

## **CHRIST CHAPEL OF BANDERA**

### **Statement of Beliefs**

#### **THE BIBLE**

We, the members of Christ Chapel, believe that the Bible is the infallible and inerrant Word of God. The Bible is unique among all the writings of the world because it is inspired<sup>1</sup> by God Himself and is therefore revered as holy and superior to human insight, knowledge, and wisdom. The Bible is the only basis and ultimate standard for our beliefs and practice. We believe that God's Word is reliable, true, and eternal. The eternal truth of the Bible is not to be diluted with personal opinion or altered by the ever-changing traditions and societal norms of humanity. The Bible is the living, powerful, and active sword of the Spirit revealing God's redemptive plan for humanity.<sup>2</sup>

#### **THE TRINITY**

We, the members of Christ Chapel, believe there is one and only one living and true God. We accept the mystery of unity among diversity in the Triune Godhead. God reveals Himself to us in three persons as God the Father - YHWH<sup>3</sup>, God the Son - Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit; each with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.<sup>4</sup>

#### **GOD THE FATHER - YHWH**

We, the members of Christ Chapel, believe in God the Father Almighty who is above all else infinitely holy<sup>5</sup>. He is a unique personal being who is totally unlike any other. YHWH has always existed; having no beginning. YHWH will always be; having no end. YHWH is the Sovereign creator and sustainer of all that is, has been, and ever shall be. Out of nothing He created the heavens and the earth, all things visible and invisible. YHWH is all-powerful and all knowing. There is no place where one can escape the presence of the Living God. YHWH is immutable and is therefore not subject to change. He is benevolent and fatherly in His attitude toward all humanity because He is love. YHWH is, however, Father in truth only to those who have been adopted into His family as His children by His grace through enduring faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Literally, "God-breathed"

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy 4.1-2; 12.32; 1 Kings 8.56; Psalm 19.7-10; 111.7-10; 119.1-176; Proverbs 3.5-8; 30.5-6; Isaiah 40.8; Matthew 5.17-19; Luke 21.33; John 17.17; Ephesian 6.10-17; 1 Thessalonians 2.13; 2 Timothy 2.15; 3.16-17; Hebrews 4.12-13; 1 Peter 1.24-25; 2 Peter 1.19-21; Revelation 22.16-21

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 3.13-15 The divine name (יהוה) from the Hebrew verb "to be" is transliterated as YHWH and translated as The LORD in most English Bibles; refers to the eternally self-existent nature of God the Father; meaning, "I AM," or "I AM WHO I AM," or "I AM WHAT I AM," or "I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE"

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 1.1-2, 26-27; Matthew 3.16-17; 28.18-20; Mark 9.1-10; Luke 3.21-22; John 1.1-17; 15.26; 16.7-15; Ephesians 4.4-6; Titus 3.4-7; 1 Peter 1.2; Jude 20-21

<sup>5</sup> Literally, "Totally other," when the Hebrew word translated as "holy" is used of God

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 1-2; Exodus 3.13-15; 15.18; 20.1-21; Deuteronomy 6.4-5; Leviticus 19.2; 1 Samuel 2.2; Psalm 47.8; 77.13; 86.11-15; 90.2; 99.1-5; 102.25-27; 103.8; 139.1-18; 147.4-5; Isaiah 57.15; Jeremiah 10.10; Malachi 3.6; Matthew 6.9-13; 7.11; 19.26; John 3.16-17; John 4.24; 8.42-47; 14.1-14; Romans 8.14-17; 1 Corinthians 8.6; Galatians 4.4-7; Ephesians 4.4-6; 1 Timothy 1.17; Hebrews 11.6; James 1.17; 1 Peter 1.13-21; 1 John 4.7-21; Revelation 4

## **GOD THE SON – JESUS CHRIST**

We, the members of Christ Chapel, believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. The Son is God, a person of the Trinity, neither made nor created, but begotten by the Father. We accept the mystery of the incarnation believing that during His first advent<sup>7</sup>, Jesus was literally, “God in the flesh.” Jesus was also known as Emmanuel which means, “God with us.” He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus is perfectly God and perfectly human, yet He is not two, but one Christ. God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and human, of the substance of His mother, born into the world. God the Father loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, Jesus, to provide the perfect and final blood sacrifice for the sins of humanity.

Jesus lived His entire life in submissive obedience to the will of God the Father and although tempted, never sinned. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming Messiah<sup>8</sup> who would be the King and Great High Priest, according to the order of Melchizedek, of the eternal Kingdom of God. The Jewish leadership of His day denied and rejected Jesus as Messiah in spite of the overwhelming verifying evidence of the teaching, miracles, and life of Jesus. He suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died, and was buried. Jesus willingly gave His life on the cross to shed His own blood as atoning sacrifice for the sins of humanity. Jesus is therefore known as Savior, making redemption and reconciliation possible for all who accept His provision for the forgiveness of their personal sins through faith. Jesus was bodily resurrected from the tomb on the third day after His crucifixion. Jesus is therefore known as Lord because death itself could not contain Him. His resurrection from the dead serves as the ultimate and conclusive verification that Jesus is, in fact, the Christ, the Son of living God. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father where He now serves as the Great High Priest and Mediator between God and humanity for the purpose of reconciliation. Salvation is exclusively possible through Jesus, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved. Jesus will return in glory to this earth for His Bride, the true Church, composed of all those who believe in and obey Him from the heart. He will return in glory to judge the living and the dead. Jesus will return in glory to establish His eternal kingdom and reign forever and ever as the King of kings and Lord of lords.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Coming, arrival, or visitation

<sup>8</sup> Literally, “Anointed One”; interchangeable with “Christ”

<sup>9</sup> Psalm 2.7-9; 24.7-10; 110.1-7; Isaiah 7.14; 9.6-7; 11.1-5; 53.1-12; 61.1-3; Zechariah 9.9; Matthew 1.18-23; 3.17; 8.27-29; 11.27; 14.33; 16.15-27; 17.5; 25.31-46; 27.1-66; 28.1-7, 18-20; Mark 1.1; 3.11; Luke 1.26-38; 4.41; 22.66-71; 24.45-53; John 1.1-18, 29; 3.16-21; John 10.22-42; 11.25-27; 12.44-50; 14.1-11; 15.1-17; 16.12-15, 28; 17.1-26; 20.1-23; 28, 30-31; Acts 1.1-11; 2.22-36; 4.12; 7.55-56; 9.1-22; 10.34-43; Romans 1.1-6; 3.21-26; 5.1-21; 8.1-4; 10.4; 1 Corinthians 1.30-31; 5.7; 8.5-6; 15.1-8, 20-28, 50-58; 2 Corinthians 5.18-21; Galatians 4.4-5; Ephesians 1.20-23; 3.11-12; 4.7-10; Philippians 2.5-11; Colossians 1.11-23; 2.8-15; 1 Thessalonians 4.13-18; 1 Timothy 2.5-6; 3.16; Titus 2.11-14; Hebrews 1.1-14; 4.14-16; 7.11-28; 9.11-15, 23-28; 10.1-18; 12.1-3; 13.8; 1 Peter 2.21-25; 3.21-22; 2 Peter 1.16-21; 3.1-13; 1 John 1.1-10; 2.2.1-2; 4.13-17; 5.6-12; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1.7, 12-18; 5.1-14; 12.10-12; 19.11-16; 22.12

## **GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We, the members of Christ Chapel, believe in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God, a person of the Trinity neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding from the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit bears witness to and exalts Jesus. He proves the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment. He draws people to Jesus and is an essential participant in spiritual new birth<sup>10</sup>. The promised Holy Spirit is the seal of the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people. The results of the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life include, but are not limited to: sanctification, the bearing of spiritual fruit pleasing to God, the granting and empowering of spiritual gifts, guidance, instruction, comfort, boldness, and assistance in prayer. While we affirm that the Holy Spirit must necessarily be present for spiritual rebirth when someone first believes in Christ, we also acknowledge that there may be additional fresh outpourings of the Holy Spirit throughout the believer's life. There is an intimate and inseparable connection between the Holy Spirit and the Holy Bible. The Holy Spirit is the Author of the Bible, speaking through the inspired writers of the Scriptures. Consequently, while believing that the Holy Spirit is still speaking to the people of God, every contemporary leading of the Holy Spirit will be consistent with what He has already revealed in the Bible.<sup>11</sup>

## **HUMANITY**

We, the members of Christ Chapel, believe that humanity was created good, has fallen, is a slave to their sin nature, is valuable to God, and can be redeemed by God. Humanity was created purposefully by God in His own image according to His own likeness. As the crowning work of God's creation, humanity was given dominion over every living thing of the air, sea, and earth. Adam and Eve were absolutely pure and innocent when God created them. They were given a free will to choose as they pleased concerning obedience to God. Adam and Eve, tempted by Satan, chose to sin against God by disobeying His will and consequently lost their original innocence and were banished from the Garden of Eden and separated from the manifest presence of God.<sup>12</sup> This original sin introduced suffering, toil, and death into the human experience. Having infected themselves with sin, Adam and Eve transmitted their sin

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<sup>10</sup> Regeneration

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 1.2; Numbers 11.29; Judges 3.10; 6.34; 11.29; 14.6; 1 Samuel 10.6-7; 16.13; 2 Samuel 23.1-2; 2 Chronicles 24.20; Nehemiah 9.20; Psalm 51.10-12; 139.7-12; 143.10; Isaiah 48.14-19; 59.21; 61.1-3; 63.10; Ezekiel 2.2; 11.5; 18.31; 36.26-27; Daniel 5.14; Joel 2.28-32; Micah 3.8; Zechariah 4.6; 7.12; Matthew 1.18; 3.11-17; 4.1; 10.16-20; 12.18, 22-32; 28.18-20; Mark 1.7-13; 3.29; 13.11; Luke 1.11-16; 26-38, 41, 67, 80; 2.25-32; 3.15-22; 4.1, 18-19; 10.21; 11.13; 12.8-12; John 1.29-34; 3.1-10; 3.31-36; 4.21-26; 6.63; 14.15-31; 15.26; 16.4b-15; 20.22; Acts 1.1-8; 2.1-48; 4.23-31; 5.1-11, 32; 6.3, 10; 7.51-56; 8.14-17, 26-40; 9.17, 31; 10.1-48; 11.15-18, 21-30; 13.1-4, 9, 48-52; 15.6-11; 19.1-7; 20.22-24, 28; Romans 5.1-5; 8.1-27; 12.6-8; 14.17; 15.13; 1 Corinthians 2.6-16; 3.16; 6.11-20; 12.1-31; 14.1-25; 2 Corinthians 1.21-22; 3.1-18; 4.13-15; 5.1-5; Galatians 3.1-5; 4.6-7; 5.5, 16-25; 6.8; Ephesians 1.13-14; 2.15-18; 3.5-6; 4.1-16; 25-30; 5.15-20; 6.17-18; Philippians 2.1.4; 1 Thessalonians 1.4-7; 4.7-8; 5.16-22; 2 Thessalonians 2.13-17; 1 Timothy 3.16; 4.1-5; 2 Timothy 1.6-7, 13-14; 3.16-17; Titus 3.4-8; Hebrews 2.1-4; 6.1-12; 9.8-14; 10.26-31; James 4.4-10; 1 Peter 1.2, 10-12; 4.6, 12-19; 2 Peter 1.19-21; 1 John 2.26-27; 3.23-24; 4.1-6; 13-16; 5.6-12; Jude 17-23; Revelation 22.17

<sup>12</sup> Referred to as, "The Fall"

nature to all of humanity.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, humanity inherited a fallen nature and an environment inclined toward sin. In addition to original sin, each and every person has personally sinned against God and is therefore subject to His just condemnation resulting in physical death and eternal spiritual consequences. In spite of humanity's defiant and sinful rebellion against God, He still loves and values people. God, in His great mercy, has made the offer of peace and the provision for forgiveness of our sins through the sacrificial blood of Jesus in order that people who accept His offer of grace and forgiveness by faith may be redeemed and restored to an abiding relationship with God. The fact that humanity is created in the image of God and that God considered people so precious that He offered His only Son on their behalf testifies that human beings are a special creation, valuable, and sacred. Therefore we consider all people worthy of dignity, respect, and Christian love.<sup>14</sup>

## **SALVATION**

We, the members of Christ Chapel, believe that every person is in desperate need of salvation. Humanity, with its fallen nature and sinful rebellion against God, is at war with God. In this war, God will prevail with a legitimate, just, devastating, and eternal wrath against rebellious humanity. Every person stands condemned before the Holy and Living God because of their sins; they need to be saved from this imminent judgment. In spite of our offenses against God, He has made a provision for peace with Him, making it possible to be saved from the eternal consequences of our sins and restored to an eternal love relationship with Him. *"God proves His love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by His blood, will we be saved through Jesus from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by His life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."*<sup>15</sup> The only provision for peace with God is Jesus.

The salvation experience includes a spiritual new birth<sup>16</sup> and justification, sanctification<sup>17</sup>, and glorification. Salvation begins with the Holy Spirit convicting a person of their sins against God which produces a godly grief leading to sincere repentance<sup>18</sup>. Placing their faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins and committing to follow Him as Lord, a person is justified<sup>19</sup> before God and becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus. The new believer is infused with divine power from God by the presence of the Holy Spirit in their life for the purpose of sanctification. The

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<sup>13</sup> Except for Jesus of Nazareth, the God-man, born of a virgin

<sup>14</sup> Genesis 1.26-31; 2.4b-25; 3.1-24; Psalms 2.1-11; 8.1-9; 14.1-4; 51.5; Ecclesiastes 7.20; Isaiah 53.6; John 3.16-17; Acts 17.26-34; Romans 1.18-32; 3.10-18, 23; 5.6, 8-10, 12-21; 6.20-23; 7.14-25; 1 Corinthians 15.20-22; Ephesians 2.1-22; Colossians 1.21-23; 3.1-10; 1 John 1.8-10

<sup>15</sup> Romans 5.8-11

<sup>16</sup> Regeneration

<sup>17</sup> Being set apart from the world unto God; transforming personal holiness

<sup>18</sup> Turning away from sin to God

<sup>19</sup> Made acceptable and presentable

disciple, in the power of the Spirit, begins the process of increasing personal holiness, growing to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. Transformation is central to God's purpose of salvation. Jesus not only paid the penalty for our sins, but through His abiding presence is able to set His people free from the controlling power of sin, free to live the lives of holiness for which they were created. The conclusion of salvation is glorification. Salvation and a glorified eternal existence in the presence of the Lord as a citizen of His glorious Kingdom are assured to those who continue steadfast in their faith.

Salvation is a gift of God. An unbeliever is dead in their trespasses and sins, incapable of any sign of spiritual life. Unable to repent, powerless to produce the kind of faith in Christ's death that saves, incapable of obeying God, the unbeliever is spiritually dead until God in His mercy and by His Spirit begins to bring life to a dead heart. God's gift of salvation is received by faith and cannot be earned. Jesus did not die to make bad people good; He died to make dead people alive!<sup>20</sup>

## **THE CHURCH**

We, the members of Christ Chapel, believe in one Holy Church which is the Body of Christ comprised of all the redeemed saints of God from all over the world throughout the ages. As a local church, Christ Chapel is just one of many members of the larger Church. By definition, the Church<sup>21</sup> is separate and distinct from anything else in the world; the Church is profoundly different from the world. Church is a fellowship of the saints of God who are called out of the world to be holy<sup>22</sup>. Christ Chapel is committed to reflecting the primary characteristics of the first century church as described in the New Testament within our contemporary context. These primary characteristics include: members were baptized disciples of Jesus, confessing that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God; their affection was on things that would matter after death; they were committed to gathering often for corporate worship and prayer, studying the Bible, observing communion, making disciples, fellowship, and breaking bread; they enjoyed a strong bond of unity; their compassion for each other was put into action by personal sacrifice; they met together frequently for mutual encouragement; and they exhibited a consistent and exuberant praise to God. The Church that is being built by Christ Himself into a spiritual household is a living spiritual organism<sup>23</sup> rather than just an organization. The Church is the Bride of Christ and was created by Jesus for Jesus.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Psalm 51.4; Isaiah 12.1-5; 53.5; Ezekiel 18.21-32; Matthew 1.21-23; 4.17; 7.13-14; 16.24-26; Mark 1.14-15; 34-38; Luke 1.67-79; 2.27-32; 4.16-21; 13.5; John 1.10-13, 29; 3.1-21, 26; 5.24; 10.1-30; 15.1-17; 16.7-11; 17.15-19; Acts 2.1-42; 3.19-20; 4.12; 15.11; 16.30-31; 17.30-31; Romans 1.16-32; 2.4; 3.10-11, 21-26; 4.1-25; 5.1-11; 6.1-23; 8.1-17, 28-39; 10.9-10, 13; 11.17-22; 13.11-14, 1 Corinthians 1.18, 26-31; 2.14; 15.1-5; 2 Corinthians 1.21-22; 5.17-21; Galatians 2.15-21; 5.16-25; Ephesians 1.3-14; 2.1-22; 4.17 - 5.27; Colossians 1.9-23; 3.1-17; 1 Thessalonians 5.23-24; 2 Timothy 1.8-14; Titus 2.11-14; Hebrews 2.1-4; 5.7 - 6.12; 9.23-28; 10.23-29; 11.1-40; 12.1-14; James 1.17-27; 2.14-26; 4.4; 1 Peter 1.1-25; 2.24-25; 2 Peter 1.3-11; 1 John 1.5-10; 2.1-17; Revelation 21.1-27; 22.1-7

<sup>21</sup> From the Greek, ἐκκλησίᾳ (Ekklesia) which literally means "a gathering or assembly of the called out ones"

<sup>22</sup> Separate; set apart from the world unto God; existing for God's purposes and pleasure

<sup>23</sup> The Body of Christ

<sup>24</sup> Matthew 16.13-19; Acts 2.37-47; 4.32-37; Romans 12.1-21; 1 Corinthians 3.16-17; 12.1-31; Ephesians 1.3-6; 2.1-22; 4.1 - 5.33; Colossians 1.15-20; Titus 2.1-15; Hebrews 10.19-39; 1 Peter 2.1-10; Jude 17-23

Jesus, who is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, is the supreme authority and head of Christ Chapel.<sup>25</sup> God gives leaders to the church for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. God's plan for the church is that every member be actively engaged in the work of the ministry, using their God given spiritual gifts, talents and resources for the glory of God and the edification of the Body of Christ. While every member is equally vital to the life and health of the fellowship, some members are set apart to perform unique functions within the church.<sup>26</sup> God has established two offices for the special purposes of governing and serving the local congregation. These offices are elders and deacons.<sup>27</sup>

## **BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER**

We, the members of Christ Chapel, believe that our Lord Jesus Christ established two holy ritual ceremonies that we are to faithfully keep and practice until He returns: baptism and the Lord's Supper.

### **Baptism**

Scriptural believer's baptism occurs when a person trusts Christ as Lord and Savior and obeys the command to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The English term "baptize" is a transliteration from the Greek word "βαπτίζω" which literally means to plunge, immerse, drench, submerge, or dip entirely. This holy ceremony of immersion and drenching in water is a powerful picture of the salvation experience that has already occurred in the life of the believer. The ritual of baptism tells the story of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as the only way of salvation. The ritual of baptism dramatically proclaims the testimony of the new believer; that they share in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection and that they themselves have died to their old sinful way of life and are made alive in Christ Jesus, raised to walk in newness of life. The believer's emergence from the water proclaims their confidence in the final resurrection of the dead. Baptism also communicates that the new believer is clothed with Christ through the drenching of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the first act of obedience called for in a new disciple's life and is a prerequisite for membership at Christ Chapel and partaking in the Lord's Supper.

### **The Lord's Supper**

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper<sup>28</sup> when He was eating the Passover meal with His disciples the evening before He was crucified for the sins of the world. Just as the Passover was a sign of the old covenant, the Lord's Supper is a sign that points to the reality of a new covenant with God made possible through the blood of Jesus. The Church continues to observe the Lord's Supper in obedience to the Lord's command to do so as a proclamation of His death until He returns. While baptism is a singular act of obedience, disciples partake of the Lord's Supper frequently. The elements of the Lord Supper are the unleavened bread which represents

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<sup>25</sup> Ephesians 1.20-23; 4.15-16; 5.23-24; Colossians 1.15-20; 2.8-10

<sup>26</sup> Romans 12.1-21; 1 Corinthians 12.1-31; Ephesians 4.11-16

<sup>27</sup> Refer to the Christ Chapel By-Laws for details concerning church membership and polity

<sup>28</sup> Also known as communion

Christ's body and the fruit of the vine which represents Christ's blood. The ceremony of eating the bread and drinking the fruit of the vine reminds the believer how much the free gift of salvation cost Jesus. The consumption of the elements during the ritual of the Lord's Supper also represents internalizing Christ, the Bread of Life, receiving all that He is and represents. Believing that the Lord Jesus is somehow mysteriously present in this holy ritual, partaking of the elements must never be taken lightly. Christians must not despise the body and blood of Jesus by being indifferent to sin; the grace and forgiveness of God is not a license to sin. Disciples should, therefore, examine themselves, confess, and repent of their sins to avoid partaking of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner.<sup>29</sup>

## **WORSHIP**

We, the members of Christ Chapel, believe that worship is the primary function of the church. All other functions of the church exist because of our worship of God. How we choose to live our lives as disciples is a response of our worship of God. It is the privilege and duty of every believer to faithfully worship God in both corporate and private settings. Private worship is a continual state of living. Corporate worship from a body of believers that do not personally engage in private worship is empty praise. God demands that we first seek Him privately. Corporate worship should be an outflow of our private worship. Worship literally means to declare the worth of God to God; because God is Spirit, believers must worship Him in spirit and truth. Worship services are not a performance for those in attendance; it is a performance for God by those in attendance. The audience for true worship is God for He alone is worthy of worship. Worship is a response of the heart, not just an activity of the mind. In the Bible, worshiping the Lord is expressed in many diverse forms including: words, shouts, raving and boasting about the Lord, celebrating His greatness, bowing, singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, dance, playing instruments, raising hands, stillness, sitting, lying prostrate, prayer, fasting, and partaking of the Lord's Supper. While forms of worship are important, they are secondary to the essence of worship. Worship must be authentic; it is the condition of the heart that ultimately matters, not the external form of worship. Ultimately, true worship requires transformation and a physical and spiritual response on the part of the worshiper. Worship is ultimately a sacrifice. In the old covenant, this was an animal sacrifice. Under the new covenant Jesus requires a spiritual sacrifice. We are called to sacrifice ourselves just as Christ offered himself as a sacrifice for us. Worship requires a broken and contrite heart, an attitude of servitude, and a desire to love and share with others. This is carried out in the daily life of a disciple by the demonstration of the fruits of the spirit and a godly lifestyle. Worship pleasing to God is a balance of freedom and order.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Matthew 3.13-17; 26.26-30; 28.16-20; Mark 1.1-11; 10.35-40; 14.22-26; 16.15-16; Luke 3.16, 21-22; 12.50; 22.14-23; John 1.29-34; 3.22-30; Acts 1.4-5; 2.37-47; 8.12-17, 26-40; 9.17-19; 10.44-48; 11.15-18; 16.30-34; 18.8; 19.1-7; 20.7; 22.16; Romans 6.1-14; 1 Corinthians 6.9-11; 10.14-22; 11.17-34; 12.12-13; 15.29; Galatians 3.27; Ephesians 4.4-6; Colossians 2.11-15; 3.1-4; 2 Timothy 2.1 1; 1 Peter 3.21-22; Revelation 19.9

<sup>30</sup> Genesis 22.1-19; Exodus 20.1-6; 34.8; Deuteronomy 6.4-8; 10.20-21; 13.6-1 1; 2 Samuel 6.1-23; 1 Chronicles 16.28-34; 2 Chronicles 7.1-3; 20.18-21; 29.25-30; Nehemiah 9.3; Job 1.20; Psalm 29.1-11; 51.15-17; 63.1-8; 66.1-4; 69.30; 95.1-7; 96.1-13; 96.1-13; 97.1-12; 98.1-8; 100.1-5; 145.1-21; 150.1-6; Isaiah 6.1-13; 29.13-14; 43.18-21; 66.22-23; Daniel 3.1-30; Matthew 4.10; 14.28-33; 15.7-9; Mark 7.6-8; Luke 2.36-38; 4.8; John 4.19-24;

## **WORSHIP THROUGH GIVING**

We, the members of Christ Chapel, believe that is the privilege and duty of every believer to bring our tithes and offerings as an act of worship. Recognizing that God is the source of all blessings, material and spiritual, we honor Him by cheerfully, faithfully, and obediently offering at least a tithe<sup>31</sup> of our earnings in accordance with His clear instruction. We give, not just of our moneys but also of our time, talents, labor, and prayer in faithful obedience to God thereby declaring with every gift that He is the Provider of all we have and that we trust Him with all our future provision. Our offerings serve as a token declaration that we are dedicating everything we are and have to the Lord.<sup>32</sup>

## **CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

We, the members of Christ Chapel, believe that when a believer falls into sin and remains in it, this rebellion against God not only hurts the one sinning, but also harms the entire body of Christ. The Savior is grieved and the reputation of His Church is damaged. Diligence must be given to keeping the fellowship, as part of the Bride of Christ, pure and presentable to Him.

### **Purity of the Fellowship**

Confronting a member of the fellowship who has become ensnared by sin is primarily for the benefit of the one sinning, but it is also a necessity in guarding the purity of the fellowship. Churches with members who love the ways of the world and sinning more than Jesus become an excuse for the ungodly to mock God and Christianity, thus sabotaging God's plan to draw people to Himself through His Church. Sin is harmful and carries within itself its own serious consequences. Allowing a dear brother or sister in Christ to continue in sin demonstrates reckless indifference and a lack of genuine love. Calling the one ensnared by sin to confession and repentance is to contend for their well-being. Confrontation is the highest expression of love under such circumstances. We follow Jesus' model for discipline, *"If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."*<sup>33</sup>

We emphasize that throughout this process, the aim is discipline, reconciliation, and restoration rather than punishment. If, however, a brother or sister in Christ repeatedly ignores the pleas of the family of God to leave the sin and return to obedience of God, the Church is instructed by Jesus Christ Himself to put the rebellious one out of the fellowship of the Church. There is no joy in the removal of a rebellious believer from the fellowship. However, when there is a clear

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9.31; Acts 13.1-3; 17.16-31; Romans 12.1-2; Ephesians 1.3-6, 12, 14; 5.1-2; Hebrews 9.11-14; 10.19-25; 12.28; 13.15-16; James 1.22-27; Revelation 1.12-20; 4.1-11; 5.6-14; 7.9-17; 11.15-19; 19.1-10; 22.8-9

<sup>31</sup> One tenth

<sup>32</sup> Genesis 14.18-20; Leviticus 27.30; Job 41.11; Psalm 4.5; 96.8-9; Proverbs 3.9-10; 11.24; Malachi 3.8-10; Matthew 5.23-24; 6.21, 24, 33; Mark 12.41-44; Luke 6.38; 16.10; Acts 4.34-35; 20.35; 1 Corinthians 16.2; 2 Corinthians 9.6-15; Philippians 4.19; 1 Timothy 6.6-12; Hebrews 7.1-10; 13.15-17; James 1.17

<sup>33</sup> Matthew 18.15-17



change of both heart and behavior, the brother or sister may be restored to full fellowship. The Savior spoke such serious words of commandment to His Church because He knew that even the thought of such procedure would discourage sin and encourage purity among His Bride.<sup>34</sup>

### **Unity of the Fellowship**

Few things are more wonderful for a disciple than to be part of a fellowship of believers that is of the same heart and mind, worshiping and ministering together in love and joy to accomplish the will of their Heavenly Father. Their unity is a key to their spiritual power and a testimony that they are Jesus' disciples and God's children. The unity of the fellowship is too rare and too precious to leave unguarded. God has given us, through the apostle Paul, guidelines for guarding unity, "*After a first and second admonition, have nothing more to do with anyone who causes divisions, since you know that such a person is perverted and sinful, being self-condemned.*"<sup>35</sup> We respond to divisive and factious individuals or groups in accordance with these scriptural guidelines. If first and second attempts by one of the elders and a group of church leaders fail to quiet the divisive one(s), their membership at Christ Chapel will be revoked. Loss of membership is permanent or until such a time when a genuine change of heart is clearly evidenced by the rebuked one(s) resulting in a restoration of full fellowship.<sup>36</sup>

### **LAST THINGS**

We, the members of Christ Chapel, believe that God is in complete control of history and has revealed His ultimate plan for the remarkable conclusion of the world in the Bible. God is currently withholding judgment and extending His gracious offer of peace, forgiveness, and salvation to humanity through Jesus Christ. God will not, however, continue this season of grace forever.

The world will experience turmoil and suffering because of an increase of human wickedness, supernatural evil, and natural disasters. Nations will continue raging against God and His people. Believers in Christ will suffer rejection and intense persecution for their faith. Satan will empower world leaders to prepare the way for a unified world government that promises peace while rejecting Jesus.

At a time unknown to humanity, Jesus will come again to the earth. During His second advent, He will not come as the Suffering Servant and Sacrificial Lamb; rather He will come as King of kings and Lord of lords. He will gather His people to Himself, restore Israel, establish His Kingdom, and judge the wicked. Jesus will reign as King for one thousand years in Jerusalem. After this millennial reign, Satan will be released on the earth to arouse the nations of the world to rebel against God a final time. God will destroy the rebelling nations with fire from heaven and Satan will be thrown into the Lake of Fire to be tormented forever, never again to disturb humanity. The dead will be raised and everyone will stand before Almighty God to give an

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<sup>34</sup> Leviticus 19.17; Deuteronomy 17.2-7; Matthew 18.15-22; Luke 17.3-4; Romans 6.19-20; 1 Corinthians 5.1-13; 2 Corinthians 12.20-21; 1 Timothy 5.19-22, 6.2b-10; 2 Timothy 3.1-5; James 5.19-20; 2 John 7-11

<sup>35</sup> Titus 3.10

<sup>36</sup> Matthew 18.15-17; John 13.34-35; 17.11, 20-24; 2 Corinthians 12.20-21; Ephesians 4.1-16; 1 Timothy 6.2b-10; 2 Timothy 3.1-5; Titus 3.1-1 1; 1 Peter 3.8

account for every word and deed of their lives. Anyone whose name is not found in the Book of Life will be thrown into the Lake of Fire; this is the second death.

This heaven and earth will pass away and God will create a new heaven and a new earth. The people of God will be given glorified bodies that are not subject to corruption, sickness, or death. God will establish His dwelling place in the midst of His people and reign in righteousness forever, receiving the worship He deserves.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Isaiah 2.2-4-1 11.1-9; 13.4-13; 25.6-9; 26.20-21; Ezekiel 37.1 - 39.29-, Daniel 7.1 - 12.13; Joel 1.15; 2.1-32; 3.9-16; Amos 5.18-20; Obadiah 15; Zephaniah 1.14-18; Malachi 4.1-6; Matthew 16.27; 19.27-30-1 22.1-14; 24.3-51; 25.1-46; 26.64; Mark 8.38- 13.3-37; 14.12-25; Luke 12.32-56; 16.19-31; 17.20-37; 19. 11-27; 21.7-36; 22.14-20; John 5.119-29; 14.1-7; Acts 1.6-11; 17.30-31; Romans 8.18-30; 14.10-12; 1 Corinthians 4.5; 15.12-58; 2 Corinthians 5.10; Philippians 2.9-11; 3.20-21; Colossians 1.5; 3.1-4; 1 Thessalonians 4.13 - 5.1 1; 2 Thessalonians 1.5 - 2.17; 1 Timothy 6.11-16; 2 Timothy 4.1-8; Titus 2.11-14; Hebrews 9.1-28; 10.19-39; 12.14-29; James 5.8; 1 Peter 1.3-9; 4.12-19; 2 Peter 3.1-13; 1 John 2.28; 3.2-3; Jude 14-16; The Book of Revelation