

# Lake County Baptist Church

## Statement of Faith

### A DECLARATION OF THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE MOST SURELY BELIEVED AMONG US

#### **CONCERNING THE SCRIPTURES**

We believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, made up of sixty-six books (Lk. 24:25-27,44), which constitute the Old & New Testaments -- The Word of God. We believe that holy men of God were "moved by the Holy Spirit" to write the very words of Scripture (2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Tim. 3:16; Mt.5:18). We believe that this divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the Scripture -- historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetic -- and the Scriptures are therefore inspired, infallible, and inerrant in their totality in the original writings. While honoring honest differences of understanding in how God has preserved His Word, we reaffirm with our Baptist forefathers that God, by His singular care and providence, has preserved His Word pure in all ages (Mt. 24:35; Isa.40:8). We believe the Scriptures are to be interpreted by the grammatical-historical method, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture. We believe the Scripture is the final authority and is to be the final court of appeal in all matters of faith and practice (Isa.8:20; Jn. 12:46-48; 2 Tim. 3:16-4:1).

#### **CONCERNING THE TRUE GOD**

We believe in the one Triune God, the Creator of heaven and earth (Gen. 1:1; Ex. 20:2-3). God exists eternally in three Persons -- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- and these three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and are worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence, and obedience (Mt. 3:16-17; Deut. 6:4; Mt. 28:18-20; Isa. 46:9; 2 Cor. 13:14). We believe that the Triune God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing in six ordinary days (Gen. 1:5; Ex. 20:11). We believe each member of the Godhead exercises distinct yet harmonious offices in the great work of redemption (Eph. 1:3-10; 4:4-6).

#### **CONCERNING THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ, being eternally the Son of God, was ordained by the Father to be the Mediator between God and man; the Prophet, Priest and King; The Head and Saviour of the Church; Heir of all things; and Judge of the world (Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 2:14-18; Heb. 4:14-16). In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary (Gal. 4:4-5; Isa.7:14; Mt. 1:23). Having the very nature of God, He took upon Himself the nature of man, becoming eternally the God-man -- Very God of Very God and Very man of Very man (John 1:1-3,14,18). The Lord Jesus Christ, having taken the nature of man, with all the essential properties and common infirmities, lived totally apart from and without sin (Heb.4:15; 1 John 3:5; 1 Peter 2:22; John 8:46). The sinless, spotless Son of God gave Himself as a voluntary, substitutionary sacrifice on the cross for our sins (1 Peter 3:18; John 10:17-18; Heb.7:25). After three days and three nights, the Lord Jesus rose victorious from the grave, becoming the firstfruits of those that were asleep. We believe the Lord Jesus ascended to Heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father, where He now makes intercession for us, and where He also now awaits the Father's good time to come again for His own (Acts 1:9-11; Heb.9:24-28; John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

#### **CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third member of the Godhead, possessing the same nature, attributes, and perfections as the other members of the Trinity (Acts 5:1-4). We believe the primary ministry of the Holy Spirit in all ages is to bring glory to the Son (John 16:13). We believe the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, as well as presently restrains evil in this world (Jn. 16:8-11; 2 Thess. 2:5-7). Furthermore, we believe in and are completely open to the ministry of the Holy Spirit among God's people as recorded in and mandated by the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit is the supernatural agent involved in convicting men of sin, regenerating the lost, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling, filling, guiding, teaching, gifting, sanctifying and sealing them until the day of redemption (Jn 16:8-11; Jn. 3:3-11; Eph. 2:4-6; John 7:37-39; John 14:16-17; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 5:18; 1 John 2:20,27; Jn. 14:16-17, 25-26; 16:12-14; 1 Cor. 12:1-11; Rom. 12:4-8; Eph. 4:7; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 3:17; Eph. 1:13-14, 4:30).

We believe the ministry of the Holy Spirit, although alike in most ways, was somewhat different in the Old Testament. Especially is this true in reference to His present ministry of baptizing all believers into one body and thereby forming the Church, which is distinctive to this age (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 3:2-11). In the future, after the rapture of the Church, the Holy Spirit will no longer restrain sin in and through the Church, allowing the full manifestation of the mystery of iniquity in the person of the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:3-12; Rev. 13:1-8).

We believe the Lord Jesus chose the Apostles for the purpose of establishing the Church and completing the Scripture. The Holy Spirit, in a unique and non-repeatable way, led them and authenticated their ministry with signs and wonders and mighty deeds (Acts 2:43; 5:12; 15:12; 19:11; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4). Upon the passing of the Apostles and completing of the Canon, the signs of an apostle ceased (Jude 3; Isa. 8:20). Although open to, and even insistent upon, the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, we reject the teaching and practice of the modern Charismatic movement.

## CONCERNING MAN

We believe the Scriptures teach that man was created in God's image and after His likeness by the direct act of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Having been created in a state of positive holiness and righteousness, Adam willfully sinned against God and fell from that state. The consequence of the fall is that all men are now constituted sinners and are totally depraved -- sinners both by nature and by choice (Eph. 2: 1-3; Rom. 3: 10, 23; Jer. 17:9). Fallen, human nature is devoid of the ability to do good or to please God and, in reality, is positively inclined to evil (1 Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:5-6; Jn. 14:16-17). Man, therefore, apart from the grace of God, is already under the condemnation of God and will be consigned forever to eternal punishment because of his condition (John 3:18, 36). Although not every individual is as sinful as he could be, this sinful state manifests itself in all men in thought, word, and deed (Rom. 3:12-19).

## CONCERNING SALVATION

We believe man, being a sinner both by nature and by choice, is in a state of perpetual enmity against God, from which he is able to do nothing to change or improve his condition. God, because of His grace and boundless love (Deut.7:1-9; Eph.2:4), ordained before the foundation of the world that His Son would be born of a virgin, live a sinless life, and give Himself as a substitutionary sacrifice for our sins to reconcile us to God. We believe that only through God's gracious gift of His Son -- the shed blood of Christ -- does mankind have hope of salvation (Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:22). This salvation is totally of God's grace, apart from anything man can do, whether this be good works, ceremonies (such as Baptism or the Lord's Supper), or church affiliation; it is only Christ's blood -- His finished work on Calvary -- that saves (Eph. 2:4-5, Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 11:5-6). By the grace of God, upon repentance from sin and personal faith in Christ (Acts 20:21; Rom. 4:1-5; Rom. 3:28), a person partakes of this great salvation. This great salvation means we are "born again" into God's family as newborn children, and that we are adopted into God's family with all the rights of adult children, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (John 3:3,5; Titus 3:5; Rom. 8:14-17; 2 Pet. 1:3-4;), awaiting the full experience of those rights and blessings at Christ's coming.

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel (Isa. 55:1; Rev. 22:17; Luke 14:17); that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith (Rom. 16:26; Mark 1:15; Rom. 1:15-17); and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel (John 5:40; Matt. 23:37; Rom. 9:32; Prov. 1:24; Acts 13:46); which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation (John 3:19; Matt. 11:20; Luke 19:27; 2 Thess. 1:8).

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again (John 3:3, 6-7; 1 Cor. 1:14; Rev. 8:7-9; 21:27); that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind (2 Cor. 5:17; Ezek. 36:26; Deut. 30:6; Rom. 2:28-29; 5:5; 1 John 4:7); that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth (John 3:8; 1:13; James 1:16-18; 1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 2:13), so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel (1 Pet. 1:22-25; 1 John 5:1; Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 3:9-11); and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life (Eph. 5:9; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 5:16-23; Eph. 3:14-21; Matt. 3:8-10; 7:20; 1 John 5:4, 18).

We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God (Mark 1:15; Acts 11:18; Eph. 2:8; 1 John 5:1); whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ (John 16:8; Acts 2:37-38; 16:30-31), we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy (Luke 18:13; 15:18-21; James 4:7-10; 2 Cor. 7:11; Rom.10:12-13; Psa. 51); at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Saviour (Rom. 10:9-11; Acts 3:22-23; Heb. 4:14; Psa. 2:6; Heb. 1:8; 8:25; 2 Tim. 1:12).

We believe that Election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners (2 Tim. 1:8-9; Eph. 1:3-14; 1 Pet. 1:1-2; Rom. 11:5-6; John 15:15; 1 John 4:19; Hos. 12:9); that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it encompasses all the means in connection with the end (2 Thess. 2:13-14; Acts 13:48; John 10:16; Matt. 20:16; Acts 15:14); that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable (Exod. 33:18-19; Matt. 20:15; Eph. 1:11; Rom. 9:23-24; Jer. 31:3; Rom. 11:28-29; James 1:17-18; 2 Tim. 1:9; Rom. 11:32-36); that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy (1 Cor. 4:7; 1:26-31; Rom. 3:27; 4:16; Col. 3:12; 1 Cor. 3:5-7; 15:10; 1 Pet. 5:10; Acts 1:24; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 2:9; Luke 18:7; John 15:16; Eph. 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:12); that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree (2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Cor. 9:22; Rom. 8:28-30; John 6:37-40; 2 Pet. 1:10); that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel (1 Thess. 1:4-10); that it is the foundation of Christian assurance (Rom. 8:28-30; Isa. 42:16; Rom. 11:29); and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence (2 Pet. 1:10-11; Phil. 3:12; Heb. 6:11).

Moreover, we believe that just as nothing can be done to earn salvation, nothing can be added to salvation. At the moment of salvation the believer receives all spiritual blessings and is complete in Christ (Eph. 1:3; Col. 2:9-10). Although the believer will certainly grow in his realization of this great salvation (1 Peter 2:2), at the moment of salvation the believer stands complete in Christ and in need of nothing.

Moreover, we believe, owing to the gracious nature of salvation (Eph.2:8-9; Rom. 6:23), the unending intercession of Christ (Heb 7:25), the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16-17; Eph. 4:30), and the indisputable promises and power of God (John 5:24; John 10:27-30; Rom. 8:28-30; Rom. 8:32; Rom. 8:35-39; Heb. 13:20-21; Jude 24), the believer is kept and is secure in Christ forever.

## **CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION**

We believe a person is justified by grace alone, through faith alone -- plus nothing and minus nothing (Rom. 3:28; Rom. 4:1-8). God justifies the sinner, not because he is righteous, or because he does righteous deeds (Phil. 3:7-9; Titus 3:5-8), but because the righteousness of Christ has been imputed to his account (2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 10:1-4). Christ's obedience and righteousness are imputed to the sinner's account, and his sin is then imputed to Christ's account. Christ bore the sinner's judgment on the cross satisfying God's holy wrath and justice (Rom. 3:25-26; Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Jn. 2:1-2).

Sanctification is that great work that, although distinguishable from justification, can and must never finally be separated from justification. In the work of sanctification, which follows and flows from justification, God progressively imparts His righteousness to the believer (John 17:17; Eph.5:26; 2 Cor. 7:1). Most assuredly those who are saved are saved unto good works, and are to maintain good works (Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 2:4-5, 9-12; Titus 3:8, 14). Good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and living faith (1 Jn. 2:3, 1 Jn. 3:10; James 2:14-26). By good works believers manifest their thankfulness (Ps. 116:12-13), strengthen their assurance (2 Pet. 1:5-10), edify their fellow Christian (1 Cor. 10:23,32-33; 2 Cor. 9:2), adorn the profession of the Gospel (Titus 2:10), stop the mouths of the adversaries (Titus 2:8), and ultimately glorify God (1 Pet. 2:9; Mt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 10:31).

Moreover, we believe that because of this union with Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit, the believer will progressively manifest a life that is separated from the world and unto God (2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 John 2:15-17; 1 John 3:1-3). This relationship with God will cause the believer to avoid all forms of evil that might bring reproach upon his Saviour .

We believe that God's work of sanctification will impact the whole person, in the totality of life. However, at the same time, the believer will never be perfect in this life; some remnants of the Fall will remain (Rom. 8:19-23), and a continual war will ensue until the day we die or see our Lord and are changed into His image: we are glorified together with Him (Gal. 5:16-17; Phil. 1:6; Phil. 3:12-21).

## **CONCERNING THE FUTURE**

Having been justified by His blood, and being sanctified at the present time by His Word and Spirit, the believer now expectantly awaits the time when he will be glorified with His Lord. We believe the Lord Jesus came unto His own in the first advent, and was rejected by His own people Israel, who were in turn set aside (John 1:11; Rom. 11:25-26). In the eternal plan and wisdom of God, an era and work unknown to the Old Testament Prophets was inaugurated -- a mystery -- that is, the Church (Mt.13:11-13; Eph. 3:2-11; Col. 1:25-27). God is now calling out of the Gentiles a people for His name, and this will be His work and our responsibility until the full number of the Gentiles are saved (Acts 15:14; Rom. 11:25-26; Luke 21:24). The next great event in prophecy will be the Lord's coming in the air for His own, to catch away His bride (1 Cor. 15:51-52; Rev. 3:10; John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Thess. 5:9; Phil. 3:20-21; Titus 2:11-14). We believe the Blessed Hope is imminent and will be pre-tribulation, that is, it will precede the tribulation period.

We believe that after the rapture of the Church, a time of tribulation will begin in this world in which Satan's emissaries, the Antichrist and the false prophet, will be allowed free reign (2 Thess. 2:1-12; 1 Jn. 2:18; Rev. 13:1-18). This will be a time of great tribulation such as never has been, and if those days were not limited by God no one would physically survive them (Mt. 24:21-22). This seven-year tribulation is in fulfillment of Daniel's seventieth week and is also called the "Time of Jacob's Trouble" (Dan. 9:24-27; Mt.24:15, 25; Jer. 30:7). Although the Great Tribulation is a horrific time, many will be saved when God again begins to graft Israel back in to the Olive Tree (Rev. 7:1-17; Rom. 11:12, 15-18). We believe that the Lord Jesus will come with His own at the end of the seven-year tribulation, bringing to a close the "Time of the Gentiles." After Christ comes with His own in the clouds with great power and glory, Satan will be bound for one thousand years in the bottomless pit. The Lord Jesus Christ will then judge the nations according to their treatment of Israel, and will begin to lift the curse which now rests on the whole creation. The Lord will restore Israel to her own land; allow Israel to realize God's covenant blessings (Isa. 9:6-7; Isa. 11:1-9; Lk. 1:31-33); bring the whole world to the knowledge of God; and establish the Millennium -- the Lord's righteous reign upon the earth for one thousand years (Rev. 20:1-15).

We believe at the end of this Millennial period, Satan will be loosed for a short time in which he will lead a rebellion against Christ, only to be cast into Hell. The eternal state -- the new Heavens and the new Earth -- will then ensue (Rev. 20:1-10; Rev. 21-22).

We believe at death the spirits and souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation pass immediately into His presence, and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the glorified body when Christ comes for His own (Luke 23:42-43; Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8), whereupon spirit, soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in glory. But the spirit of the unbeliever remains in death, conscious of condemnation and misery, until the final judgment of the Great White Throne at the close of the Millennium. At that time, both soul and body, having been reunited, shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord (Luke 16:19-31; Rev. 20:11-15; Jude 6-7).

## **CONCERNING THE CHURCH**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Church of Jesus Christ, distinct from Israel in the Old Testament, was inaugurated at Pentecost and must be considered in two aspects: the "Church which is His Body" and the local Church. The "Church which is His

Body" is the entire company of believers in Christ, irrespective of race, gender, or social standing; they are simply all who have come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ from the day of Pentecost until the rapture of the Church (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11; Eph. 2:19-22). All believers, regardless of denominational affiliation or present position in Heaven or earth, are a member of His body due to the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation (1 Cor. 12:13).

The local Church is a congregation of baptized believers, associated together by a covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word. Essentially, the local church is a place where the Word of God is proclaimed, the ordinances are administered, and discipline is exercised.

We believe the offices of the local Church are two: Pastors (also called Bishops and Elders) and Deacons (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17,28-32; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; Heb. 13:7,17). The Pastors' primary functions are those of leading, overseeing, and teaching, while the Deacons are to be the servants of the Pastors and the Church, assisting both to further the cause of Christ's Church. The calling, qualifications, and duties of these two offices are clearly defined in the Pastoral Epistles, Acts, 1 Peter, and Hebrews and are limited to men (1 Tim. 2:11-15; 1 Cor. 14:33-38) who meet the Biblical standards (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5). Furthermore, we believe, under the leadership of the Pastors, the Deacons and the Saints are to strive together to reach the Church's God-given objectives. We believe each local church is autonomous and is to be self-governing under the Headship of Jesus Christ. Each local church is free to associate with other local churches of like faith. We believe the Lord has divinely ordained two other institutions: the home and human government (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-6:4). We believe the local church is to actively promote and protect the nuclear family, which would normally consist of a father, mother and children. We also believe the church is to support and promote godliness and justice in government by praying for those in office, obeying its law under God, and seeking the appointment of godly leaders (Ezra 6:10; 1 Tim. 2:1-4; Jer. 29:4-7).

We believe the Local Church has been given two major objectives by the Risen Christ. As the gathered Church, our objective is ministering to the body. This would include such activities as edification, encouragement, organization, and worship (Eph. 4:12-16; Heb. 10:25; Heb. 3:12-13; Acts 2:41-42; 1 Cor. 14:33, 40; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). As the scattered Church, our objective is ministering to the world. This would include such activities as evangelizing the lost, supporting world-wide missions, living Christ-like lives before the world, and serving God in our particular callings (Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Lk. 24:44-48; Jn. 20:21; Phil. 4:14-18; 3 Jn. 5-8; Mt. 5:16; John 13:34-35; 1 Cor. 7:17-24; 1 Cor. 10:31).

We believe, in obedience to our Lord's commands, two Ordinances are to be perpetuated in the Local Church. Firstly, we believe in the baptism of believers in water one time by immersion. This is to be done in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and is a symbolic act symbolizing the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and our union with Him in dying to sin and rising again to a new life (Mt.28:18-20; Rom. 6:3-5). Baptism is a prerequisite to membership and privileges in the local church. We reject any form of baptismal regeneration -- that is, that baptism in any way saves. Secondly, we believe that the Lord's Supper (also called Communion) is a memorial & proclamation of His death until He comes (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:26). The partaking of the symbols of unfermented fruit of the vine and unleavened bread must be preceded by solemn self-examination in remembrance of the sinless Christ and His substitutionary death (1 Cor. 11:23-28). The frequency of the Lord's Supper, being nowhere delineated in Scripture, is determined by the desire of the Church under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Moreover, we believe the Church is to be a pure Church, as is our Lord's intent and command. The Local Church, though endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, must always refuse to have fellowship with any kind of heresy or apostasy that would dilute its testimony or dishonor its Lord. The local church must not cooperate with any movement, organization, or program contrary to the faith, whether in doctrine or practice (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:11; 2 Thess. 3:6,14; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; Titus 1:13; 1 Jn. 4:1; 2 Jn. 9-11).

### **CONCERNING MARRIAGE AND HUMAN SEXUALITY:**

We believe that marriage of one man and one woman for life, as created by God (Gen. 2:21-24), sanctioned by Christ (Mt. 19:4-6; John 2:1-11), and reaffirmed by the Apostles (1Cor. 7:10-15; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; Heb. 13:4), is God's normal plan. We also believe that some individuals are called and gifted by God to a single life and that this also is Biblical and wholly good (Mt. 19:10-12 & 1 Cor. 7:6-9). We believe that all other expressions of sexuality, such as homosexuality, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, pornography, premarital and extramarital sex, are expressly forbidden in Scripture and are not acceptable (Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18; Lev. 18:22; Lev. 20:13; Rom. 1:24-28; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:10; Lev. 18:23; Ex. 22:19; Lev. 20:15-16; Deut. 27:21). While acknowledging that divorce is a reality in our world, we clearly believe that God's original intention was one man and one woman for life and that Biblical marriage is to be honored, cherished, protected and proclaimed in our churches and homes (Deut. 24:1-4; Mt. 5:31-32; Mt. 19:3-12).

### **CONCERNING THE SANCTITY OF LIFE:**

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being created in God's image (Gen.1:26-27; Gen. 9:5-6). Abortion constitutes the unjustified, inexcusable taking of unborn human life (Ex. 21:22-25; Ps. 139:14-16; Jer. 1:5; Job 3:16; Isa. 44:24; Isa. 49:1,5; Lk. 1:44). We also believe that since human life is a sacred gift of God, then euthanasia and so-called mercy killing are sin. Furthermore, because man is created in God's image and because God alone is the Giver of life, practices such as human cloning and human embryonic cell research that requires the death of an unborn child are immoral.

## CONCERNING THE LORD'S DAY

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10), and is a Christian institution rooted in and commemorating the resurrection of our Lord (Mt. 28:1; Mk. 16:1-2; Lk. 24:1; Jn. 20:1); it is the primary day when the church gathers together to worship the Lord through praying, giving, singing, hearing the Word of God, and partaking of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:5-7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). We believe that it is to be kept sacred for spiritual purposes (Ex. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-14) by abstaining from all unnecessary secular labor and recreations (Isa. 58:13; Mk. 2:23-3:6), by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private (Ps. 118:15) and public (Heb. 10:24-25), and by preparation for that rest that remaineth for the people of God (Heb. 4:3-11).

## CONCERNING CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

We believe that worship is both the duty and privilege of every Christian and is the chief end of our salvation (Deut. 6:4-9; Mt. 22:37-40; Jn. 17:3; 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Pet. 4:10-11).

We believe that all of life is the primary arena of worship, as we present our bodies a living sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1-2), serve God in our particular callings (1 Cor. 7:17-24; Ex. 31:1-6), testify of the love of God in the cross of Christ, and glorify God in all that we do (Mt. 28:19-20; Eph. 3:8; 1 Cor. 10:31).

Furthermore, we believe that worship is to be the center of our family and private lives also. This would include singing, praying, reading Scripture and applying / obeying the Word of God.

We believe that public, gathered worship is both a high privilege and sacred duty (Ps. 84:1-4, 10; Ps. 122:1; Lk. 4:16; Acts 20:6-8) and is to be carried out as the Scripture regulates by commands, principles and examples (Acts 2:42).

Public worship is to be **God-centered**: that God is to be worshipped and He is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24), and in the beauty of holiness (Ps. 27:4; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Chron. 16:29; 2 Chron. 20:21; Ps. 29:2; Ps. 96:9). All public worship has God as its audience and God is to be approached with reverence and godly fear (Heb. 12:28-29; Ex. 3:5; Isa. 6:1-8). This would exclude all so-called worship that is man-centered and entertainment oriented. This would also exclude all forms of music that are directly associated with the world and worldliness (Lev. 11:44-45; Lev. 20:7, 26; 1 Pet. 1:14-15). God is holy and we are to worship Him and Him alone in the beauty of holiness (1 Chron. 16:29).

Public worship is to be **Bible-based**: that the content of public worship is to be regulated by the teaching of Scripture (Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 2:1-4), and that that content is to be rooted in, and a direct reflection of, the doctrines of the Bible (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Public worship includes singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs that express the full range of the Christian experience (Mt. 22:37-40; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) as do the Biblical Psalms. This would exclude all songs that are mere empty repetition (Mt. 6:7-8) and without Biblical content. This would also exclude music that lacks the variety and depth of the Christian experience and does not express the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:20, 26).

Public worship is to be **distinctly-Christian**: that all parts of worship are to emphasize the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and the resultant new life we have in Christ (1 Cor. 2:2; 2 Cor. 5:17). We are to sing a new song unto the Lord (Ps. 33:3; Ps. 40:1-3; Ps. 144:9) that clearly expresses what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us. This would exclude all forms of worship that are not clearly Christian in content and expression. This would also exclude all forms of music that identify with the old life prior to knowing Christ.

Public worship is to be **congregation-oriented**: that all parts of the service include the entire congregation publicly, corporately and whole-heartedly engaging in the worship of the Triune God through praying the Word, singing the Word, hearing the Word and obeying the Word (Isa. 29:13; Eze. 33:31-33; Mt. 15:8-9). This would exclude the congregation as being mere spectators in an entertainment atmosphere since this is not worship but entertainment.

As approved by unanimous vote of the congregation on Sunday, February 13, 2005.