



STATEMENT OF FAITH

Because we recognize the importance to openly state what we stand for, in order that we might stand together, the following are set forth as the Statement of Faith for Living Water Fellowship. (Amos 3:3)

These statements represent some of the foundations for our faith. We believe that revelation from the Word of God is progressive and that Jesus will continue to reveal more of Himself to us in and through His Word (Matthew 11:25-27; John 3:27; 8:31, 32).

THE SCRIPTURES

The Bible is the inspired Word of God. It is the result of holy men of old who spoke and wrote as they were moved upon by the Holy Spirit. It has been preserved through the years by God and is given to us by Him as the authoritative voice in matters of doctrine, faith, and conduct (2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:21).

THE GODHEAD

Our God is One God, yet manifested as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. God the Father is greater than all. He is the Source of the Word (Logos) and the creator and originator of all things (John 14:28). God the Son is the Word of God manifested in the flesh, the One who was begotten of God, and who has existed with the Father from the beginning (John 1:18; John 1:14). In Jesus, God's Son, all the essence and fullness of deity lives in bodily form (Colossians 2:9). The Father has bestowed upon Jesus all authority to rule and reign in heaven and on the earth. God the Holy Spirit is the very Spirit of God who proceeds forth from the Father (John 15:26). He has come to give testimony to Jesus and glorify Him. He convinces the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He guides us into all truth, revealing the things of Christ, and brings divine comfort and help to the believer (John 14:26; 16:7-14).

MAN, HIS FALL, AND REDEMPTION

Man is a created being, made in the likeness and image of God. Through Adam's transgression and fall, sin came into the world, and has its effect on all humanity and creation itself. The Scriptures declare, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" and, "As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one." Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was manifested to undo the work of the devil. Jesus shed His blood and gave His life to redeem mankind from sin and restore man back to God (Romans 5:4; Romans 3:10; Romans 3:23; 1 John 3:8). He is the only mediator between God and man, the only sacrifice for sin, and

the only way into the presence of God, our Heavenly Father (John 14:6). Salvation is the gift of God to man. The gift of salvation is appropriated and enjoyed independent of works and the requirements of the law, and is received by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. God's work through Christ has broken the power of sin, bringing righteousness to the believer, and enabling him to produce good works which are acceptable to God (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

REPENTANCE

Repentance is a gift from God, dependent upon the convicting action of the Holy Spirit in the lives of both sinners and believers. The conviction of the Holy Spirit, which often accompanies the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, will result in the revelation of one's sinfulness which should lead to godly sorrow. Remorse, or worldly sorrow, is a feeling of deep regret, hopelessness or even despair. It does not lead to a change of heart. On the other hand, godly sorrow produces repentance which causes us to turn away from sin and selfishness and to receive God's work in our heart. True repentance brings God's forgiveness and restoration. Repentance changes the way we feel and act about sin, self and God. Repentance is a total change of heart, mind, attitude, emotions, will, action and lifestyle flowing from the turmoil and sorrow of the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin (2 Corinthians 7:10; Psalms 51; Acts 11:18; 2 Timothy 2:25; Romans 1:18-32; Matthew 9:12-13).

ETERNAL LIFE AND THE NEW BIRTH

Man's first step toward salvation is godly sorrow that brings about repentance. This is followed by the new birth. The new birth is also referred to as one "being saved" or "born again." It is essential that one be born again to see and enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. The new birth produces eternal life in the believer (2 Corinthians 7:10; 1 John 5:12; John 3:3-5). The new birth is the rebirth of the human spirit. First, there is the washing of regeneration, which cleanses the human spirit of sin. Second, there is the renewing of our spirit by the Holy Spirit who joins our spirit to the spirit of Christ. In the new birth, the believer is made one with Christ Jesus. He is delivered from the power of sin and the authority of Satan's rule and brought into God's Kingdom. The new birth is a new beginning, bringing God's life, wisdom, righteousness, and holiness to the believer (Romans 6:11; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Titus 3:4-7).

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a gift from God promised by the Lord Jesus to all believers. The Holy Spirit is received by faith subsequent to the new birth. The Holy Spirit enables the believer to walk in the power of God, live a holy life, manifest the fruit of the Spirit, and be a witness of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit guides the believer into the truth of God's Word and brings insight into the future. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God the Father, who brings comfort and help to the believer. He causes us to know, understand, and do the will of God. Through the Holy Spirit, God the Father distributes various gifts to each believer and places them in the body of Christ as it has pleased Him. We believe in the continuing operation of the gifts of the Spirit as enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12-14 and as experienced in the early church. The initial physical evidence of this experience is the ability to speak in other tongues as enabled by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; John 14:16,17; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:38-39; Acts 19:1-7; Acts 2:4). Tongues is a divine, supernatural language and means whereby the believer may commune with God. Tongues, also referred to as praying in the spirit, is a means of an acceptable expression of thanks and worship unto God. Through the gift of tongues, one may also receive divine insight and revelation.

SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification is a definite, yet progressive work of grace, commencing at the time of regeneration and continuing until the consummation of our salvation (Hebrews 12:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 1 Peter 3:18; Philippians 3:12-14; 1 Corinthians 1:30). Sanctification refers to a "setting apart." Even though Christians

are in the world; they are not of the world. Their lifestyle should be according to the righteous and holy standard revealed in God's Word. The Bible teaches that "without holiness no man can see the Lord." To live a holy life is to live a life free from sin. God has delivered us from the authority of sin so we might serve Him in newness of spirit. We are commanded to separate ourselves from all unclean things of the flesh and every unclean spirit and "to perfect holiness in the fear of God" (Romans 6:4-14; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1).

FAITH AND WORKS

We believe that faith without works is dead. We believe, as a matter of the fundamental beliefs and doctrines of this church, that nothing can be genuinely believed without there being an accompanying and corresponding action. Our faith is an active faith that requires the doing of deeds in the world. Our faith is not a passive or complacent system of intellectual belief or assent to doctrine, but is an active force in our lives that requires that action be taken. A living, active faith will be manifested not only in belief and mental assent but in actions expressed and based upon that belief (James 2:14-17; Ephesians 2:8-10; Matthew 7:24-27; Matthew 5:16; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 16:27; Revelation 2:23; 22:12).

RESURRECTION OF THE JUST AND THE RETURN OF THE LORD

When Jesus ascended into heaven, the angels said, "This same Jesus shall so come in like manner." According to Scripture, Jesus is coming back to the earth again. When He comes, "...the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." We will ultimately return with Him to the earth, where we will reign with Him (Matthew 5:5; Acts 1:11; 1Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

HELL AND ETERNAL RETRIBUTION

The one who physically dies in his sins without believing in and receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is hopelessly and eternally lost. He shall be forever banished from God's presence and shall spend eternity in the lake of fire. He shall have no further opportunity of hearing the gospel or repenting. The lake of fire is real. The terms "eternal" and "everlasting", used in describing the duration of punishment of the damned in the lake of fire, carry the same thought and meaning of endless existence as used in describing the duration of joy and ecstasy of the saints (Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 19:20).

THE CHURCH

We believe that the church is the body of Christ expressed as the church individual, the church local, and the church universal and invisible (all saints of all places and all times united together under one Lord). As such, we believe the church to be more than just a building or a gathering of people. It is a body living in relationship and harmony under the direction of the head, Jesus Christ (1Corinthians 6:15; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Romans 16:5; 1 Peter 2:4-5; Ephesians 2:19; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 4:11-16). The local church is an expression of the community and fellowship of God. The body of Christ on the earth is an intimate community of believers who are devoted to apostolic teaching, to fellowship, and to the breaking of bread and prayer. The local body will meet together regularly as a whole and, at various times, in smaller groups in the homes of members. As in the early church, we consider the fellowship of the saints together in the private homes of the members to be an expression of the life of faith of the church. Indeed, to this end, the Word of God frequently refers to the church as a "household" (Matthew 16:13-20; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-47; 1 Peter 4:17; 1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 2:19; 1 Peter 2:5; Acts 18:8; Romans 16:5,10,11; 1 Corinthians 1:11, 16; 16:15, 19; Colossians 4:15; 2 Timothy 4:19).

THE LEADERSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that in all matters concerning the body of Christ, in its direction, discipline, ministry and functioning, that specific guidance, instruction, revelation, and discernment of truth from falsehood is available by the leading of the Holy Spirit who enables us to know spiritual things by the Spirit (Acts 13:1-3, 1 Timothy 1:18; Romans 8:14; 1 Timothy 5:22; John 16:13-15; 1 Corinthians 5:3; Revelation 2:7).

THE VISIONARY AND CHURCH GOVERNMENT

We believe that there is always a God-called individual who is the presiding leader in any church government raised up by God. That person will be the first among equals. We believe that this person will operate in an ascension gift; not necessarily a pastor. The Senior Pastor is the title given to this person in this church. The Senior Pastor will be the person through whom the main vision of the church is received, articulated, and developed. He will be the one who will ultimately be accountable to God for the church. He will be recognized by the grace, anointing, ability, and vision given to him by God (Numbers 27:15-22; 1 Corinthians 12:18; Ephesians 4:11; Acts 13:1-3). God will raise up other ascension gifts to function as leaders with, and in relationship to, the Senior Pastor. We believe that there will mutual submission and accountability within the government of the church. There will be submission and accountability of the Senior Pastor to the others in the governing leadership and there will be submission and accountability of the leaders to the Senior Pastor. We believe that they are to seek the mind of God together for the church in all areas of its affairs, both spiritual and temporal.

THE ROLE OF THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

We believe the apostolic ministry is a gift from Christ to His church. As in the early church, the ministry of the apostle continues today. The apostle functions in one or more localities, working to establish new churches and strengthen existing churches and ministries. The apostle is gifted to lay the foundation (which is Christ), recognize leadership gifts, share God's vision for His church, equip the saints for the work of ministry, and bring correction and discipline when necessary. We seek to relate to the apostles of Christ and to be apostolic ourselves (Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 1:25-29).

THE ROLE OF THE PROPHETIC MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

We believe that God continues to speak to His people today. We believe that hearing from God, both individually as members, and corporately as a church, through prophecy or any other biblical means chosen by God, is essential to our faith and walk with God. Prophecy is only one method of discerning God's will and direction. While God's Word is perfect and without error, the vessels through which God speaks are imperfect. Therefore, actions should not be taken solely on the basis of prophetic words apart from other confirmation (1 Corinthians 14:3; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Timothy 4:14; Acts 13:1-3; Romans 12:6; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 14:39; 1 Corinthians 14:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21; 1 Timothy 5:22; 2 Timothy 1:6; 1 John 4:1-3).

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is, by its very nature and composition, a membership organization. All those who have believed in and received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are members of Christ's church. The local church is the manifestation, within our society, of Christ's church. Each local church exists for an express purpose in God's plan. As a result, individual members of the body of Christ may desire to associate with us as members of Living Water Fellowship. The Lord will set some members of His church into this local church as members as it pleases Him. Members of Living Water Fellowship will agree to, and abide by, the Articles of Membership. Members shall enjoy various privileges and benefits that shall

be established by the leadership of Living Water Fellowship. Those who desire to work in ministry positions in, or as an extension of, Living Water Fellowship shall also agree to abide by the Articles of Membership, this Statement of Faith, and agree to fulfill such requirements as shall be established by the leadership. This church is owned by the Lord Jesus Christ who has entrusted the care of the flock to the leadership He has raised up here. Members of this local church are given into the care and oversight of its leaders who must give an account to God for their souls. The Senior Pastor and leaders of this church shall have the right to determine who may attend church meetings and functions. It is not a place of public accommodation, or is it a public institution, and its property is not a public place but is, rather, private property belonging to this church (Acts 20:28-31; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 1:18-20; 6:5; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 2 John 9-11; Titus 3:10-11; Romans 16:17).

ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

- a. Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper** We believe that water baptism by immersion are to be observed and practiced by believers (John 3:21; Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12; 19:5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32). Because we believe in the priesthood of believers, we believe the administration of such ordinances is not limited to ordained or licensed ministers (1 Peter 2:5,9). (While immersion for baptism is the Scriptural norm, if an individual is physically incapacitated, baptism by sprinkling is permitted.)
- b. The Institution of Marriage** We believe in the creation, and God as the creator. We believe God created man, and He created them male and female. As such, He created them different so as to complement and complete each other. God instituted monogamous marriage between male and female as the foundation of the family, the basic structure of human society. We, therefore believe in the sanctity of marriage, having been ordained and instituted by God Himself when Adam and Eve were joined together as husband and wife in the Garden of Eden. This holy union is the basis upon which the family unit is formed and a godly society is perpetuated. A husband and his wife are commanded to raise their children in the nurture, admonition, and fear of the Lord. For these reasons, we find adultery (extramarital sexual activity), fornication (sexual intercourse outside of marriage), homosexuality (same sex sexual relations), and any other sexual practices forbidden by the Scriptures, to be detrimental to the plan and purpose of God for the family (Romans 1:16-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; 7:2,3; Ephesians 5:22-33).
- c. Ordination and Licensing of Ministers** This church is a non-sacramental Protestant church. We reject the efficacy of ritual and the concept of a separate priestly class. We recognize the priesthood of believers and the serving ministry of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher with church government administered by God-called, anointed leaders. We recognize that those called to these offices will lead by example in prayer, worship, teaching, laying on of hands, and prophesying, and that such actions on the part of those licensed and ordained by this church are equivalent to the sacramental function of the priesthood in traditional sacramental churches. Ordination and licensing in this church is a separation and recognition of a specific gifting of God. We believe that God calls certain individuals into specific ministries including, but not limited to, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. It is God who calls. Man can only recognize God's call and acknowledge it. Licensing and ordination are conferred on the basis of that recognition of God's gifting. Individuals called to a specific office by God and licensed or ordained by this church will have the right to officiate and/or participate in the traditional sacramental and ordinal functions of the church such as marriage, funerals, baptisms, and the like. They shall be expected to function in the spiritual giftings of their office and demonstrate the reality of their calling. It shall also be expected that those who serve as licensed or ordained ministers in this church shall maintain a godly life and scriptural standard of teaching (Ephesians 4:1-16; Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; Acts 13:1-3).

AUTONOMY AND RELATIONSHIP

We believe that the local church, although autonomous, will be related to other local churches and ministries through fellowship and formed relationships. We believe that there are foundational ministries of apostles and prophets that transcend the local church and that the local church should be in relationship with such a ministry or ministries for the purpose of advice, counsel, oversight, encouragement and help. Such ministries are ordained by God to provide a connection and relationship to the universal body of Christ. They also provide spiritual covering, protection and accountability for local leadership (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Acts 2:42; Galatians 2:7-9; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

PASTORAL CARE

We believe the Scriptures encourage members of a church to seek advice, counsel, direction, purpose, guidance and conflict resolution through church leaders and other spiritually mature men and women within the body of Christ (Proverbs 27:9; Proverbs 11:14; Psalm 55:13-14). The transformation of the soul through the word of God, the denying of the old nature (Galatians 2:20; 5:24; 1 Peter 1:13-15), salvation through grace by faith (Ephesians 2:1-8), and the promise of the resurrection (John 3:16; 10:25-26), are effective working mechanisms that characterize pastoral care ministry. Such ministry is foundational to the practice of our faith (Romans 3:25; Luke 9:23; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 5:23; Romans 12:1-2).

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

We believe in church discipline administered in the church in a spirit of meekness. The Bible sets forth three grounds for discipline: unspiritual conduct that obscures the truth of God by false teaching or doctrine; unscriptural conduct that mars the holy character of God and His church by unholy, immoral living, action or lifestyle; and unscriptural conduct that hinders the work of God by bringing confusion or division to the body. The purpose of church discipline is the restoration of the one subject to the discipline and/or the purification of the church. Church discipline is body ministry. The steps of discipline are one-on-one private confrontation, private confrontation with witnesses, and, finally, if necessary, exposure to the church for judgment leading to restoration or separation (Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1; Romans 16:17, 2 John 9-11; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8; 1 Timothy 5:20).

MEDIATION

We believe, as members of the same body of Christ, baptized by one spirit into one body, that we must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and as such, we are precluded from bringing a lawsuit in a civil court against another person who professes to be a Christian or against a Christian ministry. We believe that all such disputes must be resolved within the body of Christ without taking them before unbelievers for judgment (1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:3-6).

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

We believe the Scriptures instruct members of the church to support the local church through tithes and offerings in proportion as the Lord has prospered them, thereby acknowledging that any institution can continue or be of full and meaningful service only in proportion as all of the members of the church accept their responsibility of faithfully supporting it (Malachi 3:10; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-9; Hebrews 7:1-8).

BENEVOLENCE

We believe that the Scriptures are clear concerning helping those in need. We are commanded to do good to all people as we have opportunity, with a special emphasis upon caring for those who profess to be fellow Christians, especially those of our own fellowship of believers. We are commanded to be generous and willing to share, laying up treasures for ourselves in heaven by our kindness and generosity in this life. This is true for the church as an organization as well as for the individual members of the church. Therefore, in accordance with these and other biblical commands, as a fundamental aspect of the practice of our faith, we will share of our material goods with those in need and will minister to them to the best of our abilities, whatever the need may be (Proverbs 25:21; Isaiah 58:10; Galatians 6:10; 1 Timothy 6:18-19; Hebrews 13:16; James 2:15, 16).

LAYING ON OF HANDS

The laying on of hands is a biblical practice. Jesus practiced it as a blessing (Mark 10:13-16) and it is our grounds for baby dedication instead of infant baptism. We believe in the laying on of hands for healing (Mark 5:22, 23 & 41); Mark 5:28-3; Acts 28:8; Acts 19:11, 12); laying on of hands to confer office (Acts 6:2-6); laying on of hands to receive the Holy Spirit (Act 8:14-18); to receive a particular impartation or anointing from God (1 Timothy 4:14); laying on of hands for appointment to leadership (1 Timothy 4:14).

DIVINE HEALING

Sickness and disease are a curse on human life and were released into the world as a result of Adam's sin. It is God's will that we "prosper and be in health, even as our soul prospers." God has made provision for healing in and through His Word and through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Healing can be realized through the prayer of faith, by the laying on of hands, and by the gift of healing (Psalm 107:20; James 5:15; 1 Peter 2:24; Mark 16:18; Matthew 8:16, 17; Isaiah 53:45, 5; 1 Corinthians 12:9). Sin, including the sin of unforgiveness, can hinder or prevent healing from being received. It is expected that the believer will live a life that encourages health and well-being, thus cooperating with the laws of God which promote good health. We recognize that God has given us various natural means and medical science which also serve to encourage life and health. At the same time, we acknowledge that all healing comes from God.

DELIVERANCE

The need for deliverance is manifested by an inability to be free from a bondage, (mental, emotional, physical or spiritual) normally associated with demonic activity. It is God's desire to bring deliverance to His people (Job 5:19; Psalms 91:3, Hebrews 2:14, 15; 2 Peter 2:9). We have been granted authority in the name of Jesus to bring deliverance to others (Mark 16:17; John 14:12; 1 Corinthians 12:8-11). We must understand that our warfare is with the forces of evil (Ephesians 6:12), our weapon is the Word of God, our authority and power is from Jesus Himself (Mark 16:17; Acts 1:8), and the battlefield is first of all in the spiritual realms (Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, Romans 8:9; Galatians 5:22-23).

RELATIONSHIP OF CHURCH AND STATE

God has entrusted the church with the solemn biblical responsibility of being the conscience of society, culture, and government. As such, the church has a duty before God to speak to the issues that arise and relate to society, culture and government. Specifically, the church, in the tradition of the prophets, is required to call government to account before God for the actions taken by the government with a view toward keeping the government in its proper role and relationship as a steward under God of the resources of the nation (1 Kings 18:18; 2 Chronicles 15:1-4; Matthew 5:13-14; Acts 12:20-23; 1 Samuel 15:14-35).

The church has a divine mandate to practice its faith as dictated by God. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. The church is the blood bought bride of Christ, of whom Jesus is the head, the Lord, and the only Master. As such, we categorically reject any and all claims by the state to headship or sovereignty over the church. When earthly governments leave their God-ordained sphere of responsibility and seek to restrain, hamper or limit the church's obedience to Christ in all areas of life, then the church must and will obey God rather than man, and must also confront the government with its error and call it back to its proper place under God (Exodus 8, 9, 10; Daniel 3:1-30; 6:1-28; Acts 4:19; 5:29).