

# Articles of Faith



## What is a church?

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus told his disciples, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” This promise reminds us of God’s commitment to gather for Himself a people for the display of His glory. The Bible calls this group of people, consisting of all believers at all times, the Church. As a Christian, you are united through the Holy Spirit to all other Christians because of your common faith in Jesus and are, therefore, called to be a part of God’s redemptive work around the world through the Church.

Your commitment to God and His Church is to be expressed through involvement in a local body of believers. Scripture depicts a local church as a community of believers in a particular place committed to gather together on a regular basis to worship God and fulfill His mission to the world. Within this community, our unity in Christ compels our commitment to one another. Membership in a local church is, therefore, participation in a family.

Just as a family is dependent on individual members functioning in specific roles, so a local body of believers requires sacrificial and responsible service from each member. The health of a local church, therefore, can be measured by the commitment of its members. At Living Hope, our goal is to be a healthy church that displays the glory of God to one another and to the world. To achieve this goal, it is important to clearly articulate both what we believe and how we are committed to behave as a family of faith. The beginning point of our beliefs is a biblical understanding of what it means to be a Christian.

## What is a Christian?

A Christian is someone who has made the following confession of faith:

- I have repented of my sins and believe in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ
- I have been saved by the grace of God through faith in His Son
- I am committed to love and follow Jesus as the Lord of my life through obeying His Word and living for His glory

## Articles of Faith

The following statements represent a consensus concerning the foundational beliefs of Living Hope Baptist Church. These statements, while not exhaustive, seek to communicate the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith that are taught in the Scriptures. It is important that members know and understand these doctrines, however; they are not required to be able to articulate these beliefs fully. The explicit verbal rejection of any of these statements may be justification for removing or preventing someone from membership, particularly if this rejection is a threat to the unity of this church.

### I. The Scriptures

We believe that the sixty-six books of the Bible were written by men inspired by God. That it is God’s only written revelation of Himself and His standards for mankind. That it is without error in the original manuscripts, worthy of our trust, sufficient for explaining salvation, and authoritative for faith and life. Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is the focus of divine revelation.

*Psalm 19:7-10; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:21; Revelation 22:18-19*

## **II. The Trinity**

We believe in one God, who exists eternally in three persons – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. That these three persons are equal in divinity and glory and yet each has personal attributes and distinct functions. Because of His triune nature, God is both transcendent over all of creation and personally involved in this world as the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver and Ruler of the universe.

*Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 3:16-17; 1 Peter 1:2*

## **III. God the Father**

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, holy, and loving being, who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-wise. That He sovereignly reigns over the affairs of this world, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

*Isaiah 43:15; Matthew 6:9-13; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 1:11-12*

## **IV. God the Son**

We believe in Jesus Christ, the one and only eternal Son of God, who, while fully divine, became a man that He might reveal God and redeem mankind. That He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. That He lived a sinless life and died a substitutionary death in order to serve as the one and only mediator between God and man. That He was buried and then physically resurrected from the grave and ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father, where He remains as an intercessor for His people until the day in which He will return to judge the living and the dead. That His judgment is final, resulting in those who are righteous in Christ spending eternity with the Lord and the unredeemed spending eternity in Hell.

*John 1:1,14; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 9:28*

## **V. God the Holy Spirit**

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who inspired the Scriptures and enables men to understand truth. That He convicts men of sin, regenerates the heart to believe, and is the means by which the believer is sealed until the day of final redemption. That He dwells within believers, empowering, guiding, and equipping them toward holiness.

*John 14:26; John 16:8; 1 Corinthians 6:11,19-20; Ephesians 1:13-14*

## **VI. Man**

We believe that God created man in His own image, making men and women with distinct qualities and roles, yet equal in dignity. That having been tempted by Satan, man chose to sin against God and thereby incurred physical and spiritual death, which is separation from God's fellowship. As a result, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and also willfully choose to sin. These realities bring them under the just condemnation of God.

*Genesis 1:27; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12; Hebrews 9:27*

## **VII. Salvation**

We believe that salvation is the free gift of God, whereby God, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies an individual. That, in order to be saved, individuals must respond by faith to the call of God by repenting of their sin, believing in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and committing themselves to follow Christ. We believe that those whom God has redeemed in Christ and sanctified by the Spirit will persevere to the end and can never lose their salvation.

Regeneration is the new birth, whereby God gives a person a new heart that responds to Him in repentance and faith.

Justification is the act whereby God declares a person innocent and righteous by counting the righteousness of Christ to his/her credit through faith in the completed work of Christ.

Sanctification is the lifelong process whereby the believer is transformed into the image of Christ through progressive growth in holiness, both in attitude and action.

Glorification is the culmination of the salvation process at the time of Christ's return that ultimately results in the believer experiencing perfect communion with God throughout all eternity.

We believe that there is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ.

*John 3:16; Romans 5:1-5; Romans 6:22; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7*

## **VIII. The Church**

We believe that a church is an expression of God's people gathered in a community of believers who have entered into covenant with one another. The local church is to gather for worship, teaching, fellowship, and is entrusted with the mission of taking the Gospel to all the nations of the world. We believe that a local church is free to cooperate with like-minded churches and associations in order to fulfill its mission to the world. The church of Jesus Christ observes two ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that the universal Church is the body of all believers in all places at all times existing under the headship of Christ.

*Matthew 16:18; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 2:19-21*

## **IX. Baptism**

We believe that baptism is a public identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Baptism is immersion into water following a personal profession of faith in Jesus Christ done in response to the grace of God. It is a prerequisite to the privileges of membership at Living Hope Baptist Church.

*Mark 1:9-11; Acts 8:35-38; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 1:13-17; Matthew 28:19-20*

## **X. The Lord's Supper**

We believe that the Lord's Supper is given to believers to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and to anticipate His glorious return. The Lord's Supper is to be observed as a remembrance on a regular basis until Jesus returns.

*Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:17-18; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

## **XI. The Last Things**

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His glorious kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body and the final judgment where the redeemed will dwell forever in the presence of the Lord and the unredeemed will spend eternity in Hell.

*Matthew 16:27; John 11:25; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Revelation 21:1-8*

## **XII. Christian Conduct**

We believe the Holy Spirit, as the third person of the triune God, is the active agent in our sanctification and seeks to produce His fruit in us as our minds are renewed and we are conformed to the image of Christ. Though sin remains a reality, as Christians are led by the Spirit, we grow in the knowledge of the Lord and endeavor to keep His commands. We believe that a Christian is called to do everything to the glory of God, to make disciples of all nations, to pursue love and do good to everyone, to be a faithful steward of all that God has entrusted to him/her, and to obey the Word of God in all matters of faith and life.

*1 Corinthians 10:31; Titus 2:11-12; 1 Peter 4:11; 1 John 2:3-6; Romans 12:1-3*

## **XIII. The Family**

We believe that God has ordained marriage to be the union of one man and one woman in a life-long covenant, as they submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Husbands are called to love and lead their wives as Christ loved the Church. Wives are called to respect and submit to their husbands as the Church submits to Jesus. Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing from God and parents bear the primary responsibility of training them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

*Genesis 2:24; Deuteronomy 6:7; Psalm 139:13-16; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 5:21-25*

## **XIV. Marriage and Sexuality**

We believe that the term 'marriage' has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God. We believe that God has ordained marriage to be the union of one man and one woman in a life-long covenant, as they submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

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.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexual or bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or stated disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

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 neither in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church. Any such behavior or attitudes will be subject to discipline by the elders, as laid out in Article II Section 5 of our by-laws.

*Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:21-25; Hebrews 13:4*