

CONSTITUTION OF LIVING WATERS CHURCH

ARTICLE I. STATEMENT OF FAITH

- A. Bible: We believe the Bible is God's inspired and inerrant written Word in the whole and in the parts and our standard, not only where it speaks of matters of faith and practice, but also where it touches on matters of interest to science, history and government.
- B. God: We believe there is one triune God eternally manifested in the persons of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is Creator, Redeemer, and the Sovereign Ruler of creation. He is the author of truth, love and faith.

1. God the Father: The Father sovereignly governs His creation and human history by His wise and holy providence. He is all-powerful, all-loving, all-wise, righteous in all His ways and just in all His works. He demonstrates His fatherly love for all who become His children through Jesus Christ by caring for them, providing for them, instructing them and disciplining them. His purpose is to prepare a family of redeemed people on the earth to show forth His glory.

2. God the Son: Jesus Christ is God the Son - the second person of the Trinity. He is eternally the uncreated Word of God. Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He was God incarnate; He perfectly revealed and did the will of the Father. He took upon Himself human nature and identified fully with humanity, yet remained without sin. He honored the Divine will and law by His obedience and through His death on the cross, He made provision for the redemption of all who would believe in Him. He was raised from the dead and appeared to His disciples. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God the father, where He is the One Mediator, effecting the reconciliation between God and man and providing access to the Father for the believer.

The Father has established Him as Lord over all things and has appointed Him as Judge of the world. He is the head of the Church. He will return in power and glory at the end of the present age to judge the world, to reign with His people and to complete His redemptive mission by establishing in full measure the Kingdom and Reign of God. He will then return to the Father the government of all things, so that "God may be all in all." (I Cor. 15:20-28)

He presently dwells in all believers through the Person of the Holy Spirit as the living and ever-present Lord. He is Heir of all things. He was and is the perfect Prophet, Priest and King, representing God to humanity, humanity to God and being fully entitled to reign as King.

3. God the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. He exalts Christ. He convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment. He calls people to Jesus and effects regeneration. He inspired the authors of Scripture and has superintended both the recording and transmission of the Scripture. He grants revelation to men and women, enables them to understand and obey

the truth, and illuminates and quickens God's Word to them. He comforts, teaches and guides God's people and empowers them to obey God, to cultivate Christ-like character and to be witnesses to Jesus Christ. There are many experiences which are valid encounters with God, the Holy Spirit. "Baptism in the Holy Spirit, filled with the Holy Spirit, anointed with the Holy Spirit" are among those Scriptural terms used to describe such encounters with the Holy Spirit. These experiences should produce greater commitment to God's will, greater realization of His power, and greater edification of His Church. We further believe the Holy Spirit imparts gifts or abilities greater than our own to accomplish God's will. These gifts include miraculous healings, revelations and utterances. These gifts ought to be operative in the Church, supervised by mature leaders and ministered in love by Christians whose lives reflect godly character.

- C. Man: We believe man is a triune person (spirit, soul & body), created in the image of God as the crowning work of His creation. Man stood in unique relationship with his Creator and was commissioned to rule the earth under God's headship. Through the temptation of Satan, man transgressed the command of God; thus, all his descendants inherit both a nature and an environment twisted by sin. Because of sin, man is separated from God and is without hope of reconciling himself to a just and holy God through any of his own efforts. Only the grace of God can restore man to his original calling: to live in fellowship with God and to fulfill the purposes for which he was created.
- D. Salvation: We believe that salvation involves the redemption of the whole person and is available only in and through Jesus Christ. It is offered to all people and is appropriated and experienced by those who respond in faith to God's call to submit to His Son as Lord and Savior. Jesus, through the shedding of His blood, obtained eternal redemption for those who through faith believe in Him. This faith is a gift from God and is preceded by the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, who enables a person to repent of his sin and self-determination. The Scriptural evidence that one has repented and put his faith in Jesus Christ includes public confession, baptism in water and the reception of the Holy Spirit. The gift of righteousness enables the believer to live a life of obedience to God's will, as revealed in His Word, to respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and to cultivate and maintain right relationships.
- E. Covenant Life: We believe God is a covenant-making and covenant-keeping God. That is, He has made promises to those who respond to His love by committing their lives to Him. His promise of forgiveness and eternal life begins the moment one commits himself to Him. (From His sovereign perspective He knows those who are His.) He is the source of life and all necessary provision to the one believing. This provision, including both spiritual and natural resources, is available in abundance.
- F. Priesthood of the Believer: We believe in the priesthood of the believer. By the shedding of His blood, Jesus has become the believer's High Priest and has made it possible for each Christian to have free access to the presence of the Father. In His presence, each one can come to know God and to receive from Him. Each Christian, likewise, is responsible to come to the Father in confidence and faith as a priest unto Him under the New Covenant, and there to minister both the worship of his lips and the worship of his life sacrificially presented to God.

- G. Family: We believe the Church is symbolized in the family unit which God ordained. We see the foundation of marriage as the covenant between one biologically born man and one biologically born woman. We believe marriage is more than partnership -- it is union through self-denial. We believe in marriage as an expression of covenant love, and that procreation and the rearing of children should take place in the context of covenant love. We believe the ministry of the Church is to strengthen the family in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the peace and harmony of God's divine order for the home. We strongly oppose divorce and see it as the breaking of covenant. We do not sanction it and only allow it when one spouse violates covenant through infidelity or when the unbelieving spouse violates covenant with a believer through desertion. The act of divorce is not to be taken until all steps of forgiveness and reconciliation have failed to restore the covenant. Then we believe the faithful person is free. While we oppose divorce, we are nevertheless committed to minister God's redeeming grace to those who are its victims. We believe that divorce is a sin as any other sin. Just as redeemed believers are not precluded from service unto the Lord and his Church, neither are those redeemed from the sin of divorce.

We strongly oppose abortion on demand as the wanton taking of life. We likewise oppose homosexuality as being a perversion of identity and an abomination to our Creator. While we oppose homosexuality and abortion, we are nevertheless committed to minister God's redeeming grace.

We believe that healthy families produce healthy citizens. We believe that much violence and destruction in our present society is directly traceable to delinquent parents, and strong negative social pressures on weakened families. For these and many other reasons, we make family life a priority.

- H. Church: We believe the very nature and purpose of God is revealed in His Church. Jesus came and established it as His Body in the earth. We believe the Church universal consists of all who live under Jesus' Lordship, while the Church local is a body of believing people, baptized and joined together, practicing the New Covenant. Since the Church is one, as God is one, the Church local must seek to walk in harmony with the Church universal.

We believe that Jesus Christ, who is Lord of the Church, has established government and ministry in the Church on earth; apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are set in the Church by the Lord to mature it and inspire it to do His work in the earth. We believe the Scriptural norm calls for each local church to have plurality of elders with one pastor presiding. We recognize, however, the validity for variety in church governments as the Lord may lead other Christian groups. We believe the Lord sets His people under pastoral care in the Church for maturing of character and development of ministry. We believe pastoral ministry should be personal, attempting to follow the pattern of Jesus and His disciples. People are joined together in committed relationships for mutual support, correction and encouragement. Each individual has particular God-given abilities which are different from and complementary to those of the other members. Each member should be encouraged to function in his own areas of strength, in interdependence with his fellow members. Gatherings are patterned after the early New Testament church with large meetings ("temple worship") for worship and Bible teaching and preaching, and smaller house group meetings, care groups, for fellowship and more personal instruction and ministry.

- I. Freedom of Conscience: We believe in freedom of conscience. While God has ordained both civil and spiritual government, each Christian is individually responsible to God and accountable to Him for their choices and behavior. The believer's personal access to the Father through Jesus makes them responsible to:
1. Cultivate their personal relationship to God through prayer, the study of Scripture and obedience.
 2. Function as a priest to God through personal praise, worship and intercessory prayer.
 3. Represent the Lord to those around them, through their life and words.
 4. Be faithful to their conscience.
- J. Evangelism: We accept the commission of Jesus Christ, who is Lord, to make disciples of all nations, to baptize them and teach them to observe His commandments. We join with all those believing in Him to accomplish this urgent task. We accept this as a personal commission, as well as a Church commission.
- K. Spiritual Warfare: We believe that God and His people are opposed by supernatural foes in the persons of satan and his principalities, powers and demons. We believe that their power has been definitely and decisively broken by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, who now lives within each believer. We believe that satan is a liar and a thief. As God's people, we have been commissioned and given authority to expose satan's lies and take from him all that he has stolen. We believe that his power is limited by the sovereign purposes of God and that the Church's victory over him is complete.
- L. Christ's Return: We believe that Jesus Christ will personally return to earth in power and glory. He will come to fully establish the government of God upon the earth and to judge the living and the dead, rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked. While there are many views concerning His second coming, we believe that Christians should lovingly look for His appearing, giving full attention to obedience until He comes.
- M. Judgment: We believe in a final judgment at the end of the age. The righteous and the wicked shall stand before Him and be judged. Those who have righteousness produced by faith will be rewarded with the privilege of ruling with Him and enjoying His eternal blessings. Those who are wicked in relationship to God and man will be eternally punished.
- N. Authority: We believe that God is the source of all legitimate authority and that all earthly authority is to be subject to and fulfill the intentions of the Divine authority. God has enjoined man to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue and rule it. To accomplish this goal, He has established for man three spheres of authority: the family, the Church, and civil government. Each has its own set of responsibilities, limits of authority and procedures with regard to wrongdoers.
1. The Family - The family is the basic societal unit: the first place of common worship, common work and common life. It is, ideally, headed and led by a man and those under his care: his wife, who is his helper; his children and any elderly or displaced persons for whom God grants him responsibility. A man, assisted by his wife, has the responsibility to lead, train and discipline his children according to the principles and methods given in the Scripture. We do, however, recognize that single-parent families can properly function under the authority of Jesus Christ.

2. The Church - The Church on earth is the redeemed people of God, who are living under His delegated authority. The Church has been charged by the Lord Jesus to preach the Gospel, to make disciples of all nations, to baptize new members, and to teach all of its members all that God has commanded. Christ has commissioned His Church to be responsible for the education of its members and their families in all areas of life, and to take care of the poor, aged, homeless and needy within its ranks. The Church may discipline its members by correction, admonition, reproof and, if necessary, by ban from participation in the life of the Church community.

3. Civil government - Civil government is given by God to preserve peace among all people. Its purpose is to provide liberty so that the godly may function quietly and effectively in their families and churches and so that all people are given opportunity to be saved and to come to full knowledge of the truth. In accordance with its responsibilities, it may punish wrongdoers with penalty to their property or person.

- O. Conclusion: These principles of our faith are foundations for God's ongoing leadership in our lives. We realize that our statement of faith does not relieve us of the responsibility to live by faith. Although there are those who serve Jesus Christ whose doctrinal expressions are different from our own, we desire to walk with them as brothers and sisters. Our statements are not to be construed as walls, but as doors through which others may communicate with us and we with them.

ARTICLE II. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Our ultimate goal is to exalt Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior in everything we are, say and do. We envision ourselves as a fellowship of believers who live in harmony with God our Father and with one another. Spirit-filled, confident, faithful men and women, happy marriages; children and teenagers under authority. Fathers who are dynamic spiritual leaders; wives and mothers whose works praise them, homes that display the order, warmth and joy of Christ's presence; children who are mighty in spirit; widows who bring conviction of sin among unbelievers when they see the reality of living in the kingdom of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Purpose for the local Church is derived from God's purposes for the Body of Christ. Only the Bible itself can fully declare the purposes of a church, but the following states those which are of high priority to our church:

- A. Worship:
We have purposed that our personal lives and corporate gathering be always centered around the love and worship of God.
1. To guide each individual to commit their life to the Lord Jesus Christ and to love Him with all his heart, soul, mind and strength.

2. To challenge people and lead them to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness - Kingdom thinking, attitudes, goals and relationships.
3. To regularly assemble together the members of this church for prayer, teaching of the Word of God, fellowship with one another, and to worship God in spirit and in truth, both in all-Body gatherings and in care groups.

B. Prayer:

As His spiritual "house of prayer", we are committed to making prayer the foundation of all we do.

1. To pray for the needs of all men and for local and national leaders and governments.
2. To engage in spiritual warfare against powers of darkness through prayer, fasting, deliverance, praise, declaration of the Word and the blood of Jesus.

C. Prophetic:

We are a people who genuinely desire to know, speak and follow God's "now" word and will for His church. To help people live in that blessed daily relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ - having the ability to hear His voice and to walk in obedience of faith.

D. Word:

We believe the Bible to be the God-inspired, inerrant Word of God and are committed to being a Bible-teaching, Bible-obeying church.

E. Spirit Filled:

We have purposed to live out and proclaim that Jesus is the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit and that the manifestations of the Spirit are indispensable gifts to build up the Body of Christ. To lead people into Spirit-filled life; new birth in Christ, water baptism, baptism in the Holy Spirit, fruit and character of the Spirit, gifts and ministries of the Spirit, and the fellowship and communication of the Spirit.

F. Equipping the Saints:

It is our priority to equip and release every person to be a contributing minister of the church.

1. To help people experience all that is theirs in Christ, who has come to deliver us from sin, selfishness, satanic bondage, sickness and poverty in order that we may live fruitful lives for His glory.
2. To help each member discover his spiritual gift(s) and assist him in using these gift(s) to express Christ's love to those he serves.
3. To call forth and equip laborers to go into the harvest fields, both near and far.
4. To ordain ministers.

G. Maintaining Body Unity:

In our relationships with one another and with other local churches, we seek to maintain and foster the unity of the Spirit in Christ's Body.

1. To train members to express their love for the Lord and their loyalty to one another by giving only a good report of each other, following the guidelines in Matthew 18 in dealing with offences, with the goal of restoration rather than criticism and judgment.
2. Should doctrinal disputes arise, we purpose to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, until we all attain to the unity of the faith.
3. To involve our people in what the Holy Spirit is doing in calling the people of God into a greater reality of the unity of the Body of Christ in our city, state, nation and world.
4. To recognize, support and cooperate with the various ministries established by God to equip believers to fulfill their respective functions as members of the Body of Christ and to bring the whole Body of Christ to maturity and completion.

H. Discipleship:

Our goal is to make disciples, the way Jesus did, that we might help each individual reach their full maturity in Christ.

1. To build Christ's character in individuals, in marriages and in families, so that we will be a people who are models of what it means to be disciples of Jesus Christ.
2. To make disciples of all nations and to build up the Body of Christ, as the Lord specifically gives us open doors to do so.

I. Family:

The family is a central emphasis of our ministry. We seek to strengthen every aspect of family life, including traditional and single-parent families.

1. To teach every man how to love his wife in the same way in which Christ loved the Church.
2. To teach every wife how to submit to her husband, care for her children and manage her home.
3. To equip parents to bring up their children in the ways of the Lord on a daily basis.
4. To motivate those called to a life of singleness to use their time and abilities to the fullest in serving the Lord.
5. To help single, separated and divorced parents, and their children to gain acceptance, security and strength in the Lord and experience His ability to bring about restoration.

- J. Pastoral Care:
We are committed to providing personal pastoral care for each member of the local church.
1. To baptize in water, to anoint the sick with oil, to marry, to dedicate infants, to celebrate the Lord's Supper and to minister to the grieving.
 2. To function as the Body of Christ and the family of God, with members caring for and supporting one another.
- K. Evangelism:
We are committed to being an outreaching church, proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and demonstrating the power of God unto salvation.
1. To evangelize the lost both far and near, wherever the Lord sends us.
 2. To be a godly influence in society, actively involved in the life of the community around us.
 3. To help the poor and downtrodden; the widow, orphans, lame, blind, infirm, diseased, imprisoned, abused, elderly and the forgotten through the Gospel and material assistance when appropriate.
 4. To use all creative and modern means to spread the Gospel as the Holy Spirit leads; spoken word, art, music, drama, films, TV, literature, radio, concerts, etc.
 5. To send forth missionaries.
 6. To assist in establishment, maintenance and upbuilding of other churches, both domestic and foreign.
- L. Youth:
We have a mandate from God to help raise up a Godly generation. To corporately support the parents' training of their children, thereby equipping them to stand as overcomers and leaders in their generation.

ARTICLE III. CHURCH COVENANT

We believe those called to membership agree to make the following statement of covenant:

Having been led by God the Holy Spirit to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and to confess Him as Lord, and on confession of this faith, having been baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully covenant together as one body in Christ to endeavor to fully please the Lord.

We covenant to live as a community of God's redeemed people: binding ourselves together in covenant love, submitting to compassionate authority and rulership, and manifesting peace, holiness and family fidelity as expressed through respected manhood and womanhood, revered fatherhood, cherished motherhood and secure and obedient children.

We covenant to live as a community where loving instruction and correction produce healthy growth and maturity and where dedication to excellence produces the finest results in arts, crafts, trades and commerce, thus providing prosperity and abundance for all its members. We covenant to live as a community of faith, worship, praise and selfless ministry, manifesting individually and corporately the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit.

We covenant to live as a community where all life is inspired and directed by the Spirit of Jesus Christ and is lived to His glory as a witness and testimony to the world.