

**The Declaration of Faith  
For The Spiritual Family  
Of  
Tri-County Baptist Church**

**Declaration of Faith  
Tri-County Baptist Church  
of  
West Chester, Ohio**

**This constitutes the Articles of Faith for the Tri-County Baptist Church of West Chester Ohio. All members of Tri-County Baptist Church shall agree that they wholeheartedly believe the following:**

**I. Bibliology- The Doctrine of God’s Revelation of Himself**

In General Revelation – We believe the Triune God of the Bible is Creator of everything that exists, both seen and unseen (Genesis 1:31, Psalm 104:5). He is eternal and anything that may exist other than God has been created and is sustained by Him. He freely spoke His new creation into existence, using no pre-existing material (John 1:1-3). God did so in a literal 24-hour, six-day time frame (Genesis 1; Ex. 20:8-11). Through His creation, God reveals Himself to man. The Bible teaches that God’s “eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse” (Romans 1:20b). Furthermore, God’s moral character is revealed in the consciences of even lost people, all of whom have the requirements of the law written on their hearts (Romans 2:14-15). Although man can come to an understanding of the power and character of God through God’s general revelation, he cannot come to know or believe the saving work of Jesus Christ without God’s special revelation, the Word of God (Romans 10:14-17).

In Jesus Christ – We believe He is the ultimate revelation of God because He is God, Himself (John 1:1-14; Colossians 1:15-23; Hebrews 1:1-3).

In the Holy Scriptures – We believe the collection of sixty-six books from Genesis to Revelation - as originally written - does not only contain and convey the Word of God but is the very Word of God. All Scripture is verbally and completely (John 10:35) inspired of God (2 Timothy 3:16) and is the complete revelation of Himself. It is infallible and inerrant (1 Thess. 2:13; Ps. 12:6; Matt. 5:17-18; Romans 3:4; John 17:17). It is supreme in authority and finality in all matters of life, godliness, and the church (2 Timothy 2:16-17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Pt. 1:3-4). Because of these truths, man, in his relationship to God, must move from truth to experience and not from experience to truth (Pr. 30:5, 6; Mt. 7:21-23; Rm. 3:4).

**II. Theology Proper – The Doctrine of God the Father**

We believe there is only one living and true God, that God is Spirit, and that in the unity of the Godhead, there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who

are equal in every Divine perfection and execute distinct but harmonious offices (Mt. 28:29; Jn. 4:24; 15:26; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; Eph. 2:18; 2 Cor. 3:14). He is the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth. He is inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all worship, confidence, and love (Ex. 15:11; 20:2-3; Rev. 4:11).

God is transcendent in that He is entirely separate from all His creation (Rev. 4:11). He is all-sufficient and is not dependent on any person or thing (Is. 40:25-26; Ps 90:2). He is indivisible in that He is complete having no parts and needing nothing to contribute to His being (Deut. 6:4). He is eternal in that He alone has no beginning nor end (Ps 90:2) and always has and always will exist, and all else that may exist receives its life from God.

The living God is unchangeable, completely stable, dependable, and trustworthy in all that He is (Ps 33:11). God's presence and activity cannot be limited by time, space, nor any enemy of God (Ps 50:1; Ps 139). He is the one true, powerful God who creates, sustains, and rules everything he has created (Ps. 102:25-26; Jm. 1:16-17).

God is imminent in that He providentially chooses to reveal Himself to His creation (Ex. 3:14; Jn 1:14,18). God alone is good, and His goodness is evident in His giving of Himself and everything good to His creatures (Ps. 100).

God has perfect wisdom that exceeds man's thoughts and imaginations (Is. 55:8-9). His wisdom is real and true because all truth is either God Himself or His reflection through His creatures (Rm. 11:33-36). Anything that man knows or learns to be true is already known by God.

God is sovereign, working out every situation according to His perfect will (Is. 40:10, Dan. 4:25, Ps. 135:6, Phil. 2:13). God's perfections describe His beauty and glory. When confronted with all of God's perfections in perfect balance our only response should be that of complete submission and worship (Ps. 8).

### **III. Christology – The Doctrine of God the Son**

We believe God the Father is the foundation of the biblical story, but the Incarnate Son is the central figure of all of Scripture. The entire Scripture testifies about the great person and work of Jesus Christ (Jn. 5:36-40).

We believe in His Absolute Deity. He was Divine as no other man can be, being God, existing for all eternity and co-equal with the Father and the Spirit (Jn. 1:1-3; Col. 2:8-10; Heb. 1:2, 3, 8; Micah 5:2).

In his voluntary humiliation at His incarnation, He was miraculously begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary as no other man was nor can ever be born. (Gen 3:15; Is 7:14; Mt 1:18-25; Lk 1:35; Jn 1:14) Consequently, Jesus is one person with two natures.

Jesus Christ is fully God, fully man, like us in all things, but without sin (Romans 5; Hebrews 4:14-16). He lived under the same limitations of mankind, while remaining completely God (Luke 2:40; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 5:7-8).

Jesus Christ, as fully God, and fully man, filled all the qualifications necessary to accomplish perfect reconciliation between God and man (Matt 3:17, Heb. 3:2). Jesus Christ as our mediator (1 Tim. 2:5) had to live and teach men the truth (John 14:16), satisfy God's wrath against sin (Romans 5), and be perfectly obedient to all of God's creation commands (Gal. 4:4-5).

Jesus Christ lived a completely perfect life (Matt. 4:11). He was tempted in every way like us yet was without sin (Heb. 4:15). He fulfilled every command of His Father living a perfectly obedient life and dying a perfectly obedient death (John 19:30). The righteousness imputed to believers is Christ's complete obedience in life and death (Rm 5:18-19; Titus 2:14).

The cross is central in all the redemptive acts of Jesus Christ as our mediator. The entire Bible teaches the necessity of Messiah paying for the sins of humanity on the cross (Gen. 3:15; Is 52:13-53; Lk 24:25-27). God's wrath against sin is satisfied in Christ's blood (Jn 19:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 2:15; 1 Pt 1:18-19). Jesus Christ's atonement allows sinners to be justified before God through repentance of sin and faith in Christ (Rm 8:1).

Christ's work of redemption did not end at the cross. He rose from the dead after three days according to the Scripture. In His resurrection he proved His defeat of sin and death. Christ's resurrection makes it possible for sinners to be born again and to be raised from the dead (1 Cor. 15:18-21; Romans 10:9-10).

Jesus Christ continues to minister on our behalf from His exalted state. Jesus' ascension back to Heaven completed His first coming (1 Pt. 3:22). He reigns in Heaven exalted at the right hand of the Father (Eph. 1:20-23) from where He pours forth His Spirit on the church (Acts 2:33). Jesus now fulfills the ministry of intercession for His people of their sin (Heb. 7:25; Rm. 8:34). We look forward to Jesus Christ's glorious return when the world will see Him as God's glorified Messiah (Jn 16:19-20).

#### **IV. Pneumatology – The Doctrine of God the Holy Spirit**

We believe that God, the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, equal with God the Father and the Son, and of the same nature (Jn 14:16, 17, 26; Mt. 28:19; Heb 9:14). He was active in creation (Gen. 1:1-3; John 1:1-3; Heb. 1:2). In His relation to the unbelieving world, He restrains Satan until God's purpose is fulfilled (2 Thess. 2:7).

His purpose in this age is to glorify the Son and to exalt the completeness that is in Jesus Christ by never exalting anyone or anything as above, or as an addition to, Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 12:3; Col. 2:10).

Today, He convicts people of sin, of judgment, and of righteousness (Jn. 16:8-11) as well as bearing witness to and empowering the truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony (Jn. 15:26, 27; Acts 5:30-32). He is the primary agent of the Godhead in the New Birth (Jn. 3:5-6).

At the moment of salvation, He indwells, seals, baptizes, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps believers until the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13, 14, 4:30; Jn. 14:26, 16:13; Acts 11:16; Rm. 8:9, 14, 16; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pt 1:2; Rm 8:26, 27). Additionally, at salvation, He gives the believer spiritual gifts of service according to His will (1 Cor. 12:11) that He designed for the edification of the local church (1 Cor. 13:5b; Eph. 4:16).

## **V. Angelology- The Doctrine of Angels**

Holy Angels - We believe that angels are spirit beings created by God, referred to in the masculine gender, and do not procreate (Ps. 148:2-5; Col. 1:16, Mt. 22:30). Angels were created with ability, judgment, and intelligence surpassing that of humans (2 Sam. 14:20; Matt. 28:2; Heb. 2:7; Lk. 1:26-38). Although they are spirit beings, they at times take on physical form (Mt. 28:1-7). Angels are very important in God's plan, but they are still completely dependent on God and should not be worshipped (Rev. 19:10).

Angels were created with order and have differing roles. Angels minister to God by worshipping Him (Is. 6:1-8), assist Him by announcing news (Lk. 1:26-28, Mt. 28:1-7), and are sent by Him to minister to believers (Ps. 91:11; Dan. 4:13; Heb. 1:14).

Holy angels are particularly interested in God's redemptive plan and celebrate each time a sinner comes to faith in Jesus (Lk.15:10; 1 Pt. 1:12). They are involved in the battle against Satan (Dan. 12; Rev. 12:7). They were instrumental in the earthly ministry of Jesus as they celebrated the birth of Christ (Lk. 2:13), helped Him in time of temptation (Mt. 4:11), ministered to Him at Gethsemane (Lk. 22:43) and testified to His resurrection (Mt. 28:1-7).

Satan and Unholy Angels - We believe that Satan is a distinct personality who was once holy and enjoyed heaven's honors, but, through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell (Is. 14:12-13; Ez. 28:15-17). At his fall, he drew after him a host of angels (Rev. 12:9; Jude 6; 2 Pt. 2:2; John 14:30) and is now the malignant prince of the power of the air, and the unholy god of this world (1 Thess. 3:5; Matt. 4:1-3).

Today, he is man's great tempter (1 Pt 5:8), the enemy of God and His Christ (Zech. 1:3; 1 Jn. 3:8; Matt. 13:25, 37-39; Lk 22:3, 4), and the accuser of the Saints (Rev. 12:10).

Satan is the author of all false religions, the chief power promoting the present apostasy (2 Cor. 11:13-15; Mk. 13:21, 22), and will be the lord of the Anti-Christ. (1 Jn. 4:3; 2 Jn 7; 1 Jn 2:22).

He is the author of all the powers of darkness (Rev. 13:13, 14; 2 Thess. 2:8-11), and although powerful and to be respected, he is not omniscient, omnipotent, nor omnipresent and cannot overcome the believer who is submitting in obedience to Jesus Christ and His Word in faith (James 4:7; 1 John 4:4).

Satan's destiny is one of defeat at the hands of God's Son through His death on the cross (Gen. 3:15; Rev. 19:11, 16, 20; Rev. 12:7-9; 20:1-3) and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels (Rev. 20:10-15; Mt 25:41).

## **VI. Anthropology & Hamartiology – The Doctrines of Man & Sin**

We believe in the Genesis account of creation and that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively (Gen. 1:1; Ex. 20:11; Acts 4:24; Col. 1:17; Heb. 11:3; Jn 1:3; Rev. 10:6; Rm 1:20; Acts 17:23-26; Jer. 10:10). The triune God created man in His own image and likeness out of the dust of the ground on the sixth day of creation (Gen. 1:26-29) and is not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species or development through long periods of time from lower to higher forms (Gn. 2:7, 21-23; Jn. 1:3).

The possession of God's image happens at conception. God has and ordains a purpose for each individual before conception (Psalm 139:13; Isaiah 44:2,24; 49:1,5; Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:13-17, Gal 1:15-16). Humans are a *unique* entity and different by nature than all the rest of creation, both in who they are (Gen. 1:27) and in what they do (Gen. 1:28). As God's image bearers, God has given people stewardship over nature, culture, and human life (Gen. 1:28, 2:15).

God created man in innocence (Gen. 1:27) and "man" by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and innocent state (Gen. 3; Rm. 5:12, 19). Consequently, all people are sinners by inheritance from Adam and by individual choice and until regenerated, are dead in sin (Eph. 2:1-3; Rm. 3:10-13). All people are by nature, utterly void of the righteousness required by the law of God and inclined to evil (Rm. 3:11; Gal. 3:22; Eph. 2:1-3; Ps. 40:12).

All people are under just condemnation and without defense or excuse (Rm. 3:9-20, 23; Rm. 1:19-20; 2:1, 12-15). Mankind's only hope of eternal life with Christ is through redemption in Jesus Christ (Jn. 3:3,5; Acts 4:12; Eph. 2:8-9; Gal. 3:26).

## **VII. Soteriology – The Doctrine of Salvation**

In Christ's Atonement For Sin – We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of God's grace, (Eph. 2:8, 9; Acts 15:11; Rm. 3:24, 25) and through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by appointment of the Father, voluntarily took upon Him the form of a man, was tempted in all points as we are yet without sin in nature or deed, honored the Divine Law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins (Jn 3:16; Matt. 18:11; Phil. 2:7, 8; Heb. 2:14, 4:15; Rm 3:25; 1 Jn. 4:10; Is. 53:6; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21).

Moreover, His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a Martyr but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ, the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree (Jn. 10:18; Phil. 2:8; Gal. 1:4; 1 Pt. 2:24; Is. 53:11; Heb. 12:2; 1 Pt 3:18).

God's satisfaction with Christ's sacrifice and the provision of the believer's hope in the resurrection from the grave was demonstrated and guaranteed by Christ's bodily resurrection from the dead. He is now enthroned in heaven at the right hand of God the Father as the believers' Advocate and Intercessor (Is. 53:12; Heb. 7:25, 9:12-15, 10:10, 12, 14, 18; 1 Jn. 2:2).

The blessings of this atonement are given to each one who believes from the heart and confesses Jesus Christ as his own Lord and Savior. Therefore, it is the immediate duty of man to obey the command to accept this offer of mercy (Ac. 17:30; Rm. 10:8, 9, 10).

In Salvation By Grace – We believe that in order to be saved, all men must be born again (Jn. 3:3; Gal. 3:26). The new birth is a New Creation in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17). It is instantaneous, and not a lengthy process (Jn. 3:5-7; Acts 16:30-33). In the new birth, the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made partaker of the Divine Nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God (2 Pt. 1:4; Rm. 6:23; Eph. 2:1, 4-9; Col 2:13; Titus 3:5).

The new creation is brought about in a manner above comprehension, not by culture, not by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of The Holy Spirit in connection with Divine Truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience by faith in the Gospel (Jn. 1:12, 13, 3:8). The proper evidence of salvation appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith in the finished work and Person of Jesus Christ and newness of life (Rm. 10:8-10; 1 Jn. 5:1-5).

In Justification – We believe that the great gospel blessing, which Christ secures to such as believe in Him, is justification. Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on the basis of Christ's righteousness and atonement (Acts 13:39; Is. 53:11; Rm. 5:1, 9, 8:1). It is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness, which

we have done or ever will do, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood that is His righteousness imputed to us (Titus 3:5-7; Rm. 4:24, 25; 5:1, 17; Gal. 3:11).

In the Freeness of Salvation – We believe in God's sovereign grace (1 Thess. 1:4; Col. 3:12; 1 Pt. 1:2) and that salvation is freely offered to all by the Gospel (Rm. 10:9-13; Rev. 22:17). It is the immediate duty of all to accept this salvation by whole-hearted, penitent, and obedient faith (Jn. 3:15-18; 1 Tim. 1:15; Acts 2:37-41; Rm. 10:8, 9). Nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel. It is that personal rejection that brings upon a person the condemnation of God's wrath (Jn. 3:18, 36; Rm. 1:18, 20, 2:1, 4, 5).

In Repentance and Faith – We believe that repentance and faith are inseparable graces (Mk. 1:15) and solemn obligations (Acts 20:21). They are created in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God who convicts the believer of guilt, danger, helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, so that the believer turns to God with unfeigned contrition, and confesses to God his wholehearted faith in the work and person of the Lord Jesus Christ as his all sufficient Savior (Acts 2:27, 28; Rm. 10:9-13).

In Sanctification – We believe that Biblical Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, the believer is set apart from sin, unto Christ, and has three aspects:

- a) The believer has been set apart positionally before God the moment they believe (1 Cor. 1:30, 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 10:10, 14).
- b) The believer is being set apart progressively in their walk day by day as they grow in grace toward the likeness of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit in the continual use of the appointed means, especially the Word of God, self-examination, watchfulness, prayer and yielding to the Spirit through Biblical change (Jn. 17:17; Rm. 8:13; 2 Pt. 3:18; Rm. 8:28, 29a; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Tim. 4:7b; Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Jn. 3:3; Rm. 12:1, 2; Eph. 4:22, 24)
- c) The believer is to be set apart prospectively from the very presence of sin when their sanctification is completed at the coming of Christ for the church. (1 Jn. 3:2; 1 Thess. 3:13, 5:23)

In the Security of the Believer – We believe this is the design of God's divine plan. Every person, immediately upon acceptance of Christ as personal Savior and Lord, receives eternal life and is made at once a child of God (1 Jn. 5:11-13; Jn. 1:12). Believers are kept by the power of God through faith, in a state of grace, and are eternally secure apart from any human works and that such only are believers who endure to the end (Phil. 1:6; Jn. 8:31; Rev. 21:7,8; Eph. 2:10).



## **VIII. Ecclesiology – The Doctrine of the Church**

We believe that the church universal is a New Testament institution, established by Jesus Christ, who is its sole Head; revealed through the apostles; empowered and perpetuated by the Holy Spirit; His “body” for service and His “bride” for glory. The church universal began with the New Testament saints at Pentecost and will be consummated at the coming of Christ in the Rapture (Mt. 16:18; Acts 1:8, 2:1-13, 4:1-47, 15:14; Eph. 1:22, 23, 3:21, 5:23-32; 1 Thess. 4:13-18)

The church universal is manifested through the local church, which is a congregation of baptized believers, associated together by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel (Acts 2:41, 42), observing the ordinances of Christ (1 Cor. 11:17-34), governed by His laws (Eph. 1:22-23), and exercising the gifts, responsibilities and privileges invested in them by His work (Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 12:4; 8:11).

The mission of the church is expressed in the New Testament and abbreviated in Matthew 28:19-20 and Ephesians 4:11-16. That mission is expressed in three imperatives: 1) Make disciples, 2) Baptize them into a properly organized and functioning local church, and 3) Teach them to obey His Word as He commanded. This includes assisting parents in teaching the truth to their children.

The local church has the absolute right of self-government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; the one and only superintendent is Christ, through the Holy Spirit’s direction by the Word (Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23-24; 1 Pt. 5:1-4).

It is scriptural for true churches (as defined in the previous four paragraphs) to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel. Each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation (Acts 15:22; Jude 2-3; 2 Cor. 8:23, 24; 1 Cor. 16:1-3).

The scriptural offices of the local church are those of pastors/elders/bishops, and deacons whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in Scripture (Acts 6:5-6; 14:23; 15:23; 20:17-28; 1 Pt. 5:1-4; 1 Tim. 3:1-7, 8-13; Titus 1:6-9).

On all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline, and of benevolence, the will of the local church following the Word of God is final (1 Cor. 16:2; 1 Cor. 5:11-13; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; 9:6-15).

### Ordinances of the church

- a) Of baptism – We believe that baptism is the immersion in water of the believer (Acts 8:36-39; Mt. 3:6; Jn. 3:23; Rm. 6:4, 5; Mt. 3:16) in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19) to show forth in a solemn testimony a picture of our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with His effect in our death to sin and resurrection to new life (Rm. 6:3, 5; col. 2:12).
  
- b) Of the Lord's Supper - We believe that the Lord's Supper commemorates our Lord's death until He comes by the sacred use of broken bread and the cup as symbols of the price He paid for us. This commemoration should always be preceded by solemn self-examination. (Mt. 26:26-29; Mk. 14:22-25; Lk. 22:14-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-28)

## **IX. Eschatology – The Doctrine of the End Times**

Of the righteous and the wicked – We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked (Gal. 3:22, 26; Gen. 18:23; Rm. 6:17, 18; 1 Pt. 4:18; Pr. 11:31). Only those who through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and sanctified or set apart by the Spirit of our God are truly righteous in their standing before God (Rm. 1:17; 1 Cor. 15:22; Jn. 5:24; Rm. 3:22-24, 4:22-24; Eph. 1:6, 7). All who continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and are under the curse (1 Jn. 5:19; Gal. 3:10; Rm. 6:23, 7:5). This distinction holds among men both before and after death, in the everlasting, conscious suffering of the lost (Mt. 25:34, 41, 46; Lk. 9:26, 16:25, 26; Jn. 8:21; Rm. 6:23; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20:10-15).

Of the rapture of the Christ's church – We believe in the imminent, glorious, personal, pre-tribulational and pre-millennial rapture of the church. Jesus Christ will appear at a time known only by God (Mt. 24:36). First, the dead in Christ will be resurrected to meet Him in the air, then to be joined by those believers who are alive (1 Thess. 4:13-18). This will be followed by the Bema Seat (Judgement Seat of Christ), at which all believers will be rewarded for their service to Christ and their works will be tried by fire (Mt. 25:23, 2 Cor. 5:10, 1 Cor. 3:13-15). The Bride of Christ will then join in the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9).

Of the Tribulation – We believe the period of the Tribulation will be initiated on earth after the rapture (Dan. 9:24-27). Within the span of seven years, God will pour out His wrath on all that stand in rebellion against Him (Rev. 4-19). The Antichrist will be revealed during the first three- and one-half years, making a covenant with the Jews. In the middle of the seven-year period, he will break the pact. God will purify and call out the faithful remnant of Israel (Rev. 7:4-8, Dan. 9:27, Mt. 24). The tribulation will end in the gathering of nations for the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:17-21).

Of the Second Coming of Christ – We believe Christ’s second coming will come at the battle of Armageddon where Satan will be defeated, bound, and cast into the bottomless pit for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3). Christ, victorious in battle, will reign upon the earth during this millennial period. This period will be characterized by peace, justice, and righteousness (Rev. 20:4-6). Satan will be loosed at the end of the Millennium for a short time, only to be defeated again in the battle of Gog and Magog and cast into the lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:7-10).

Of the Great White Throne Judgement – We believe that, after the final defeat of Satan, the dead will be raised to be judged at the Great White Throne according to how they responded to Jesus Christ and according to their works (Rev. 20:11-15). Those who rejected Jesus Christ as Savior and whose name is not found in the Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire where they will experience endless, conscious suffering absent from God (Mt. 3:12; Mk. 9:43-48; Mt. 25:41,46; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 14:11).

Of the New Heaven, New Earth, New Jerusalem – We believe that God will then usher in His New Heaven and New Earth whose capitol is the New Jerusalem, where God Himself will dwell with His people. The New Heaven and New Earth will be a perfect place without the effects of the fall. There will be no more suffering or death (Rev. 21:1-4) and all inhabitants will serve God (Rev. 22:1-5). God will be glorified as representatives from every people group (Rev. 7:9) will worship Him for all of eternity (Rev. 22:5).

## **X. The Family**

On Gender – We believe that God created humanity with specific gender identity and that he continues this process through biological reproduction, that genotypic gender, and not feelings, determines gender identity, and that God makes no mistakes (Num. 23:19; Ps. 145:17; Is. 46:9-10). We would not minimize the struggles that some experience with gender identity and affirm that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, and proper respect and dignity. Hateful and harassing speech, behavior or attitudes contrary to Scripture directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with the doctrines or practices of Tri-County Baptist Church (Rm. 12:9-21; Eph. 4:29-5:2).

On Marriage – We believe that marriage was created by God and is a holy and divinely established covenant between one (genetically male) man and one (genetically female) woman to be a representation of the relationship between Jesus Christ and His church. Marriage is the bond joining one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. Pastors at Tri-County Baptist Church shall only officiate in ceremonies that are consistent with this statement.

We believe that God created sexual intimacy to be enjoyed exclusively between one man and one woman who are married to one another. Sexual intimacy outside the marriage

relationship is sinful and offensive to God and any form of sexual immorality, including but not limited to adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, prostitution, pedophilia, premarital sexual intimacy, cross dressing, sexting or any attempt to change one's gender, or to disagree with one's biological gender. We also believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 15:19, 19:4; Mk. 10:7; Rm. 1:21-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-20; Eph. 5:31; Heb. 13:4; 1 Jn. 1:9).

On Family – We believe Scripture clearly defines the roles of husband, wife, parent, and child within the family. Moreover, we believe children are a blessing of God, that the responsibility for them rests solely upon the parent, and that they are to be brought up in loving, structured control and conscientious instruction in the truths of God and His principles of life (Ps. 127:3; Eph. 6:4; Deut. 6:6, 7; Ps. 78:4-7; Pr. 22:6; Pr. 17:6).

## **XI. Sanctity of life**

On life - We believe that God is the Author of human life - which begins at conception- and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well-being of the mother are acceptable.

On death – We believe that God is the Author of death. Euthanasia and physician assisted suicide seek to put the individual in the place of God as the author of death and thereby are an affront to His character and authority and are a violation of Scripture. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; Ps. 102:18; 139:14-16; Is. 43:7; 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Lk. 1:44).

## **XII. Civil Government**

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society (Rm. 13:1-7; 2 Sam. 23:3; Ex. 18:21-22). Government officials are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed (Mt. 22:21; 1 Tim. 2:1, 2; Titus 3:1; 1 Pt. 2:13, 14, 17; Dan. 1:8-15), except for and only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, (Acts 4:19-20; 5:29; Dan. 3:17-18; 6:10-11) who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the Kings of the earth. In this connection, we stand firmly for the separation of the church and state (Mt. 10:28; 22:21; 23:10; Rev. 11:16; Phil. 2:10-11; Ps. 72:11).

### **XIII. Unity and Purity**

We believe that in order to preserve the function, integrity and purity of Tri-County Baptist Church as a local body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to Tri-County Baptist Church members and the community, it is imperative that all members of Tri-County Baptist Church must assent and be subject to these Articles of Faith and conduct themselves accordingly.

#### **Resources**

1. *Elemental Theology: An Introductory Survey of Conservative Doctrine* by Dr. Emery H. Bancroft
2. *Handbook of Evangelical Theology: A Historical, Biblical, and Contemporary Survey and Review* by Dr. Robert P. Lightner
3. *Practical Christian Theology, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed.* by Dr. Floyd H. Barackman
4. *Systematic Theology* by Dr. Augustus H. Strong
5. *The Moody Handbook of Theology* by Dr. Paul Enns
6. *Basic Theology* by Dr. Charles C. Ryrie
7. *Principles and Practices for Baptist Churches* by Dr. Edward T. Hiscox
8. Doctrinal statement of Rev. Brian K. McManus