

CONSTITUTION OF
CORNERSTONE BIBLE CHURCH
OF WESTFIELD, INDIANA

Cornerstone Bible Church
720 Liberty Drive
Westfield | Indiana | 46074

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ARTICLE I: Name and Location

The name shall be Cornerstone Bible Church. It is an Indiana non-profit, religious corporation with principal offices in the proximity of Westfield, Indiana.

ARTICLE II: Purpose

The purpose of Cornerstone Bible Church is to glorify God and extend His kingdom by declaring God's truth and demonstrating God's love to the world.

ARTICLE III: Membership

1. The membership of this church shall consist of those who confess faith in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior, who give evidence of regeneration by living consistent with their profession and with the views of faith, doctrine, and practice of this Church, who have been baptized as believers, and who have been received into membership according to the by-laws of this Church.
2. Membership in this Church shall not vest in any member any proprietary rights in the Corporation, but shall only entitle the member to vote at a meeting of the members on those matters that the Board of Elders chooses to submit to the membership for affirmation. In such cases, voting privileges are restricted to members who are in good standing and who are not under any disciplinary action. Membership shall not be assignable to any personal representative, family member or heir.
3. If, upon completion of a required membership class and application for membership, the Board of Elders determines that the applicant does not confess Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior, or there is lack of evidence of a godly lifestyle, membership shall be denied.
4. Applicants accepted into membership shall be presented at a Church worship service designated by the Board of Elders, at which service the applicants shall publicly affirm their membership covenant and be publicly acknowledged as members.
5. Church discipline
 - a. The three-fold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Cor. 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin (1 Tim. 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to repentance of sin and be restored to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Gal. 6:1).

- b. Members of this church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the Board of Elders, shall be subject to church discipline, including dismissal according to Matthew 18:15-18. Before such dismissal, it shall be the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of the erring individual's heresy or misconduct to warn and correct such erring individual in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring individual does not heed this warning, then the warning member shall again go to the erring individual accompanied by one or two individuals who shall confirm that the sin has occurred and is continuing to occur, and/or that the erring individual has been confronted and has refused to repent. The first and second warnings shall occur with no specific time interval. If the erring individual continues to ignore the warnings, then it shall be brought to the attention of the Board of Elders. If the Board of Elders determine, after careful investigation in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scriptures, including Matthew 18:15-18 and 1 Timothy 5:19, that the erring individual has in fact and is continuing in that sin, that he or she has been appropriately confronted, and that he or she has refused to repent, then the Elders shall inform the church at a regularly scheduled worship service in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance. If the erring individual demonstrates repentance, then notice to that effect may be given at a regularly scheduled worship service. If however, the erring individual does not repent in response to the church and its collective call to repentance, then he or she shall be publicly dismissed from the fellowship and membership of the church at a regularly scheduled worship service. If the erring individual, after such dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement before the Board of Elders, then he or she shall be publicly restored to all rights, duties, privileges, and responsibilities of fellowship and membership.
- c. The membership of this church shall agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of the dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation at the third or fourth stages of church discipline. Members who are under church discipline, as defined in the previous paragraphs, forfeit and wave the right to resign from this church. Resignations from membership are possible only by members who are in good standing (as described in Article III, point 1) and who are not under disciplinary action.
- d. Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of the elders, a member, non-member regular attender, or other individual may be notified that he or she is not to be present upon church premises for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety and well-being of others on church premises. Such required absence may, but need not, be concurrent with church discipline of that person.
- e. Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of the elders, a member who has not attended a worship service, Sunday School class session, or Home Fellowship Group meeting at

Cornerstone Bible Church for a period of three months or longer, may be removed from membership.

ARTICLE IV: Membership Covenant

Introduction

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” – **Romans 12: 1-2**.

As Christians, we are members of God’s household (**Eph. 2:19**) called to function, participate, and minister in a particular place within the body of Christ. A healthy body requires that each member do its part well. A healthy church requires the same: members who are sacrificially committed and well-equipped to do the works of service that God has prepared in advance for us to do (**Eph. 2:10; 4:12**). Cornerstone Bible Church holds its members in high regard; we expect them to lead as missionaries of the gospel to the culture. God, in his sovereignty, placed us in this city, among these people, in this century, for a reason (**Acts 17:26-27**).

“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them*: if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith; or ministry, *let us use it* in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness” – **Romans 12: 3-8**.

Being a member of Cornerstone Bible Church is really about being part of a family. All members are disciples of Jesus, unified by their identity in Christ. This unity is expressed in the way they collaborate in loving God, loving fellow Christians, and loving non-Christians. Members who enter into a covenant with their local church are called to a higher degree of responsibility and service. At the same time, the elders and deacons are covenanted to assist members first and foremost, to love and lead, provide counsel and aid, and pray for, teach, and guide them.

“And above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’ *Be* hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” – **1 Peter 4: 8-10**.

What is a Covenant?

A covenant is a promise by which we obligate ourselves to one another in such a way that the obligation of one party is not dependent on the faithfulness of the other (**Ezek. 20:44; 36:22; Ps. 76:11; Hos. 2:19-20; 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:13**). The Cornerstone Bible Church covenant includes a

statement of faith, a statement of biblical doctrine, the obligations of Cornerstone Bible Church to its members, and the obligations of members to Cornerstone Bible Church. Though the covenant does define the relationship between members and the church, it is first and foremost a promise made to God as a commitment to his glory and his bride, the church (**Eph. 5:25**).

Statement of Faith

- I am a Christian saved from the eternal wrath of God by faith in Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior, through his death and resurrection, by which I am assured of eternal life (**John 3:16-18; Rom. 3:23-26**).
- I believe Jesus Christ is exactly who he claimed to be (**Isa. 53:6; Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:70; John 4:25-26; 6:29; 8:58; 11:25-27; 14:6-7; 15:5**).
- I have repented of my sins and have been made a new creation in Christ (**1 John 1:9; 2 Cor. 5:17**).
- In obedience to Scripture, I have been baptized to personally identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and to publicly demonstrate my commitment as a disciple of Jesus (**Col. 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21**).

Statement of Biblical Doctrine

- I submit to the core beliefs of Cornerstone Bible Church, which are founded upon historic creeds (e.g. Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed) and expressed in the doctrinal statement of CBC.
- I understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace; I will adhere to Cornerstone Bible Church's position on primary theological issues, and I will not be divisive over secondary issues (**Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:7, 17**).
- I agree that the sixty-six books of the Bible are the ultimate doctrinal authority on all matters (**Isa. 55:11; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; 2 Tim. 3:15-16; Heb. 4:12**).
- I understand that Cornerstone Bible Church doctrine is also communicated and specified through various channels, such as sermons, published materials, and other writings distributed by Cornerstone Bible Church.

Obligation of Cornerstone Bible Church to its Members

- We covenant that your elders and deacons will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (**1 Tim. 3:1-13; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4**).
- We covenant to seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit (**Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5**).
- We covenant to care for you and seek your growth as a disciple of Christ, in part by equipping you for service (**Eph. 4:11-13**) and praying for you regularly, particularly when you are sick or spiritually weak (**James 5:14**).
- We covenant to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (**Acts 20:27-28; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18**).
- We covenant to be on guard against false teachers (**Acts 20:28-31**).

- We covenant to exercise church discipline when necessary (**Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1**).
- We covenant to set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of church members (**1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12**).

My Obligation to Cornerstone Bible Church as a Member

- I have read and understood the Cornerstone Bible Church doctrinal statement and will not be divisive to its teaching. I also understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace (**Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:7, 17**).
- I covenant to submit to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues (**Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:16-17**).
- I will maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines. My relationship will be evident through my participation in weekly worship services, communion, Cornerstone Bible community, service, and a life that glorifies Jesus (**Ps. 105:1-2; Ps. 119:97; Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25; 2 Peter 1:3**).
- I will steward the resources God has given me, including my time, talents, and treasure (**Prov. 3:9-10; Rom. 12:1-2; Gal. 5:22-26; Eph. 4:1-16; 5:15-18**). This includes regular financial giving, service, and participation in community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary (**Rom. 12:1-8; 2 Cor. 8-9; 12:7-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11**).
- I will not function in leadership or as a member in another church family (**Heb. 13:17**).
- I covenant to submit to discipline by God through his Holy Spirit, to follow biblical procedures for church discipline in my relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ, to submit to righteous discipline when approached biblically by brothers and sisters in Christ, and to submit to discipline by church leadership if the need should ever arise (**Ps. 141:5; Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:5-8; Gal. 6:1-5 8; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 2:25; Titus 1:9; 3:10-11; Heb. 12:5-11; Rev. 2:5-7, 14-25**).
- I covenant to pursue and protect the unity of Cornerstone Bible Church by practicing faithful soul care in all my relationships and pursuing peaceful and loving reconciliation with my church family when conflict arises (**Eph. 4:1-6; Rom. 12:3; Phil. 2:3-5**). I will forgive those who offend me and sin against me in the same manner that God has graciously forgiven me for my sins and offenses against Him (**Eph. 4:31-5:2; Col. 3:12-15; Matt. 18:15-17, 21-35**).
- I agree, by God's grace, to walk in holiness as an act of worship to Jesus Christ, who has saved me from my sin that I could live a new life (**2 Cor. 5:17**); I will practice complete chastity before marriage and complete fidelity in heterosexual marriage by abstaining from practices such as cohabitation, pornography, and fornication (**Job 31:1; Prov. 5; Rom. 13:12-14; 1 Cor. 6:9-7:16; Heb. 13:4**); I will refrain from illegal drug use, drunkenness, and other sinful behavior as the Bible dictates (**1 Cor. 8:7; Gal. 5:19-21**). Should I sin in such a manner, I agree to confess my sins to Christian brothers or sisters and seek help to put my sin to death (**Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5; 1 John 1:6-10**).

ARTICLE V: Statement of Faith

This church holds the following statement of faith as being a summary of Christian doctrine whose authority exists only in its agreement with the Word of God.

THE SCRIPTURES

We believe the verbal, plenary inspiration (inspired equally in all parts) of the 66 books of the Old and New Testament (2 Timothy 3:16). We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The Bible is an objective, propositional revelation of truth that comes to us through the careful superintendence of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21). We teach the literal, grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture which affirms that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Genesis 1:31; Exodus 31:17). While the Bible may have many applications, there is but one true interpretation to be found as one applies the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20). We believe that the Bible contains the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matthew 5:17-18; 24:35; John 10:35; 17:17; 1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; Psalm 19:7-9).

THE TRUE GOD

We believe that one true, eternal God exists as a triunity of three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; equal in every divine perfection, but executing distinct but harmonious offices (Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14).

God the Father

We believe in God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, who is, perfect in holiness, boundless in love, infinite in wisdom, and measureless in power. He orders and disposes all things according to His sovereign purposes and grace (Ps. 115:3; 145:8-9; 1 Cor. 8:6). As Creator of all things, He is Father to all people (Eph. 4:6), but He is spiritual Father only to those who believe (Rom. 8:14; 2 Cor. 6:18). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Eph. 1:11). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those He would have as His own (Eph. 1:4-6). We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayers, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ, His Son (Isaiah 6:3; John 1:12; 1 John 3:6; Psalm 147:5; Revelation 19:6; John 3:16).

God the Son

We believe in Jesus Christ, God the Son, the second Person of the Trinity, preexistent with the Father, and is the only begotten by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary. He is coequal, consubstantial, and co-eternal with the Father (John 10:30; 14:9). It is by Him that all things were created and continue in existence and operation (John 1:3; Col. 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2). We

believe in the incarnation (becoming flesh) of the Son of God, and that He surrendered nothing of the divine essence, but accepted all the essentials of humanity and so became the God-Man (Col. 2:9; Phil. 2:6-8). He is sinless in His nature and life; infallible in His teaching; making atonement for the sins of the world by His substitutionary death on the cross. We believe in His bodily resurrection, His ascension into Heaven, His perpetual intercession for His people, and His literal pre-millennial, pre-tribulational return (John 1:1, 14; Matthew 1:18-25; I Peter 2:22; Acts 1:9-11; I Thessalonians 4:13-18). As the only Mediator between God and man (I Timothy 2:5), the Head of His body the church (Eph. 1:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18), the universal king who will reign on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31-33), He is the final judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Matt. 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31).

God the Spirit

We believe in the deity and the personality of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity. He came forth from the Father to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, to be a witness to the truth, and for the glory of Christ (John 16:8-15). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; I Cor. 12:2-4; 2 Cor. 13:14). He is the agent of the New Birth, who at the time of salvation permanently indwells and seals every new believer (Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13, 14) and baptizes (places) him into the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). He further ministers to the believer teaching (I John 2:27), interceding (Romans 8:16), guiding (Romans 8:14), filling (Acts 4:31), glorifying Christ and transforming all believers into the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29; Acts 1:5; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 2:22), and imparting spiritual gifts (I Peter 4:10; I Corinthians 1:11). We believe that the gifts of healing, tongues, and other revelatory gifts served to point to and authenticate the message of the apostles as revealers of divine truth, and were never intended to be characteristic of the lives of believers (I Cor. 12:4-11; 2 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:7-12; Hebrews 1:1-2; Hebrews 2:1-4, Acts 5:12).

CREATION

We believe the Genesis account of creation. We believe that man came by direct creation of God, not by evolution, and that the days of creation were literal twenty-four hour periods (Genesis 1; Genesis 2:7; Psalm 33:6-9; Colossians 1:16, 17).

MAN

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, free from sin, for the purpose of glorifying God, enjoying God's fellowship, and living his life in the will of God (Is. 43:7; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11). But through Adam's sin all people thereby incurred not only the physical death, but also that spiritual death which is separation from God and became subject to the wrath of God (Gen. 3:1-19; Rom. 3:23; 6:23). Because of sin, man became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace (Rom. 7:18; Eph. 2:1-9). All people have a nature corrupted by Adam's sin and transmitted to them, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All people are thus sinners by nature, but also by choice, and divine declaration (Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18; Romans 5:10-12).

Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Rom. 3:23; 6:23; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).

SALVATION

We believe that eternal life is offered by God as a free gift to man on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, and that man can in no way contribute to this gift through good deeds or religious sacraments (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

Salvation is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Tim. 3:15). The Holy Spirit enables a repentant sinner to respond in faith to the Person and work of Jesus Christ. We believe in the sovereign election of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously saves, sanctifies, and glorifies (Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:4-11; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2). This choice was made by God and was completely unrelated to any anticipation of what a person might do by their own will. It is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (John 1:12; Eph. 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7). We also believe that this election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:16-19, 36; 5:40; Rom. 9:22-23; 2 Thess. 2:10-12; Rom. 10:13). All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith, and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; James 4:8).

We believe that justification is an act of God by which He declares righteous those who, through faith alone in Christ alone, repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Rom. 2:4; 3:21-26; 2 Cor. 7:10) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Cor. 4:5; Phil. 2:11). This declaration of God involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (Col. 2:14; 1 Peter 2:14) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21).

We believe that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification (Acts 20:32; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2). But we also believe that there is the work of the Holy Spirit by which the believer is brought closer to the positional sanctification the believer enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and work of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness and increasing conformity to the life of Jesus Christ (John 17:17; Rom. 6:1-22; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thess. 4:3-4; 5:23). It is in this regard that every saved person is involved in a daily battle with the flesh that will continue throughout this earthly life (Gal. 5:16-26; Rom. 7:13-25). The Holy Spirit provides everything necessary for victory over sin (1 Cor. 10:12; Eph. 4:22-24; Phil. 3:12; Col. 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9). We believe that a Christian's life will be characterized by a progressive growth in Christ-like character and conduct (Titus 2:11-14; Philippians 3:10-17; Ephesians 2:10; I Thessalonians 4:3). We teach the importance of discipleship (Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:2). We also believe that full maturity will not be complete until the glorification of the Christian at the rapture of the church (I Thessalonians 4:16-17; Philippians 3:20-21, I John 3:2).

We believe that all those who are saved are kept by God's power and are secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24).

THE CHURCH

We believe that the universal church is a New Testament institution, a spiritual organism, composed of all regenerated people from Pentecost to the Rapture, with Christ as its head (Acts 2:1-4; I Corinthians 4:13; Ephesians 1:22-23; I Thessalonians 4:14-17). We teach that all who place their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body (Eph. 4:15; Col. 1:18). We believe thus that the church is a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ. The church is distinct from Israel (1 Cor. 10:32; Rom. 9-11), a mystery not revealed until this age (Eph. 3:1-6; 5:32).

We believe the local church is a congregation of believers, having two offices: elder (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11) and deacon, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5). We believe in two ordinances for the church: believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42). The local church is sovereign in polity and is banded together for edification, worship, and worldwide evangelism under the sovereign headship of Christ (Acts 2:40-42; Acts 6:3-4; Philippians 1:1; II Corinthians 8:19; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18). Elders and deacons lead or rule as humble servants of Christ (1 Tim. 5:17-22) and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Heb. 13:7, 17).

We believe that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Eph. 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Eph. 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (2 Tim. 2:2, 15; 3:16-17; 4:2), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42), and by extending God's kingdom through the faithful proclamation of the gospel to the entire world (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42).

We believe in the priesthood of the believer (I Peter 2:9, I Timothy 2:5) and the responsibility of every believer to be equipped and ministering to others according to their spiritual gifts, for the edification of others and the maturing of the body (I Corinthians 12:7, Ephesians 4:12-16).

We believe that Christian baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water. This immersion is a solemn and beautiful emblem showing identification with the crucified, buried, and risen Savior through whom we died to sin and rose to a new life. It is a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ (Acts 2:41-41; Rom. 6:1-7). We believe that baptism is to be formed under the authority of a New Testament church and that it is a prerequisite to the privilege of church membership (Acts 8:36, 38-39; Romans 6:3-5).

We believe that the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of His death until He comes and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination (I Corinthians 11:23-28; Matthew 8:18, 20; Acts 2:41-42). The elements used in Communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of

Christ, but participation in the Lord's Supper is nevertheless actual communion with the risen Christ (1 Cor. 10:16).

We believe in obedience to the biblical commands to separate ourselves unto God from worldliness, ecclesiastical apostasy, and religious compromise (II Corinthians 6:14-17; II John 7-11; II Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; Romans 16:17).

ANGELS

We believe God created innumerable, sinless spiritual beings known as angels who were made to serve God and worship Him (Luke 2:9-14; Heb. 1:6-7, 14; 2:6-7; Rev. 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9). They serve as God's ministering messengers, advancing the cause of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 26:53; Psalm 148:2-5; Hebrews 1:14).

We believe that a number of these holy angels were led away into sin when they followed Satan in his rebellion against God (Matthew 12:24; 25:41; II Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 12:1-14). Satan is a created angel and the author of sin who incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19).

We believe in the personality of Satan, that he is the unholy prince of this age (Eph. 2:2; 6:12), the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isaiah 14:13-14; Matt. 4:1-11; Rev. 12:9-10), the originator of all the powers of darkness, and he is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire because he has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matthew 4:1-3; 25:41; Rom. 16:20; II Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:10).

LAST THINGS

We believe that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Rev. 6:9-11) and that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8). That separation of soul and body will continue until the rapture which initiates the first resurrection when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Cor. 15:35-44, 50-54; Rev. 20:4-6).

We believe in the imminent, pre-millennial, and bodily return of Christ for His Church. At that moment the dead in Christ shall be raised in glorified bodies, and the living in Christ shall be given glorified bodies without tasting death, and all shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the seven years of tribulation (John 14:1-3; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 15:42-44, 51-54; Philippians 3:20-21; Revelation 3:10).

We believe that immediately following the removal of the church from the earth the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world (Jer. 30:7; Daniel 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thess. 2:7-12; Rev. 6-19). These events will be culminated after the tribulation period by the revelation of Christ in power and great glory to sit upon the throne of David and to establish the literal, millennial kingdom (Daniel 9:25-27; Matthew 24:29-31; 25:31; Luke 1:30-33; Isaiah 9:6,

11:1-9; Acts 2:29-30; Revelation 20:14, 6). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Christ over all the nations of the earth (Ezekiel 37:21-28; Daniel 7:17-22; Rev. 19:11-16; 20:1-7). We teach that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Genesis 12:1-3; Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Zech. 8:1-17) to restore them to the land that they forfeited through their disobedience (Deut. 28:15-68). Israel, who was temporarily set aside (Matt. 21:43; Rom. 11:1-26) will again be awakened through repentance to enter the land of blessing God promised them (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32; Rom. 11:25-29).

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all the dead; the saved to eternal life and blessedness in Heaven, and the unsaved to eternal conscious suffering and woe in Hell (John 5:29; Rom. 8:10-11, 19-23; 2 Cor. 4:14; Daniel 12:2; Rev. 20:11-15).

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

Being a Christian is more than identifying yourself with a particular religion or affirming a certain value system. Being a Christian means you have embraced what the Bible says about God, mankind, sin, and salvation. We believe the following are essential truths about salvation found in Scripture:

God is Sovereign Creator

Man is not the product of evolution. Instead the Bible says we were created by a personal God to love, serve, and enjoy endless fellowship with Him. The New Testament reveals that it was Jesus Himself who created everything (John 1:3; Col. 1:16). That means He has authority over our lives and we owe Him absolute allegiance, obedience, and worship.

God is Holy

God is absolutely and perfectly holy (Isaiah 6:3) and therefore cannot commit or tolerate any evil (Nahum 1:3; Hab. 1:13; James 1:13). God requires holiness of us as well (Matt. 5:48; 1 Peter 1:16; Rev. 21:27).

Mankind is Sinful

According to Scripture, everyone is guilty of sin (1 Kings 8:46; Rom. 3:10-12, 23; 1 John 1:8).

Sin Demands a Penalty

God's holiness and justice demand that all sin be punished, and God has ordained that the punishment for sin is death (Ezekiel 18:4; Rom. 6:23). That's why simply changing our patterns of behavior can't solve our sin problem or eliminate its consequences.

Jesus Is Lord and Savior

Even though God's justice and holiness demands death for sin, His love has provided a Savior who paid the penalty and died as a substitute for sinners (John 3:16; 1 Peter 3:18). Christ's death satisfied the demands of God's justice and Christ's perfect life satisfied the demands of God's holiness (2 Cor. 5:21), thereby enabling Him to forgive and save those who place their faith in Christ (Rom. 3:26).

The Nature of Saving Faith

True faith is always accompanied by repentance from sin. Repentance is agreeing with God that you are sinful, confessing your sins to Him, and making a conscious decision to turn from your sin (Luke 13:3, 5; 1 Thess. 1:9) and pursue Christ (Matt. 11:28-30; John 17:3) and obey Him (John 14:21; James 2:14-26; 1 John 2:3). It isn't enough to believe certain facts about Christ. Even Satan and his demons believe in the true God, but they don't love and obey Him (James 2:19). True saving faith always responds in obedience and is accompanied by God-ordained works (Eph. 2:8-10).

STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE

Cornerstone Bible Church believes and teaches that marriage is a sacred covenant between a man and a woman instituted by and publicly entered into before God. God's divine design for marriage is an institution that mankind, society, culture or government does not have the liberty to change, amend or define outside of what is clearly taught in Holy Scripture. It is the Word of God that governs and establishes what the marriage covenant is. Below is a brief Biblical definition of marriage:

1. Marriage is Exclusively between a Man and a Woman: God describes marriage to be solely between a man and a woman. As Genesis 2:24 stipulates, "*A man [masculine] shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife [feminine], and the two shall become one flesh.*" Heterosexuality is the only possible arrangement for marriage, as the Creator has commanded and expects married couples to "*be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth*" (Genesis 1:28). Hence, "same-sex marriage" is an oxymoron, a contradiction of terms. Since homosexuality involves same-sex intercourse that cannot lead to procreation, it is unnatural and cannot logically entail the possibility of marriage.
2. Marriage is Designed to be Permanent: The marriage covenant is intended to be never broken (Matthew 19:1-12, Luke 16:18, Mark 10:9). Although there are limited Biblical reasons for divorce, the original established intent of the covenant is that it would stay binding. Because the covenant of marriage is not only to one's marriage partner but also before God, it is a serious commitment not to be taken lightly.
3. Marriage is Sacred and Intimate: Marriage is more than just a covenant on paper, it is the 'two becoming one flesh' (Genesis 2:23-25) under God's design. The married couple enjoys the blessings of an intimate relationship with each other in a spiritual, emotional, and physical sense. In fact, marriage is the most intimate of all human relationships where a bond between man and woman exists to reflect the relationship of the Godhead and glorify Jesus Christ.
4. Marriage is to be Protected: The marriage covenant is a selfless relationship that is mutually exclusive to each other (Ephesians 5:25-30). This means that no other human relationship must interfere with the commitment between husband and wife (Genesis 2:22-25, I Corinthians 7:2-5). The physical, emotion and spiritual aspects of the

marriage are exclusive to one another and are not to be shared with another. Both the husband and wife are to work diligently at protecting each other and their covenant before God and man.

Any marriage covenant that does not agree with God's Word as described above and furthermore in the pages of Scripture, Cornerstone Bible Church (by the direction of our Lord Jesus Christ) will not welcome into our membership. Furthermore, Cornerstone Bible Church reserves the right to not perform any marriage ceremonies (on church grounds) that do not agree with the above definition of marriage as outlined in God's Word.

STATEMENT ON HUMAN SEXUALITY

The personhood and sexuality of mankind are grounded in and defined for us in the Word of God. Genesis 1:27 says that man and woman are made in the image of God. That means, mankind's souls, bodies, reason, will and goodness are like God. Yet, at the same time we are unlike God, for He is our Creator and infinite example of these qualities. While we are made in the image of God, our sexuality does not define our standing before God. One's gender (male or female), does not determine the amount of love, grace, forgiveness and acceptance of God in one's life. The defining characteristic of God's love, grace, forgiveness and acceptance of humankind is whether or not they have accepted by faith the redemptive work of God's Son Jesus Christ. It is on His (Jesus') life and work, humanity is accepted by God, not gender.

Our sexuality is an attribute of human nature that God gave to us. Psalm 139 speaks of God's knowledge and formation of each human. Jeremiah 1:5 says, "Before I (God) formed you in the womb I knew you; and before you were born I consecrated you..." One's sexuality did not happen by chance, it was designed that way by God.

It was because of sin (Genesis 3:1-24, Romans 1:18-32, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:12-14) that human sexuality and sexual relationships were altered and sinfully abused. Pre-marital sex, promiscuous behavior and adulterous lifestyles are a result of sin and damage the design and covenant of marriage. The results of sin have also lead to the practice of pedophilia, prostitution, pornography, cross-dressing, medically altering the body to change sexes, and practicing behaviors characteristic of the opposite sex. All these things are sinful violations of God's Word and design for our bodies and personhood.

However, sexual desire and relationships are rightfully fulfilled only within the union of a man and a woman in matrimony. All sexual relationships outside of the marriage covenant are condemned in Scripture by God and never appropriate (Matt. 5:27-29, Galatians 5:19). Sexual intimacy is a blessing from God when enjoyed within the boundaries set forth in God's Word.

Along with the Biblical teaching on sexual intimacy within a heterosexual marriage are the specific instructions that prohibit homosexual conduct. Leviticus 18:22, 20:13 reads, "*You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; that is an abomination.*" Homosexual conduct is declared by God to be an abomination because it is out of harmony with the purpose for which God created human beings.

Homosexual conduct gives evidence of the universal rejection of God's supreme glory and authority and like all forms of sexual behavior that violates God's original design, it is sin. Romans 1:25-27 reads, "*because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.*" The New Testament further states, "*Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God*" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

With God's Word being our (Cornerstone Bible Church) standard of moral righteousness on human sexuality and sexual behavior as outlined above and furthermore in Scripture, we (Cornerstone Bible Church) will not welcome into our membership those who practice any sexual behavior that violates God's Holy Word and His design for marriage. This includes, but is not limited to homosexuality. Similarly, because homosexual conduct is declared by God as sin; any current member who practices homosexuality who is confronted by a church member for the purposes of repentance and continues in that habitual sin will be subject to the process of church discipline as outlined in our church's constitution.

Human sexuality and sexual behavior is very important to God. Both male and female are created by God, in the image of God, reflecting characteristics of our Creator. He has graciously outlined for us in His Word the way in which we are to express and enjoy our human sexuality and sexual behavior. And He desires that all men and women enjoy the freedoms they have in Christ within the boundaries set forth in Scripture. We grieve with those who are in slavery to the corruption of sexual sin and want to offer hope that can only be found in our Savior Jesus Christ. As with all sin, Christ offers forgiveness to all who repent and place their faith in Christ alone. 1 John 1:9 says, "*If we confess our sin He (Jesus Christ) is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" It is on the basis of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ that we are liberated from the bondage of all sin and can live life to the fullest.

ARTICLE VI: Statement of Operation

ADMISSION

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, having been subsequently baptized by single immersion, giving satisfactory evidence of regeneration, accepting the Constitution held by this church, and who upon recommendation by two interviewing elders, will be received into the membership (Acts 2:41).

DISMISSAL

Membership may be terminated by request of the member seeking dismissal, providing they are not in any stage of the church discipline process. Membership may also be terminated by church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17, joining another church, moving from our area, or inactivity. Any member who is inactive for three months without reasonable excuse shall lose the privilege of membership in this local church.

CHURCH OFFICERS

The biblical officers of the church are elder and deacon.

THE OFFICE OF ELDER

Cornerstone Bible Church operates upon the biblical conviction that church leadership is found in the office of elder. The clear teaching of the New Testament is that the terms elder, overseer and pastor are used interchangeably to speak of one office (Acts 20:17 & 28, Titus 1:5-7, I Peter 5:1-2), and that each local church was pastored by a team of elders (Acts 14:23, 15:4). We further maintain that I Timothy 5:17-18 makes a clear distinction between vocational elders, who are financially remunerated for their ministry and non-vocational elders, who earn their living through means other than the eldership. It is the operational principle of this church that both vocational and non-vocational elders are necessary for an effective eldership to exist. All elders, vocational and non-vocational, will function as a shepherding team, providing shared leadership to the congregation, pastoral care, and instruction (I Thessalonians 5:12, Acts 20:28, Hebrews 13:17, I Peter 5:2).

Although the elders act jointly and equally in authority, we maintain that one elder will emerge as “first among equals;” first in the sense that his gifts, dedication, training, and abilities will bring influence and direction to the body of elders, but equal in that he has no more authority than the other elders. This principle is seen in Galatians 2:7-12. It is recognized that most often the elder who emerges as the first among equals will be a vocational elder who by training, calling, and time will be best prepared to give the needed direction. However, there is no reason

why God cannot provide such leadership in a non-vocational elder. It is expected that the body of elders will affirm God's choice in this matter.

Both vocational and non-vocational elders must meet the scriptural qualifications as outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Furthermore, elders must be men (I Timothy 2:12) who are members and hold to the statement of faith and philosophy of ministry of Cornerstone Bible Church. A vocational elder who is called to serve from outside our church will become a member upon approval of his call.

Potential elders, both vocational and non-vocational, will be selected and interviewed by the existing body of elders to determine their spiritual qualifications for the eldership. Those candidates approved by the elders will be presented to the membership for their written evaluation of the candidates' spiritual qualifications. Based on the elders' interviews and the congregational evaluation, the elders will appoint to the eldership those candidates who are spiritually qualified (Acts 14:23). Non-vocational elders will be called to a three-year term; vocational elders will be called to an indefinite term. Upon completion of the term, non-vocational elders may be re-confirmed to another three-year term. There is no limit on the number of three-year terms an elder may serve. Both a job description and compensation package shall be set by the elders for the vocational elders. The compensation package shall be reviewed annually by the non-vocational elders and be a part of the annual budget. Consideration should be given to salary, allowances, vacation, sick leave, and education/enrichment leave.

Should it become necessary to dismiss an elder, the guidelines of I Timothy 5:19-20 and Matthew 18:15-17 will be followed. If a vocational elder desires to resign his place of service, he should give the elders a 30 day notice.

Because we recognize that the public preaching and teaching of the Word of God is central to our worship (I Timothy 4:13, II Timothy 4:2), that adequate time is necessary for sermon preparation, and that formal theological and biblical training is an asset for such public speaking, the elder who fills the primary pulpit ministry should be a vocational elder. In the event of his resignation, the elders will constitute a search committee to replace this vocational elder with a man of adequate training and giftedness who is in doctrinal and philosophical harmony with the church and who meets the qualifications for elder as outlined in this constitution.

The elders are the trustees of the corporation and may appoint legal representatives from their number.

The elders are to carry out their ministry in the spirit of I Peter 5:2-3, not as lords but as loving, guiding shepherds, empowered by the influence of their Christ-like lives. In turn, the congregation is to appreciate, esteem in love, obey, and submit to the elders (I Thessalonians 5:13, Hebrews 13:17).

THE OFFICE OF DEACON

The selection of deacons will follow the biblical pattern of Acts 6:1-6. The membership will select as deacon candidates those men they perceive to have a servant's attitude and who meet the spiritual qualifications of Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13.

The elders will interview these candidates, and after prayer appoint to the deaconship those men who are qualified (Acts 6:6). The term of office will be three years or upon written resignation. Upon completion of the term, deacons may be re-confirmed to another three-year term. There is no limit on the number of three-year terms a deacon can serve. Should it become necessary to dismiss a deacon, the guidelines of Matthew 18:5-17 will be followed.

The New Testament lists no specified duties for deacons. However, their title implies that they are servants. Deacons are to work in close association with the elders, receiving from them delegated tasks and authority in areas of need. Deacons are to relieve the elders in tasks that are essential to the church's welfare thus enabling the elders to shepherd the church (Acts 6:1-6). Care will be taken by the elders to match individual deacons with tasks that best suit the deacon's abilities, gifts and interests to allow each deacon to serve to his fullest capacity with joy.

MINISTRY LEADERS

The elders may appoint individuals/committees to serve as leaders of the various ministries in the church. Appointments are made on an annual basis, with a job description and periodic meeting for accountability.

Ministry leaders, at every point of the church, need to be individuals who possess personal faith in Jesus Christ, have followed the Lord in believer's baptism, are members in good standing in the church, regularly attend the services of the church, consistently tithe, and strive to live holy lives pleasing to God.

The elders of the church may appoint paid staff positions as the need arises. Salary packages are at the discretion of the elders, in keeping with the proposed budget. Paid staff shall be accountable to the elders of the church. Positions may open or close at the discretion of the elders.

STRUCTURE AND ACTION

Cornerstone Bible Church is an independent, autonomous church. It may associate with organizations, but shall not place itself under any outside authority.

In the church, Jesus Christ is the Head and Senior Pastor (Ephesians 1:22-23, I Peter 5:4). He is the final authority, and scripture –Christ's word- is the standard to which all must conform and submit (I Thessalonians 2:13).

Since the elders are Christ's undershepherds (I Peter 5:1-2) they have been given the authority to direct, guide, protect and carry out the discipline of the church (I Timothy 5:17, I Peter 5:2, I Thessalonians 5:12, Hebrews 13:7). Elders are not to be authoritarian rulers, instead they are to be humble servant-leaders among their brethren. In all major church decisions, the elders must inform the congregation and cultivate an environment of open Christ-like communication (Ephesians 4:15, 25, 29, James 1:19). The elders and the congregation must seek to act as a united body. When assembled, the elders will lead the congregation in seeking the Lord's will (Acts 15:22).

If the elders and congregation sense a division among godly members, decisions may need to be postponed for further discussion and prayer. However, in situations of false teaching, evil discord, or immorality, the elders must exercise their authority as shepherd-overseers and make decisions against the contending brethren, false teachers, or immoral behavior (Acts 20:28-31).

Realizing the New Testament church is expanded on the thrust of evangelism, this church will annually designate a portion of its General Fund to the support of world missions. Only missionaries who are in agreement with our statement of faith, both in doctrine and in practice, shall be eligible for support.

In the event of dissolution of the church, the trustees shall satisfy all debts and distribute the remaining assets to other non-profit organization of like faith.

MEETINGS

Regular Sunday services shall be the central focus of meetings. Schedules will be determined by the elders.

The church's fiscal year shall be September 1 to August 31. An annual business meeting will be held in September and include a review of the previous year's financial report, and a presentation of the new year's goals and budget.

Special business meetings may be called by the elders at any regular public service. A special business meeting may also be called by a signed statement of purpose of 25% of the adult members. The time and purpose of these special meetings must be announced two Sundays preceding the date of the meeting. Thirty-five percent of the adult membership (members 18 years of age or older) must be present to constitute a quorum.

AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any business meeting by a two-thirds vote of the adult members present, provided that a public notice is made in writing two weeks prior to the meeting at which action is desired.