience (Gen. 3). Because of this, all humanity is now sinful and completely unable to achieve God's salvation by his own works or merits (Ps. 14:2-3; Ecc. 7:20; Jer. 17:9; Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:23; 5:12-19; 6:16; 7:5, 21; 8:7-8; Eph. 2:1-4).
2. Conversion – We believe that in order for a person to be saved, God must draw him and convict him of his need of a Savior (John 6:44; 12:32; 16:8-11). Because of that gracious work of God, and in order to be saved, a sinner must repent of sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21).
 - a. Repentance – Repentance is a change of heart and mind that leads to a change of action. In repentance, the sinner turns from the sinful life which is his by nature and asks God's forgiveness (Matt. 4:17; Luke 3:3; 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; 3:19).
 - b. Faith – Saving faith is placing one's trust in, and committing one's entire life to, Jesus Christ. It rests in Jesus Christ and in His finished work of salvation through His death and resurrection alone. When turning from sin in repentance, the sinner turns to Jesus Christ, committing his life to Him as Lord and Savior (John 3:16, 18, 36; Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9).

- c. Regeneration – We believe that regeneration is an act of God effected in conjunction with a sinner’s conversion whereby the Holy Spirit changes the nature of the sinner, thus creating a new spiritual creature (2 Cor. 5:17; Titus 3:5). It is also called the new birth or being “born again” (John 3:3-7).
- d. Components – We believe salvation is both an event and a process; it is present, perpetual, and future. Salvation is comprised of justification, sanctification, and glorification.
 - i. Justification – Justification is God’s instantaneous saving act whereby He declares believers righteous in His sight, granting that they are no longer legally condemned but are at peace with God by faith (Rom. 5:1; 8:1). It is granted on account of the Substitutionary, sacrificial death of Christ (Rom. 3:21-26) and imputes to believers the righteousness of Christ (Rom. 4:4-5; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:26-27; Phil. 3:9).
 - ii. Sanctification – Sanctification is God’s progressive saving act whereby believers cooperate with God as He works to remove sin in their lives, make them holy, and conform them to the image of Christ (Rom. 6:22; 8:29; 12:1; Eph. 5:26; Col. 3:1; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; 1 Pet. 1:14; 1 John 3:3). Sanctification is the inevitable consequence and visible evidence of justification.
 - iii. Glorification – Glorification is God’s final saving act whereby He completes believers’ sanctification, making them perfectly like Christ in heaven (Rom. 8:30; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:4; Heb. 12:23; 1 John 3:2).
- e. Perseverance – We believe that all true followers will persevere in the faith and continue to follow Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives (Matt. 10:22; John 8:31; Col. 1:22-23). While a Christian is still capable of sin and times of rebellion, they will ultimately follow Christ as Lord for the entirety of their life on Earth. Because of the eternal nature of salvation, it cannot be lost, if it was ever truly received (John 6:38-40; 10:27-28; Rom. 8:29-30, 35-39; Eph. 1:13-14; 1 Pet. 1:5).

D. Eternity

1. Heaven – We believe that all true followers of Jesus Christ will spend eternity with Him in Heaven (Matt. 25:21, 23; 25:34; John 14:1-3; Rev. 21-22).
2. Hell – We believe that all who do not turn to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in this life will be condemned to eternal separation from God in Hell (Matt. 25:30, 41; Mark 9:43-48; John 3:18, 36; Rev. 20:1-15).

E. The Church

We believe that a New Testament church is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who have voluntarily associated together to carry out the commands of Christ. The church is God's agency in the world, charged with the task of making disciples of all the nations through the preaching of the gospel (Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8). The New Testament indicates governance by plural local eldership (Acts 15:1-6; 20:17-18; 1 Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1) and a limited congregational rule (Acts 6:3). The ordinances of the church include baptism and the Lord's Supper or communion (Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). A church is responsible for maintaining its own membership through acts of church discipline (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5).

We believe that baptism should be administered only to those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:37-41; 8:37; 16:31-33). We believe the proper mode of baptism is immersion (Matt. 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:38-39).

Lord's Supper or Communion – We believe that the Lord's Supper, which symbolizes the body and the blood of Jesus Christ, should be regularly practiced by the Lord's Church in remembrance and proclamation of His death and Second Coming (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

- F. The sanctity of life** – We believe in the sanctity of life which begins from the moment of conception. We believe there is a Christian alternative to abortion. Instead of terminating the life of the unborn child, the newborn can be placed for adoption by loving Christians. Adoption is a concept authored by God, for all Christian believers have been *adopted* into the family of God. By choosing to give birth to her baby rather than having an abortion, the birth mother spares the life of a child created in the image of God.