

# Visitor's Booklet

Reformed in Doctrine, Charismatic in Ministry, Evangelical in Mission



**HOUSEHOLD *of* FAITH**  
COMMUNITY CHURCH  
HILLSBORO, OR

## Service Time:

Meeting every Sunday afternoon -- 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm  
With a Shared meal following

Hillsboro HOFCC meeting location: (in the CEC building)  
5529 NE Century Blvd  
Hillsboro, OR 97124

## Mailing Address:

Hillsboro Household of Faith

Community Church  
7325 NE Imbrie Dr, #256  
Hillsboro, Oregon, 97124

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# WELCOME TO HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH!

We are happy to have you with us. The introductions on these pages are provided to help you understand how our Sunday Gatherings support one another in living the Christian life.

## **SUNDAY IS OUR WEEKLY HOLIDAY!**

At HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH (HOFCC) we celebrate our Lord's Day each week as a delightful holiday for the family of God. The atmosphere of our weekly gathering is intended to be a wonderful family reunion, full of joy and loving concern for one another. Because this is our only service each week, we like to "make a day of it."

Our gathering is age-integrated. That means all ages participate together in worship, Bible teaching and fellowship. Our worship is doctrinally sound and musically appealing to all ages. Likewise, our Bible teachers make every effort to feed all ages on sound, soul-stirring expository preaching. Following our service, we host a weekly Shared Meal where we come prepared to show our love for God by the way we love and serve one another. (Visitors are welcome as our guests!)

This extended time together once each week accomplishes two things: First, it allows our members to really reconnect with one another.

Second, it leaves ample time each week for everyone to "Be doers of God's Word, and not merely hearers" (Jam 1:22). Rather than multiply church services, we encourage our members to live a lifestyle of ministry hospitality: hosting times to pray and worship together, Bible study groups, and organizing "work-parties" for one another. In times of crisis, we expect everyone to flex their schedules and squeeze their

finances to pitch in and help by preparing meals, caring for one another's children, and helping one another make it through hard times.

## **THE GREAT COMMISSION LIFE-STYLE**

All this provides the biblical backdrop needed for effective evangelism. Our love for one another "adorns the Gospel." (Tit 2:10) But living this lifestyle is a *family adventure*. To serve God effectively as a team of ambassadors for Christ we must equip each family together as a team. Then every home can become an embassy of God's kingdom—a place where others "taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psa. 34:8). What you are seeing here today is our weekly "support group meeting" for this godly lifestyle.

### **"WALKING WITH THE WISE"**

"Those who walk with the wise become wise, but a companion of fools will suffer harm" (PRO. 13:20). Many families and churches today are losing their children to the world. This is because they fail to be truly converted to Christ and knit into the body-life of the church. But by God's grace, at HOFCC, we are not losing our children. This is partly because we *do not* offer a Sunday School or a Children's Church. Instead, we put our efforts into equipping our member parents to include their children in their lives at home and in the church. In our services, the children sing the same songs as their parents, hear the same teaching, and feel the same awe as God moves among us in the gifts.

As a visitor with children, please do not feel embarrassed if your children seem uninterested. Help them to understand that their eternity is at stake. Train them to enjoy being included. Coach them in worship. Use our Nursing Mother's/Changing Room (to change diapers and attitudes). This approach is not easy, but it is well worth the effort.

## **MOVING IN THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT**

“Each one has a song, a teaching, a revelation...” (1 COR. 14:26). During our worship time the Holy Spirit prompts believers to build up one another by means of spiritual gifts. This “body ministry” is welcomed, provided it is offered in keeping with the guidelines laid down by Paul in 1 Cor. 14:12-19 & 26-35. In keeping with scripture, we have laid out the following guidelines.

All men, ages 13+, are free to speak without prior “screening” by from the elders. This is because, “the head of every man is Christ,” (1Cor 11:2-7). However, all that is said will be evaluated by the leaders and other men of the church as to its faithfulness to the Bible. And will be corrected congregationally. Paul does not permit women to participate *audibly* in this evaluation process (see 1Cor 14:31-35).

Women may move in the spiritual gifts. Phillip had four daughters who prophesied. (Acts 21:9) But, because “the head of a wife is her husband” (1Cor 11:2-7) a wife or daughter must ask her own husband or father for *his* oversight before addressing the congregation. Our leaders will cover for those whose husband or father is not present. Time may not permit everyone to share. Allow the Worship Leaders to pace the flow of this ministry, and defer to one another.

## **DEVOTING OURSELVES TO THE APOSTLES’ DOCTRINE**

The main course of our time together each week is spent devoting ourselves to the Word of God. We practice Expository Teaching which means we allow the Bible to direct the content of our sermons. We will often spend several months studying a single book of the Bible. During or after the sermon there may be opportunity for the men to discuss the message in the context of the whole assembly. This is not a time for divisive comments, argumentation over words, or “rabbit trails”, but rather to build one another up with the gifts God has given us. We also want to put you at rest about being too concerned with the noise level of your children. We are all in the process of training our children as well and those teaching are very comfortable with occasional children’s noises.

## **OUR LORD'S SUPPER**

Communion is celebrated at the close of our gathering each week. Tables of bread and grape juice are set up where we welcome the believing head of each household (whether male or female) to serve our Lord's Supper to the believing members of his or her family and guests. Huddle together or slip outside to a quiet place and use this special time to draw closer to God and closer to one another in Christ. Examine yourselves. Confess your sins to God and renew right relationships with one another. Step away to speak privately as needed. Forgive. Embrace. Then partake together. As a visitor feel free to join with a member's household if you like.

## **OUR SUNDAY AFTERNOON SHARED MEAL & FELLOWSHIP TIME**

"...They were taking their meals together with gladness" (Acts 2:46). Our Shared Meal (please, don't call it a "pot luck!") is much more than a social activity. It is an offering to God that is given to one another in Jesus name. It is our time for making *new* friends who we trust enough to begin sharing our lives with throughout the week. Expect to be included, but even as a visitor, invite yourself to join another family. Spend our Sunday evening meal and fellowship time in *age-integrated* activities. Tell an interesting story that illustrates the truth of God's Word. Enjoy one another's company.

All parents are responsible to know where their children are and who they are with at all times (this won't be easy!). Though your family doesn't have to stay together all the time, please keep your family members from drifting away into age-segregated groups. Welcome all ages into your activities.

## **PRODUCTIVE FELLOWSHIP**

"And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful." (Tit 3:14) We all have projects hanging over us that need to be tackled. At HOFCC, instead of doing these jobs on our own, we encourage our members

to work with one another. Yard work, spring cleaning, painting, remodeling, building projects, landscaping, moving parties, and such can all be accomplished much faster in the spirit of the old fashioned barn raisings and quilting bees. All ages can learn valuable work skills and make new friends while getting the work done. Work parties should be roughly ¼ “party.” Hosts are asked to provide a generous lunch during a break or after the work is completed. Have lunch, make music and enjoy a time of family-inclusive recreation.

To schedule a “work party” for any HOFCC member in need of help, our members have only to call one of our leaders.

## **STOREHOUSE TITHES & OFFERINGS**

At HOFCC we teach New Testament “grace giving” under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament God’s people were required to “Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house” (Mal. 3:8-10). In the New Testament, giving continues to supply the church’s ministers, members, and missions, but it is no longer *divesting* oneself of money, but rather of *investing* in far safer opportunities which yield far better returns (Php. 4:17). Every Christian is commanded to love others and to give in proportion to (i.e., as a percentage of) his actual income (2 Cor. 8:12-15 & 1 Tim. 6:17-19). All such giving is to be done cheerfully, from a willing heart, without compulsion (2 Cor. 9:6-8).

God does not need our money. He already owns everything. But our fellow members will have need of occasional charity. At HOFCC we “hire them” to get back on their feet. So, find a local church that you can believe in enough to support it with your tithes and offerings. Identify where you would turn for assistance in times of crisis, and then do your part to make it financially strong for everyone.

### **Our Offering Box**

In doing so, please give discretely and without fanfare. At HOFCC we do not collect offerings. Instead, we ask our members to place their tithes and offerings in the Offering Box which is towards the back of the room.

## YOUR BUDGET FOR HOSPITALITY

“... go to the place that the LORD your God chooses and spend [an annual tithe] for whatever you desire... And you shall eat there before the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household.” (see Deu. 14:22-26) The *spirit* of this *Celebration Tithe* continues in God’s command that we practice hospitality toward one another. Hospitality, and especially sharing meals, is an offering of worship toward God expressed by loving one another.

On this basis we encourage all our members to set aside a generous percentage of income each year for use in celebration. Bring ample quantities of quality food for our Shared Meal each week. Celebrate worthwhile holidays with family and friends. Live well as Ambassadors for Christ. Make your home an embassy of God’s kingdom. Practice hospitality toward new friends. As your income allows, consider taking a ministry vacation or going on a short-term missions trip. Invest a reasonable amount of money each year in rejoicing with your family and friends. By sharing your celebrations you adorn the Gospel of Christ, and allow others to “taste and see that the Lord is good” (Psa. 34:8).

## **KEEPING THE FIRE IN THE FIREPLACE**

*“Reformed in Doctrine, Charismatic in Ministry, Evangelical in Mission” - A short essay by Greg Harris*

These three phrases are emblazoned across the top of our Sunday bulletins. But what do they mean? How do they affect the way we live and serve as a local church? Why do we believe that all three must be championed in our day? The following article attempts to explain.

For many years the Bible has been treated like a deck of cards. Denominations behave like players in some doctrinal card game where each church holds only a few cards in its hand as it competes with other churches for new members. Every church has its own “doctrinal distinctives” or emphases which may even be reflected in the church’s name (e.g. Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc.) In addition, churches are grouped into larger camps, based on over-arching values (e.g. Reformed, Charismatic & Evangelical). Such divisions rob every church of its heritage in the whole counsel of God.

Generally speaking, Reformed churches hold tightly to the cards (i.e. the passages of Scripture) that pertain to “the doctrines of grace.” They also emphasize the need to guard sound doctrine from error. Charismatic churches hold the cards that relate to the Holy Spirit and His gifts. They emphasize supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Evangelicals hold on dearly to the cards that teach the Great Commission, personal evangelism and world missions. They emphasize winning the lost to Christ.

Our analogy breaks down of course, because no true church is void of all interest in the doctrines championed by the others. But over time, these three camps have drifted farther and farther apart. Today they seem mutually exclusive of one another. What is worse, as each has overemphasized and overreacted to each doctrine, errors have occurred on all sides. As each church pushes its favorite truth to an erroneous extreme, the other churches attempt to distance themselves from those errors and all but abandon some key doctrines.



“We don’t emphasize election here.” Or, “We are not ‘seeker sensitive.’” Or, “We won’t stand for Holy Spirit wildfire.” In this way major passages of God’s Word are being abandoned to other churches who, in their zeal, distort them and make them the primary basis of their church’s identity. By being taught without the balance that comes from knowing and believing the other doctrines, every church loses out.

### **It Takes All Three!**

The situation today requires a Christian to attend three churches just to receive a balanced diet of what the Bible actually teaches— one to enjoy expository Bible teaching and basic Bible doctrine (e.g. a sound Reformed Church), one to experience supernatural ministry (e.g. a sound Charismatic church) and yet another to be equipped to live the Great Commission (e.g. a sound Evangelical church). As long as every church holds only its own limited denominational “hand,” no church is “playing with a full deck.” The whole counsel of God has become divided, disjointed and out of balance. HOFCC is an attempt to bring these three camps of Bible doctrine back together in one local church. We strive to be *biblically* Reformed, *biblically* Charismatic and *biblically* evangelical in order to enjoy the benefits and avoid the errors of all three. We want everything that the Bible teaches, but nothing more.

### **Strengths Can Become Weaknesses**

The strength of the Reformed pastor can become his weakness. He has such confidence in the truth of the Bible and the sovereignty of God that he distrusts the Spirit of God and becomes fatalistic in his approach to missions. He is cold and academic in his teaching. He closes all opportunities for God to move with power in the church. He “despises prophesy” as “adding to the Scripture.” He “forbids speaking in tongues,” dismissing it as “wildfire.” He is like a man with a massive stone fireplace made up of sound Bible doctrine. But he would rather sit in a cold, dark, empty house than take any chance that the fire might get out of the fireplace, or that careless guests might damage his fine stone work. He does not understand that his precious fireplace has been designed by God to safely hold the blazing fire of God’s Holy Spirit for the benefit of many yet to be saved. A fireplace needs a fire.

On the other hand, the strength of the Charismatic pastor can also become his weakness. His confidence in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit can undermine his motivation to do the hard work of Bible study and sound doctrinal preaching of the Gospel. He believes he need only read a passage and “pray through” until he “feels the anointing.” Then he steps into his pulpit to serve up half-baked ideas to an ever-enthusiastic, but doctrinally famished congregation. This pastor is like a man who builds a bonfire in the middle of his living room floor. Though a wonderful stone fireplace stands just a few feet away, he thinks that any attempt to regulate the moving of the Spirit, to limit the use of tongues in the service or to evaluate the content of a given prophesy, (as the Bible clearly commands us to do in 1 Cor. 14:26- 33), would somehow “quench the Spirit.” He also presumes upon the Holy Spirit in evangelism, failing to explain what God has accomplished for the sinner through Jesus Christ, not taking seriously the fact that the Spirit of God works through the proclamation of the Gospel to save sinners. Fire belongs in a fireplace.

In a similar way the Evangelical pastor’s strength can become his weakness. His desire to reach people for Christ is admirable. But when he compromises God’s Word by dumbing down the Gospel and despises God’s Spirit by resorting to a “repeat after me” sinners prayer, all in order to get more people to make a decision for Christ, he does everyone a disservice. In his attempts to be “culturally relevant” and “seeker sensitive,” he is ashamed of the Gospel, attempting to offer a Savior who is not Lord. Lacking zeal for sound doctrine for fear that God’s truth will offend visitors, and lacking faith in the power of the Holy Spirit to convict and convert the lost through the foolishness of the Gospel message, such pastors serve up a diet of short, fluffy, topical messages that produces many *false conversions*. This is the cause of “nominal Christianity,” seen in the growing number of people who attend evangelical churches, but who have yet to be born again, who have only false assurance of salvation, who bear no spiritual fruit, are not zealous for good works and who in fact know very little Bible doctrine!

Such an Evangelical pastor does not understand that without the fireplace of sound doctrine to display God's Truth there can be no knowledge of sin, no true repentance, nor saving faith. Without the fire of the Holy Spirit to confirm God's Word with power in the new birth, there will be no lasting fruit. It is this combination of the fireplace and the fire that provides an ideal context for effective evangelistic ministry.

### **The Balance of God's Truth**

In each camp, the remedy is found in the doctrines monopolized by the other two camps. The entire Bible is for the entire church! What has been lost is the integrity of Truth itself. The major doctrines referred to by the terms Reformed, Charismatic and Evangelical, interact in dynamic ways to check the excesses of one another and maintain proper balance.

By keeping the fire in the fireplace, we create a beautiful backdrop of God's power in confirmation of God's Truth as an expression of God's Love. Here we find God's people showing their love for God by the way they love one another. Here we experience passionate worship toward God that is both "in spirit and in truth," and here we discover a confidence in the Gospel that allows us to boldly speak God's truth in love.

All of the Bible doctrines now monopolized and distorted by the three major camps of Protestant Christianity are found in every Bible. They have always been there. They comprise an integrated whole. One group's misunderstanding or misapplication of a doctrine cannot justify the rest of us in ignoring that part of God's Word. All of God's truths are intended to be understood, believed and obeyed in relation to one another by the entire Body of Christ. In this sense, every church is intended to be "a full deck church" with all of the crucial checks and balances in place. HOFCC is an attempt to be just that. Thus far we find the combination to be both refreshing and effective.

## **OUR PURPOSE, POLITY & CULTURE**

The following is provided to help our visitors understand a few of the Biblical principles that most effect our local church. For more information, please visit [www.hillsboro-hofcc.org](http://www.hillsboro-hofcc.org)

### **THE PURPOSES OF CHRIST'S CHURCH**

Christ's church exists to *worship God corporately*, to *nurture fellow believers in the obedience of faith* and to *proclaim the Gospel of God's grace to the world*. These three purposes are accomplished under the oversight of a plurality of local Elders and Deacons. Church leaders are not intended to do the works of ministry on behalf of the people of God (EPH. 4:11-14). (Elders are called "overseers," not "over doers!") Instead, leaders are to use their offices to equip God's people to provide the ministry as a life-style. (1THESS. 4:9- 12).

### **A PLURALITY OF LOCAL ELDERS**

"Be examples to the flock..." (1 PETER 5:3) The most important ministry of Elders is to be *examples of sound doctrine in action*. This is why the qualifications for church Elders (1 TIM. 3:1-15) are based on a man's ability to manage his own household well. In the context of that life example, through ministry hospitality, each Elder is best able to teach sound Bible doctrine.

## **THE ROLE OF DEACONS**

Deacons are *ministers of mercy*. They have been commissioned, under the oversight of our Elders, to respond to needs on behalf of our church. They serve God in many ways — opening and closing facilities, cleaning up, organizing the rest of us to serve, etc., but their primary role is to identify needs and fill them by organizing Productive Fellowship activities and dispersing financial assistance. If you have a need, or are aware of a need, please contact us.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLD IN THE LOCAL CHURCH**

The Christian household is the primary embassy of the kingdom of God and the primary training ground for local church leadership. It is also the social and economic vehicle God has chosen to plant new local churches at home and abroad. As such, it becomes strong by exerting itself in a life-style of ministry. Unfortunately, for most families in the developed nations, the home has become a place to go when nothing else is open. Responsibilities that God intended to be fulfilled by each household, such as child-training, education and hospitality, have been transferred out of the home into churches, schools and businesses. In the churches Sunday schools, youth groups, and other age-segregated programs attempt to do for families what God intended each household to do for its own members. This further *weakens* families by allowing them to avoid the very activities that would make them strong and effective for God. Families are restored by returning obediently to their responsibilities.

## **Leadership Institute: OUR STUDY GROUP FOR EMERGING CHURCH LEADERS**

New leadership for a reproducing local church emerges from among the godly men of each new congregation. Though Bible college and seminary can be helpful, formal training alone cannot satisfy all the Biblical qualifications for church leadership (see 1 Tim. 3:1-7). The basic qualifications are developed simply by “walking with the wise” through a season of participation in one’s local church: learning how to manage one’s own household well, faithfully attending the Sunday gatherings, building up the body in love, participating in prayer, Bible study and evangelism, and walking in fellowship with the current leadership.

To facilitate this process, we have established Leadership Institute, a weekly study group for aspiring church leaders. Christian men (ages 18 and up) who have been members of HOFCC for over a year (or who are ministry students) and who have a holy desire to study and teach God’s Word in some public ministry are invited to apply at the end of each quarter. The pulpits are filled each week by seasoned members of this study group, and from their number our new church leaders normally emerge.

## **WHY DOES HOFCC FOCUS SO MUCH MINISTRY ATTENTION ON THE MEN?**

At HOFCC we hold the “complementarian view” of gender roles. Men and women are wonderfully different by God’s design. A man is the head of his wife just as Christ is the head of the church and God the Father is the head of Christ. There is nothing demeaning or abusive about these complementary roles of loving headship and respectful submission.

We teach that men need to be respected by the women in their lives in order to play their strategic part in God's plan for the good of all. Likewise, women need to be loved, cherished, protected and provided for by the men in their lives in order to play their parts in God's plan for the good of all. In this, God is not putting women down, but He is raising men up for the good of all.

We find in Scripture and in practical experience that most men by reason of their role in the home can influence their families in ways that most wives and children are unable. When a family man is converted he often brings his entire household with him to Christ. Sometimes his entire social network as well. As he grows in grace and becomes more the man his wife and children have always needed and wanted him to be, he begins to provide the ministry and leadership his family so badly needs.

Therefore, the best and most biblical thing we can do for the salvation and pastoral care of women and children in any community is to save the souls, inspire the hearts and inform the minds of all the men in their lives. Truly Christian men turn faithfully to serve their wives and children as God intended— and in doing so our evangelism succeeds, our church culture becomes all the more exciting for men and loving toward women, and our entire local church thrives under the Lordship of Jesus!

## **HOFCC STATEMENT OF FAITH**

“Beloved... contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. (Jde. 1:3) The following are brief, but theologically precise, statements of what we believe and teach as a local church regarding the fundamentals of the Christian Faith.

**THE SCRIPTURES** - We accept the Bible, consisting of the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, as the written Word of God. The Bible is the only essential and infallible record of God’s self-disclosure to mankind. It leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Being given by God the Scriptures are both fully and verbally inspired by God. Therefore, as originally given, the Bible is free of error in all that it teaches.

**GOD IS TRIUNE** - There is one God: infinite, eternal, almighty, and perfect in holiness, truth and love. In the unity of the godhead there are three persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These are coexistent, coequal, and coeternal, yet loving one another in distinct roles of headship and submission.

**GOD THE FATHER** - God the Father is the Creator of heaven and earth. By His Word and for His glory, He freely and supernaturally created the world out of nothing. Through the same Word He daily sustains all His creatures. He rules over all and is the only Sovereign. His plans and purposes cannot be thwarted. He is good and faithful to every promise, working all things together for good to those who love Him. In His unfathomable grace He gave His Son Jesus for the redemption of His elect. He decrees that all creation will exist for the praise of His glory. He is to be loved, honored, and worshipped as God the First Person of the Trinity.



**JESUS CHRIST** - Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God the Father, is the eternal Word of God made flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, just as the Old Testament prophets foretold. He is perfect in nature, teaching and obedience. He is fully God and fully man. He was always with God and is Himself God. Through Him all things came into being and were created. He was before all things and in Him all things hold together by the word of His power. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation and in Him dwells all the fullness of the godhead bodily.

He is the only Savior for the sins of the world having shed His own blood and died a vicarious death on Calvary's cross. By His death in our place, He revealed the divine love and upheld the divine justice, removing our guilt and reconciling us to God. Having redeemed us from sin, on the third day He rose bodily from the grave, victorious over death and all the powers of darkness and He appeared to many witnesses performing many convincing proofs of His resurrection. He ascended into heaven where, now at God's right hand, He intercedes for His people and rules as Lord over all and one day He will return.

He is the Head of His body the Church and should be loved, adored, served, obeyed and worshiped as God the Second Person of the Trinity.

**THE HOLY SPIRIT** - The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. Through the proclamation of the Gospel He brings about the new birth, indwells the regenerate, granting the desire and ability to believe the truth, repent of their sins, trust in God's mercy and confess Jesus Christ as Lord. He unites all believers in faith to Jesus

Christ whom alone He has come to reveal and glorify. He is the Comforter who is neither to be grieved nor quenched as He leads the Church into the one right understanding and application of God's Word. He empowers God's people to bear spiritual fruit as they walk in the obedience of faith. He is to be loved, obeyed, and worshipped as God the Third Person of the Trinity.

**MAN** - God made man, male and female, in His own image, as the crown of creation, that man might enjoy loving fellowship with Himself. Tempted by Satan, man distrusted God's goodness and rebelled against God righteousness. Being estranged from his Maker, yet still responsible to Him, man became subject to divine wrath, inwardly depraved and, apart from a special work of grace, utterly incapable of returning to God. This depravity is radical and pervasive. It extends to his mind, will and affections. Unregenerate man lives in slavery to sin and Satan as an enemy of God. Fallen, sinful man, whatever his attainments in this world, is lost and without hope apart from salvation by faith in Christ.

**THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION** - The Gospel is the good news that the death of Jesus Christ was a once for all substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins. Christ satisfied the demands of God's holy justice and appeased His holy wrath. He purchased God's saving grace for all who believe and justified God for His common grace of kindness toward all sinners who do not believe.

Jesus Christ is therefore the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name under Heaven by which anyone can be saved. Our ability to respond in faith to this Gospel is itself provided by the free and unconditional selection of God. The Gospel is therefore effective only in those who, by the grace of God, are born again and thereby willing and able to

genuinely repent of their sins and place their faith in Christ alone to save them. This Gospel is to be sincerely preached to all people in all nations without bias or prejudice. True conversion is characterized by a new life of love that delights to walk in the obedience of faith and is zealous to do good works that are pleasing to God.

Salvation is the free gift of God. In it the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the sinner by God's judicial decree. Thus justified by faith alone he is accepted by God and his debt for sin is forgiven. The believer is thus reconciled to God as Father and adopted as His child into His eternal family. He is liberated from the law of sin and death and empowered by the Spirit of God to walk in new life.

**SANCTIFICATION** - The Holy Spirit is the indwelling agent in our progressive sanctification. As He shines God's love in our hearts He produces His fruit in our lives. Our minds are renewed and our actions are conformed to the image of Christ. Though our battle with indwelling sin continues throughout our lives, as we are led by the Spirit, we are enabled to walk in the Spirit and so delight in God's commandments that we truly endeavor to live in this world for the glory of God. All believers are warned by God to persevere in their faith, knowing that they will give an account to God for their every word and deed. The spiritual disciplines of Bible study, prayer, worship, giving, fellowship and confession of sin are provided by God as effective means of grace to assist us in our pursuit of holiness. Nevertheless, the believer's ultimate confidence that he will persevere in the faith is based on the sure promise of God to keep all those who are His to the end.

**EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT** - In addition to effecting regeneration and sanctification, the Holy Spirit also empowers believers for Christian witness and service. All genuine believers are baptized by the Spirit into the Body of Christ at conversion. However, subsequent to conversion believers are also made to drink of the same Spirit in order to be repeatedly filled with the Spirit. Though the Holy Spirit may be resisted, grieved, and quenched by our sin and unbelief, by God's grace He readily fills all who thirst with God's love, joy, peace, wisdom and power. In this way He also imparts to His people supernatural gifts for the edification of the Body and witness to the world. All of the gifts of the Holy Spirit described in the Bible are still available for us today. They are vital for the mission of the church, and are to be desired and used within the guidelines of Scripture.

**THE CHURCH** - God by His Word and Spirit builds His Church, calling sinful men out of every tongue, tribe and nation of the human race into the holy fellowship of Christ's Body. By the same Word and Spirit, God guides and preserves His redeemed as a gathered community. It is not limited to any religious institutions or denominations. Rather, the Church Universal is made up of all who are born again followers of Jesus.

The Church exists in the world to worship God, to nurture fellow believers and to bear witness to the Gospel. New local churches are to be planted in the world for a visible evidence of God's salvation. The Church's mission is to make disciples through the preaching of the Gospel. Though social transformation is an indirect benefit of changed lives, it is not the primary focus of the ministry.

All members of the Body of Christ are to function as committed members of a local church. In this context they

are able to walk in the obedience of faith working through love, as they show their love for God by the way they keep His commandment to love one another.

### **ELDERS, DEACONS & MINISTRY GIFTS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH**

The ascended Christ has given gift ministries to His Church (including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) for the equipping of Christ's body for works of service. Thankfully, these gifts continue to function. However, the closed canon of Scripture now fulfills the place of authority originally held by its authors. No church leader is ever exempt from the biblical qualifications for church office (1 Tim 3:1-13). Those with gift ministries do not hold special authority over the local churches. In order to function in any official capacity every minister must meet the biblical qualifications of an Elder or a Deacon.

Likewise, though women play a vital role in the life of the church, in keeping with the teaching of Scripture, women are not permitted to "teach or to have authority over a man" (1 Tim. 2:12). All church officers must therefore be men.

### **THE CHURCH ORDINANCES -**

**Water baptism** is an initial act of the obedience of faith in Jesus Christ. It is intended only for those who have been born again. As a public testimony of one's faith, it may be performed for the new believer by any trusted fellow believer, ideally in the presence of fellow church and community members. In it a believer should be immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as a visual demonstration of the believer's union with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. It signifies that one's former way of life has been put to death, and that one has now been raised to new life.

**The Lord's Supper:**

As with water baptism, the Lord's Supper is to be partaken of only by those who are genuine followers of Christ. This ordinance symbolizes the breaking of Christ's body and the New Covenant sealed by the shedding of His blood on behalf of His people. It is to be observed repeatedly throughout the Christian life as a sign of participation in the atoning benefits of Christ's death. As the believer partakes of the Lord's Supper with an attitude of faith and self-examination, he remembers and proclaims the death of Christ, receives spiritual nourishment for his soul, and signifies his unity with other members of Christ's body. A common misunderstanding has been that this ordinance can only be effectively served in formal services by officers of the church. In the Bible we find believers often "breaking bread from house to house" (Act. 2:46). We therefore encourage all our members to rejoice in the priesthood of all believers by serving and partaking of the Lord's Supper with one another whenever and wherever desired.

**THE CONSUMMATION** - The Consummation of all things includes the visible, personal and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the transformation of those alive in Christ into glorified bodies, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. In the Consummation, Satan with his hosts and all those outside of Christ will be finally separated from the benevolent presence of God to justly endure eternal punishment in hell, but the righteous, in glorified bodies, shall live and reign with Him forever in heaven. Married to Christ as His Bride, the Church will live in the holy presence of God, giving Him unending glory by praising and enjoying Him forever.

## THE GOOD NEWS

*Many today have had a brief but ineffective contact with Christianity. The following will clarify the truth of what God has done for us through Jesus Christ.*

The good news comes to us through the Bible, which is God's message to all mankind. In it we find that God is *sovereign*—He does whatever He chooses and no one can stop Him. But He is also *good*—all that He does He does for good reason. All that He requires of us, or forbids us, is for *our good*. He created us specifically to enjoy knowing Him.

Unfortunately, Adam and Eve, our first parents, doubted God's goodness and so they disobeyed His commandment. *They sinned*. And because God is *good*, He had to punish them for their *sin*. That punishment was *death*. Thus, Adam and Eve brought sin and death upon themselves *and on us*, their descendants.

We all continue to sin and be sinned against. Our sinful human nature now corrupts everything we do. We break God's laws even though we know it is wrong. We curse and lie and cheat and steal and lust and hate. The Bible says we are *dead* in sin. Unless God rescues us we will be lost in sin and death forever in the anguish of eternal hell.

However, because God is good, He is also *merciful*. In mercy God sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to save us from our sins by dying for us on the cross.

Why did Jesus have to die? *Because God has to be absolutely just*. Someone has to die for what we have done and Jesus agreed to do so. His perfect life was sacrificed in death to pay the debts of all who trust in Him. In doing so, Jesus not only

took our punishment, He also gave us His reward. God treats all who trust in Jesus as if they had never sinned, and He gives them a new life.

How can we know for certain that God's plan to save us actually worked? Because three days after Jesus died, God raised Him from the dead. This was proof that His death satisfied all the demands of God's justice. Jesus is alive and He is Lord!

Today, if you put your trust in Jesus Christ to save you, you will be *born again* into this new life. When that happens, all your sins will be forgiven. You will receive God's Holy Spirit in your heart and He will begin to change your deepest desires. *You will no longer enjoy sin. You will prefer* doing what pleases God. You will find your greatest joy in just knowing God, worshiping Him, learning from the Bible, talking with God in prayer and telling others what God has done for you. You will love others; forgiving those who hurt you and helping those who need you, especially fellow members of God's eternal family, the Church. And when you die, you will go to be with God in heaven forever. All this happens to those who are *born again*. It is the evidence that one is spiritually alive.

So, if none of this is *happening* in your life, you are *still dead in your sins* and *you need to be saved!* Admit the truth. Repent! Ask Jesus to save you and He will! *That is good news!*



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