

Evangelical Pietist Church Of Chatfield



Striving to know Christ and to make Him known.

In reference to Matthew 28:18-20

3. All teachers, assistants, and supervisors of minor children must be approved by church council.

ARTICLE VII. OF CHURCH SOCIETIES

1. The members of our church enjoy the rights to form, organize, elect, or appoint societies, as approved by the church council, as aid for the proclamation of the gospel, such as young people society, ladies mission society, and athletic ministries, etc.
2. Such societies elect their officers according to their own rules, acknowledging the spiritual and legal supervision of the church through its council.

ARTICLE VIII. OF NOMINATIONS

ALL NOMINATIONS OF CHURCH OFFICERS ARE TO BE MADE BY VOTING MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.

ARTICLE IX. OF COMMITTEES.

ALL STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES ARE APPOINTED BY THE COUNCIL, AND ARE RESPONSIBLE TO THE SAME.

ARTICLE X. OF OFFENCES.

1. Offences by all members not assuming official responsibilities are under the jurisdiction of the Church Council. All other offences are dealt with by a joint meeting of the board of elders and the guiltless council members.
2. All suspected persons shall be dealt with and interviewed as directed in Matthew 18:15-18. If this does not correct the condition then charges must be made in a written form, and the suspected person be summoned to meet with the respective judicatories.
3. Failure on the part of the accused to appear at said meeting for examination, shall not prevent the judicatories from examining the case and rendering a verdict in accord with the information at hand.
4. There are two decrees of punishment permissible, suspension from the Lord's table and excommunication.

ARTICLE XI. OF AMENDMENTS.

THIS CONSTITUTION MAY BE AMENDED OR ALTERED IN ANY ARTICLE BY A TWO-THIRDS VOTE OF THE CONGREGATION AT ANY REGULAR MEETING. THE CONSTITUTION WILL BE REVIEWED AT LEAST ONCE EVERY FIVE YEARS AND AMENDMENTS ARE SUGGESTED BY THE CHURCH COUNCIL AND ELDERS.

CONSTITUTION of the EVANGELICAL PIETIST CHURCH OF CHATFIELD

**3535 Chatfield Center Road
Bloomville, Ohio 44818**



PART I: Church Historical Review

PART II: Articles of Faith

PART III: Church Administration



ADOPTED: July 14, 1901

REVISED: July, 1936

December, 1952

January, 1979

January, 1984

October, 1994

September, 2000

January, 2013

January, 2019

January, 2024

WELCOME

We welcome you into this church, to its sacred fellowship, duties and privileges.

May the great Head of the Church bless you and keep you blameless and enable you to be faithful in all good works.



MISSION STATEMENT

Striving to know Christ and to make Him known.

In Reference to Matthew 28:18-20



EVANGELICAL PIETIST CHURCH OF CHATFIELD

3535 Chatfield Center Road

Bloomville, Ohio 44818

U.S.A.

(419) 988-0204

www.pietistchurch.org

ARTICLE IV. OF THE MINISTRY.

1. THE MINISTRY of this Church shall be vested in the hands of such a brother that is able to meet all requirements of the Word of God, and who is able to furnish best evidences of his Christian character and pastoral ability for his responsible call. 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Pet. 5:2,3.
2. THE PASTOR, or any associate pastor, before nomination, shall have read and given assent to the constitution to the satisfaction of the Church Council and Elders. The Pastor, or any associate pastor, shall be nominated by a two-thirds vote of the Church Council, and be elected by a two-thirds vote of the congregation. Starting salary shall be ratified by the congregational vote to elect the Pastor or any associate pastor.
3. By the virtue of his office, the Pastor, or any associate pastor, shall perform all the duties of the ministry, preach the Word of God, exercise pastoral care, dispense the Holy Sacraments, give himself wholly to the service of Christ, and be a member ex-officio of the Council and all committees without motion or voting privileges.
4. Final agreements concerning time of service, salary, residence, or similar accommodations are made in a written form, and require the signature of both parties, the council and the minister.

ARTICLE V. OF DEACONS AND DEACONESSSES.

1. Deacons and Deaconesses shall be members of the church 21 years of age or older, who have evidenced the committed Christian Life. They shall be appointed by the council and elders with appointments being reviewed annually by council and elders.
1 Tim. 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-4.
2. The deacons are to assist the pastor in ministering to the church through visitation, outreach programs, and any other function where by they might assist in the work of the church.

ARTICLE VI. OF SUNDAY SCHOOL.

1. THE SUNDAY SCHOOL is an incorporated body of the Church and enjoys as such the Administrative and Spiritual care of the same and under the leadership of church council.
2. The Sunday School Board shall consist in addition to the Superintendent, an Assistant, a Secretary, a Treasurer and the Teachers. The following officers of the Sunday School are to be selected from its members: Superintendent and Assistant, Secretary, Treasurer, and elementary teachers and their assistants. They are selected by a consensus of the Sunday School. The teachers and their assistants of the remaining upper classes are to be selected by a consensus of the respective classes. All offices expire at the end of each calendar year.

3. The brethren of the council are elected by the regular annual business meeting of the church for a term of 2 years, 2 members are to be elected on even years and 3 members on odd years. A majority vote is sufficient. Council members may serve three consecutive 2-year terms (6 years) and then be off Council at least one year before being eligible for another term. Vacancies are filled within 30 days by appointment of the remaining council members. It is required that any new council member review the constitution.
4. All council meetings will be called by the President of the council.
5. The officers of the council, such as President and Secretary, are elected by the council members out of their own group.
6. The regular annual business meeting of the church shall be held as near to the end of the year as possible, at the church, at such time as suggested by the council. Notice of the meeting will be given to the congregation at least two weeks prior.
7. THE PRESIDENT shall assume all responsibility over the Church in the absence of the Pastor or the vacancy of that office. He shall take charge, together with the other Council Members, regarding pulpit supplies, when, and for any reason, the Pastor has vacated the same. In the absence of the President, the Secretary shall act as Vice-President assuming all responsibilities of the President.
8. THE FINANCIAL OFFICER shall hold and disburse the church funds, and make a monthly report to the council. The Financial Officer shall submit books whenever called upon by the Council for an audit, and give a treasury report to the Annual Regular Business Meeting.
9. THE SECRETARY shall keep a record of all business transactions at the church meetings, and meetings held by the council. He will also be expected to notify members of any meetings that have been called, to which, by virtue of their offices, they are expected to attend.
10. Since the Council Members take the responsibilities of trustees of this church, they are as such entrusted with such responsibilities as civil laws assigns to this office, being subject in their actions to the congregation.
11. Members of the church council may assist the pastor and the Board of Elders in serving regular Holy Communion.
12. The Sunday School Superintendent and the President or leader of all church societies (See Article VII) will automatically become Honorary Members of the council upon election to their respective offices and without motion or voting privileges.

PREFACE

To the best of our knowledge, under the present condition of our church, we assume it to be our granted obligation to form a Church Discipline together with a Church Constitution; for the prosperity, good and welfare of all concerned therein, as well as for the general good of others. We herewith present a sketch of the origin of our Church (or denomination) as a concise part of our Church history.

Pietism is the name given in the 17th century to the spirit of a group of people, who, being members of the Lutheran Church, were dissatisfied with the cold dogmatism of the majority of its clergy. These people felt the need for a closer, warmer and more personal relationship with God. This deeper walk was to be evidenced by an ascetic life of practical piety and charitable works.

Philipp Jakob Spener, a German Lutheran pastor, was the central figure of 17th century Pietism. In 1670, while chief Pastor in Frankfort, he began holding Bible study and prayer meetings in his home for those who desired to deepen their own spiritual lives. These meetings were called collegia pietatis, from which the name Pietist is derived. In 1675 Pastor Spener wrote "Pia Desideria." This work set forth Spener's ideas on the warmer, deeper Christian life. Pastor Spener died on Feb. 5, 1705.

A pietistic spirit has also been detectable in other movements such as the Methodists, Moravians, and other groups which desire a close personal walk with God.

The Pietist movement was brought to North America by European immigrants who settled mainly in Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio. A Pietist Society was begun in Chatfield Township, Crawford County, Ohio, as early as 1837. This gathering was under the leadership of Father Michael Brose, Father Christopher Klink, Father Frederick Lust and a man named Wagner. Father Brose ministered 36 years. Father Lust, surviving Father Brose, ministered 42 years and died Dec. 10, 1882. In the year Frederick Lust died he said to Israel Lust, "After my ministry, my mantle in this work shall fall upon you."

HISTORY

Rev. Israel Lust, born Dec. 11, 1838, died Nov. 27, 1929, ministered here 40 years.

Rev. John Beal, born June 9, 1857, died July 31, 1940, ministered 41 years.

Rev. Daniel Brose, born Oct. 30, 1849, died Jan. 7, 1943, ministered here 18 years and 18 years at the Martin Luther Church.

From 1931 to 1933 this congregation was without an ordained minister, being served by other preachers and laymen of the congregation.

Jan. 22, 1933 to Nov. 1, 1934 served by Rev. A. M. Froese.

Sept. 29, 1935 to June 26, 1938 served by Rev. O. F. Weissman.

Sept. 1939 to Sept. 1946 served by Rev. H. M. Maurer.

1947 to 1951 served by Rev. W. R. Shisler.

1951 to 1952 served by Rev. Donald Martin.

1952 to 1953 served by Rev. T. W. Bennett.

1953 to 1955 served by Rev. Charles Miller.

1955 to 1962 served by Rev. Lowell Reeder.

1962 to 1970 served by Rev. Rea Book.

1970 to 1975 served by Rev. Robert Ferguson.

1975 to 1977 served by Pastor Silas Beal.

1977 to 1981 served by Rev. Larry Bertsch.

1981 to 1984 served by Rev. Dennis Bone.

1984 to 1994 served by Rev. Lowell Reeder

1994 to 1996 served by Pastor Scott D. Philipp

1996 to 1997 served by Pastor Lyle Beal

1997 to 2000 served by Pastor Scott D. Philipp

2000 to 2003 served by Pastor Ron Ecklebarger

2003 to 2023 served by Pastor Larry Bertsch

2023 to Present served by Pastor Jason DeZurik

Historical sketch by Rev. Israel Lust.

Supplemented by J.W. Beal, 1955

Revised by Rev. Larry Bertsch, 1979

Revised by Rev. Lowell Reeder, 1994

Revised by Elders and Council, 2000 & 2024

4. We discourage all members from becoming or adhere to the doctrine of any organization whose rules are subversive, or antagonistic to the Word of God, or which may lead to sin and folly.
5. Members must be active members in the Evangelical Pietist Church for at least two years before being eligible to serve on the Board of Elders or Church Council.
6. All children of our church members enjoy the spiritual care of the church.
7. All who have made a "Profession of Faith in Christ as their personal Saviour" are welcomed to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion. It is recommended that children wait until they complete catechism to receive communion.
8. Only members 18 years of age or more enjoy voting rights. Any member may attend regular council meetings (except executive sessions).

ARTICLE II. OF THE BOARD OF ELDERS.

1. The board of Elders shall consist of not more than five active male members, 50 years of age or more. They are elected by the congregation for life. Only those who have evidenced a committed Christian life may be considered for nomination. I Timothy 3:1-7 (See Article III for more Scriptural qualifications).
2. Two or more members of the board may assist Pastor in visitation duties, which may include Communion.
3. The Board of Elders shall have the authority to ordain to the ministry any worthy candidate who has met the requirements of (article of the ministry).
4. The Elders shall serve as advisor to council and Pastor, and be represented at all regular council meetings.

ARTICLE III. OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL.

1. THE SPIRITUAL AND SECULAR CARE OF THIS CHURCH IS VESTED IN THE CHURCH COUNCIL, WHICH SHALL CONSIST OF FIVE MEMBERS.
2. Any male member of the church, in good standing, of the age of 25 years and upwards, whose life shows that he has been "Born Again", and whose walk in life indicates that he has severed all ties with worldly attachments ("Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Rom. 12:2), shall be eligible to become a member of the church council. (See 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:6-9; Acts 20:28).

PROPHETS; AND SOME, PASTORS AND TEACHERS; FOR THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS, FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY, FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST.” Eph. 4:11, 12.

THE CHARACTER, QUALIFICATION, AND RIGHTS OF SUCH CHURCH OFFICERS ARE CLEARLY SET FORTH IN OUR HOLY SCRIPTURES. Cf. Acts 6:1-4; 1 Tim. chapters 3, 4, 6. Titus 1:5 etc.

SUCH SUMMARIZED TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES TOGETHER WITH OTHER SCRIPTURAL RULES OF ORDER AND DISCIPLINE, AS CONTAINED IN THE STATUTES OF OUR CHURCH ADMINISTRATION, ARE HEREWITH DECLARED TO HAVE BINDING AUTHORITY ON ALL OUR MEMBERS.

ARTICLE 1. OF MEMBERSHIP.

TRUE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE PIONEERS AND FOUNDERS OF OUR BELOVED CHURCH, THE GREATEST HOSPITALITY SHALL BE OBSERVED TOWARD ALL FRIENDS OR STRANGERS WHO WISH TO WORSHIP WITH US HOLY GOD. AT ALL TIMES SHALL VISITORS BE ENCOURAGED, AND BE ASSURED A HEARTY WELCOME TO ATTEND OUR SERVICES.

BELIEVERS THAT WISH TO UNITE WITH US AS MEMBERS OF OUR CONGREGATION ARE SERVED WITH FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

1. We gladly welcome sincere Christians with their families into our fellowship.
2. Persons desiring to become members will affirm their faith with these vows:
 - A. I believe the Holy Bible to be the Word of God, and that within it alone is revealed the way of salvation through Jesus Christ and do take this Word, Old Testament and New as guide in faith and conduct.
 - B. I have received Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and Lord and do now in the company of these witnesses confess Him as Lord.
 - C. I will endeavor to know both the privilege and responsibility as a member of the Evangelical Pietist Church. I will serve Christ and His Church as called upon by my fellow Christians that I may grow in the Christian life, and advance the cause of Christ in our church, community and world.
 - D. I will contribute to the support of the work of Christ and His church as the Lord provides finances for my stewardship.
3. All letters of transfer and membership applications must be considered and acted upon by the Church Council; and after approval by that body, shall be reported to the congregation.

PART TWO

ARTICLES OF FAITH

INTRODUCTION: IN PRESENTING OUR ARTICLES OF FAITH WHICH WE BELIEVE TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WORD OF GOD, WE CONSIDER IT NECESSARY TO STATE THE PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDED THE FORMATION OF THE PLAN.

WE WERE FULLY AWARE OF OUR IMPERFECTION TO STATE ALL TRUTH CONCERNING HOLY GOD AND HIS SALVATION THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. Cf. 1. Cor. 13:12: “Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

WE ARE CONVINCED THAT ALL TRUTH, ESSENTIAL TO OUR SALVATION, IS PLAINLY DECLARED IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE WHICH ARE ABLE TO MAKE US WISE THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST. 1 Tim. 3:15-17. THIS WORD OF GOD IS HELD BY US AS THE BINDING AUTHORITY IN ALL MATTERS PERTAINING TO FAITH.

OUR ARTICLES OF FAITH, THEREFORE, ARE A CONCISE SYSTEMATIC REPRODUCTION OF CERTAIN BIBLE TEACHINGS. PRESENTING THEM, WE WISH TO UNDERSCORE SUCH SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINES THAT WILL HELP US:

1. to prevent disregard of such true children of God that may adhere to minor differences in matters pertaining to belief. Rom. 14:1
 2. to acknowledge the unity of all true members of the Body of Christ. 1 Cor. 12:12-27
 3. to refuse fellowship with adherents of such doctrines that interpret or neglect the Word of God with craftiness. Eph. 4:14
- THUS HELP US GOD.

ARTICLE 1: OF GOD, AND OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

1. WE BELIEVE IN THE UNITY OF THE GODHEAD: IN GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON, AND GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT.

- (a) “There is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things.” 1 Cor. 8:6
- (b) “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John 1:1-14
- (c) “God is Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” John 4:24. “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” 1 John 5:7.

2. WE BELIEVE IN THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST (a); HIS VIRGIN BIRTH (b); HIS SACRIFICIAL DEATH AND BLOOD ATONEMENT (c); HIS BODILY RESURRECTION (d); HIS PERSONAL, BODILY, AND IMMEDIATE RETURN (e).

- (a) "But unto the Son he (i.e. GOD) saith, Thy throne, oh God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." Heb. 1:8 (Here even Holy God is calling our Lord Jesus Christ "GOD", what right has man to say he is not God, denying His deity? Cf. also Jude 25; 1 Tim. 2:3; Rom. 9:5.
- (b) "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." Matt. 1:18. Cf. verses 19-23; Isa. 7:14; etc.
- (c) "In whom (i.e. Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Eph. 1:7; Cf. Heb. 2:9; Eph. 5:2.
- (d) "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." Luke 24:39.
- (e) "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." Acts 1:11 Rev. 1:7 (Notice: No "Spirit"-Christ was pierced.) Cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18, the blessed Hope.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT SUCH TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES ARE ADEQUATELY SET FORTH IN THE STATEMENTS OF THE APOSTLE'S CREED:

"I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH AND IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, OUR LORD; WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY; SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DEAD AND BURIED; HE DESCENDED INTO HELL: THE THIRD DAY HE AROSE FROM THE DEAD; HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN AND SITTETH AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY; FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD. I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST: IN THE HOLY (CHRISTIAN) CHURCH; THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS; THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS; THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING."

ARTICLE II. OF HOLY SCRIPTURES, AND OF SONSHIP.

1. WE BELIEVE THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, i.e. THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT, TO BE THE TRUE WORD OF GOD, SETTING FORTH THE ONLY WAY OF OUR SALVATION.

AT THE CLOSE OF SUCH INSTRUCTIONAL COURSE THE SCHOLARS SHALL BE DISMISSED WITH A SOLEMN REQUEST OF BLESSINGS ASKING HOLY GOD TO CONFIRM THE LEARNED TRUTH UNTO ALL OF THEM (b).

- (a) "Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not." Proverbs 8:32,33. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." Isaiah 54:13.
- (b) "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." Psalms 119:9.

Article XIV. OF MARRIAGE.

WE HUMBLY BELIEVE THAT MARRIAGE IS A HOLY COVENANT BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN ORDAINED AND BLESSED BY GOD.

"For this reason a man will leave his Father and Mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one Flesh." Gen. 2:24 See also Mat. 19:4-6, Eph. 5:31-33

Article XV. OF THE SANCTITY OF LIFE.

WE BELIEVE THAT LIFE BEGINS AT CONCEPTION AND ENDS NATURALLY.

- (a) "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made..... My frame was not hidden from you when I was made..... your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them became to be." Psalms 139:13-16
- (b) "When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb..... As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy." Luke 1:41-44
- (c) "I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive forever and ever! And I hold keys of death and Hades." Revelation 1:18 NIV

PART THREE

CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

PREAMBLE. IN PRESENTING OUR FORM OF CHURCH ADMINISTRATION, WE DEFINITELY EXPRESS OUR CONVICTION THAT ALL POWER IN THE CHURCH BELONGS TO OUR BLESSED LORD. IT PLEASURES OUR LORD, HOWEVER, TO EXECUTE HIS POWER THROUGH SPIRIT-ENDUED MEN. "HE GAVE SOME, APOSTLES, AND SOME,

ARTICLE XI. OF HOLY COMMUNION.

WE BELIEVE THE HOLY SUPPER TO BE A MEMORIAL FEAST FOR TRUE BELIEVERS, PROCLAIMING THE LORD'S DEATH UNTIL HE COMES (a) and EXPRESSING THE COMMUNION OF THE BLOOD AND OF THE BODY OF CHRIST (b) and AN EXHORTATION TO EVERY COMMUNICANT TO PRACTICE DEATH UNTO SELF (c); and BREAD AND WINE (fruit of the vine) BEING CERTAIN TOKENS OF THE ALL SUFFICIENT SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST, CONFIRMING UNTO BELIEVERS THAT CHRIST'S BODY WAS BROKEN FOR THEM, AND HIS BLOOD SHED FOR THEM, AS CERTAINLY AS BREAD AND WINE (fruit of the vine) ARE COMMUNICATED UNTO THEM (d).

- (a) "Do this in remembrance of me." 1 Cor. 11:24. "For as often as ye eat of this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death.
- (b) Lord's death till he come." 1 Cor. 11:26. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" 1 Cor. 10:16.
- (c) "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." 1 Cor. 11:28-31.
- (d) See 1 Cor. 11:24, 25. Notice the words: FOR YOU.

ARTICLE XII. OF DEDICATION.

WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS TO TRAIN THEIR CHILDREN UP IN THE ADMONITION AND INSTRUCTION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH (Deut. 6:4-9; Eph. 6:4). WE BELIEVE IT IS FITTING FOR PARENTS TO INDICATE THIS COMMITMENT PUBLICLY IN A SERVICE OF DEDICATION (1 Sam. 1:21-27; Luke 2:21-24). DEDICATION, LIKE BAPTISM, DOES NOT INDICATE OR CONVEY SALVATION, RATHER, AS WE TRUST GOD'S PROMISES, WE PROMISE TO DO OUR BEST AS PARENTS TO SEE THAT OUR CHILDREN RECEIVE CHRIST AS THEIR PERSONAL SAVIOR. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT IT IS THE CONGREGATION'S RESPONSIBILITY TO SUPPORT SUCH PARENTS IN THE NURTURE OF THEIR CHILDREN IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. (For further Scripture on the responsibility of training your children in the Lord see Article XIII).

ARTICLE XIII. OF CATECHISM.

WE BELIEVE THAT OUR CHILDREN - on or about their 12th year - SHOULD RECEIVE A SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY TO DECIDE FOR CHRIST, AND TO ACCEPT HIM AS THEIR PERSONAL SAVIOR. WE, THEREFORE, INSIST THAT THEY RECEIVE ADEQUATE INSTRUCTION IN FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES OF SALVATION (a);

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." 1. Thess. 2:13. Cf. also 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21.

2. WE BELIEVE THAT WITHOUT FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS TAUGHT BY THE HOLY SCRIPTURES NO ONE CAN BE TRULY CALLED A CHILD OF GOD.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. 1:16. "And he (i.e. God) commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he (i.e. Christ) which was ordained of God to be the Judge of the quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Acts 10:42, 43. Cf. Acts 13:38, 39; 2 Cor. 11:4.

ARTICLE III. OF FALL OF MAN, AND OF REDEMPTION THROUGH CHRIST.

1. WE BELIEVE THAT ALL MEN HAVE FALLEN INTO SIN AND ALL HAVE COME SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD (a); and THAT MEN ARE REDEEMED BY THE SACRIFICIAL DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST ONLY (b); and ONLY THOSE THAT RECEIVE SUCH GIFT OF GOD BY LIVING FAITH HAVE THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION AS GRANTED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT (c).

- (a) For there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Rom. 3:22-24.
- (b) "In whom (i.e. Christ) we have the redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Eph. 1:7.
- (c) "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Rom. 8:16.

ARTICLE IV. OF SANCTIFICATION, AND OF SEALING OF BELIEVERS.

WE BELIEVE THAT EVERY TRUE BELIEVER - UPON ACCEPTING THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS HIS PERSONAL SAVIOUR - RECEIVES THE HOLY SPIRIT INDWELLING IN HIM (a); and IS SO BAPTIZED BY THAT SPIRIT INTO ONE BODY, WHICH IS THE INVISIBLE CHURCH (b); and IS THEREBY SEALED UNTO THE DAY OF REDEMPTION (c); and SANCTIFICATION, THUS BEGUN, REMAINS A CONTINUAL PROCESS DURING THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER (d).

- (a) "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father." Gal. 4:6. "No man can say that

Jesus is the Lord, but IN the Holy Ghost.” 1 Cor. 12:3. (see also Rom. 8:9, Gal. 3:1-2).

- (b) “By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” 1 Cor.12:13.
- (c) “In whom (i.e. Christ) ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation: in whom having believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His Glory.” Eph. 1:13-14.
- (d) “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend for that which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” Phil. 3:12. Cf. also 1 John 3:2.

ARTICLE V. OF VICTORY, AND OF GOOD WORKS.

WE BELIEVE THAT TRUE BELIEVERS ARE EMPOWERED BY THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT TO LIVE A VICTORIOUS LIFE CONFORMABLE UNTO THE HOLY WILL OF GOD, AND TO DO GOD HONORING (i.e. good) WORKS BY EXERCISING FAITH.

“For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:4. See also 1 Cor. 2:14; etc.

“It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Phil. 2:13; Cf. Phil. 4:13; 2 Cor. 3:5; Eph. 2:10.

ARTICLE VI. OF PERFECTION.

WE HUMBLY BELIEVE AND FIX OUR HOPE UPON WHAT HOLY SCRIPTURES TEACH US CONCERNING THE TWO NATURES INFLUENCING TRUE BELIEVERS, WHICH ARE ANTAGONISTIC TO EACH OTHER AND WILL REMAIN SO THROUGH LIFETIME (a); and CONCERNING THE FUTURE PERFECTION, GLORY, AND BLISS THAT AWAITS ALL TRUE BELIEVERS AT THE EXPECTED RETURN OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (b).

- (a) “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” John 3:6.
“The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other.” Gal. 5:17; etc.
- (b) “Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” 1 John 3:2; etc.

ARTICLE VII. OF FUTURE REWARDS

WE BELIEVE THAT ALL TRUE BELIEVERS HAVE TO APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGEMENT SEAT OF CHRIST IN ORDER TO RECEIVE

REWARDS ATTAINED BY DEEDS WHICH WERE PERFORMED DURING LIFETIME.

“We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” 2 Cor. 5:10. See also 1 Cor. 3:11-15.

ARTICLE VIII. OF ETERNAL RETRIBUTION.

WE BELIEVE THAT ALL UNSAVED ONES WILL BE JUDGED BEFORE THE GREAT WHITE THRONE, AND WILL RECEIVE ETERNAL AND CONSCIOUS PUNISHMENT.

“And I saw a great white throne -. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened -, and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Rev. 20:11-15.

ARTICLE IX. OF SACRAMENTS.

WE BELIEVE THE TWO SACRAMENTS, HOLY BAPTISM AND HOLY COMMUNION, AS APPOINTED OF GOD AND INSTITUTED BY OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, TO BE VISIBLE, HOLY EMBLEMS, AND SEALS OF GRACE WHEN RECEIVED BY FAITH.

Compare: “He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.” 1 Cor. 11:29.

NOTICE: This statement implies by logical necessity blessings promised to them that eat and drink worthy. This is only possible by faith. Heb. 11:6. That the Holy Sacraments never bear any saving ability in themselves is clearly set forth by the fundamentals of the Scriptures concerning Salvation. See Article 3. They never work “ex opere operato”, i.e. they never convey grace by the fact of its reception.

ARTICLE X. OF HOLY BAPTISM.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE OUTWARD USE OF WATER IN HOLY BAPTISM SIGNIFIES THE NECESSITY OF SPIRITUAL WASHING, BECAUSE OF ORIGINAL OR ACTUAL SIN, AND THAT BAPTISM IS NOT A PUTTING AWAY OF THE FILTH OF THIS FLESH, BUT A SOLEMN REQUEST FOR SUCH CLEANSING, WHICH IS A WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND OBTAINABLE BY FAITH IN THE ONE SACRIFICE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

“EVEN Baptism - (is) not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the demand of a good conscience toward God.” 1 Pet. 3:21. See Articles 3 and 4.