

STATEMENT OF FAITH
OF THE
MARTENSDALE COMMUNITY CHURCH

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Articles of Faith

Article I – The Scriptures

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and God breathed (Luke 24:44; Rom 15:4; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:21; 3:16).

Article II – The Godhead

We believe in one triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—eternally existing in three persons executing distinct but harmonious offices in divine operation, co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections (Deut 6:4; Matt 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; 2 Cor 13:14).

The Father is that person of the Godhead who holds the final authority and highest position although all persons are equal in essence. He is the architect of a perfect plan which includes man and all creation (Matt 11:25; John 20:17; 2 Cor 1:3; Eph 4:6).

The Son is the eternal, sinless second person of the Godhead who is declared to be the “brightness of His glory and the express image of His person” (Heb 1:3). We believe the Son came to earth to bear the sins of man (2 Cor 5:21); and that faith in His person and work is the only means of salvation from sin and its punishment (Acts 4:12).

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. We believe He convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:7-11). He indwells every believer, and by His baptism unites all to Christ in one body, and is the source of all power and all acceptable worship and service. In addition to these ministries, He fills, guides, seals and generally helps the believer (Rom 8:9-16; 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 1:12-13; 4:30; 5:18; 2 Thess 2:7; 1 John 2:20-27).

Article III – Angels, Fallen and Unfallen

We believe that God created a great company of sinless, spiritual beings known as angels. Most of these have kept their holy estate and serve God by ministering to them who shall be heirs of salvation (Luke 15:10; Eph 1:21; Heb 1:14; Rev 7:12). Others have lost their holy estate, having followed Satan, the highest in the rank of angels, in rebellion against God. As a result of Christ’s work on the cross, they have been judged along with their leader and will be ultimately delivered with him to the just judgment of the lake of fire (Isa 14:12-17; Ezek 28:11-19; John 16:11; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 6:11-12; Rev 12; 20:1-3, 10).

Article IV – The Depravity of Man

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam’s sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God, and, that man is depraved and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition (Gen 1:20-27; Rom 3:23; 5:12; Eph 2:1-3).

Article V – The Salvation of Man

We believe the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace (Rom 3:24; Eph 2:8-9) through personal faith in the substitutionary work of Christ (Matt 20:28; 1 Pet 2:24). We believe no human effort, no personal integrity, no church relationship, nor any human institution can justify a man in the sight of God (Isa 64:6; John 3:5; 1 Pet 1:18-19, 23).

Article VI – The Christian's Life and Service

We believe God intends for His children to live daily in a holy manner before Him. This necessitates a life separated from sin and dedicated to God. We believe the Christian must allow his life to be controlled by the Holy Spirit and this Spirit-controlled life will be a means of bringing glory to God and a testimony to man (Rom 6:11-13; Gal 5:16-23; Eph 4:22-23).

We believe the Christian's life is to be a life of service in obedience to the command of Christ to take the gospel to all men (Matt 28:18-20). We believe God has given specific and individual gifts to His saints, and these gifts are to be exercised to the end that believers are edified and unbelievers are reached with the gospel message. A key motivation for faithfulness is the reward which the Lord desires to give us in the day we stand before Him (Rom 8:16; 12:1-2; 1 Cor 3:10-15; 12:4-11; 2 Cor 5:10; Eph 4:11-13).

Article VII – The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers

We believe that all the redeemed are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. Personal sin cannot sever that relationship. However, it can affect the joy of that relationship and will bring the experience of God's chastening unless dealt with by confession (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom 8:1, 38-39; 1 Cor 11:30-33; Heb 12:5-11; 1 John 1:9).

We believe God has given His saints sufficient basis for the assurance of their salvation and relationship to Him. This assurance finds its basis in the certainty of the Scripture promises, the integrity and perfection of God, and the inner assurance of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:16; 2 Cor 5:1; Heb 10:22; 1 John 5:13).

Article VIII – The Church

We believe that all who are united to the risen and ascended Son of God are members of the church which is the body and bride of Christ, which began at Pentecost, and therefore is distinct from Israel. Its members are constituted as such regardless of membership or non-membership in the organized churches of the earth. We believe that by the same Spirit all believers in this age are baptized into, and thus become, one body—that is Christ's—whether Jews or Gentiles (Matt 16:16-18; Acts 2:42-47; Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:13).

We believe the local church is a congregation of professing believers, associated by bond of faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the ordinance of Christ, governed by His laws and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges granted it. We believe the obligation of the local church is to take the gospel of Christ to all the world (Matt 28:18-20). The local church has the absolute right of self-government free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations.

Article IX – The Ordinances of the Church

We believe Christian baptism is the immersion of the believer in water to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith and union to the crucified, buried, and risen Savior. It is demanding upon all Christians because it is the command of Christ (Matt 28:19; Rom 6:3-5).

We believe the Lord's Supper is a memorial service in recognition of the death of Christ and its effect in the life of the Christian. This ordinance is to be observed by the Christian only after self-examination (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor 11:26-32).

Article X – The Offices of the Church

We believe there are two local church offices established by Scripture: Elders and Deacons, and that the Lord raises these men up in each local congregation (Eph 4:11-12). Each local church should seek to identify and recognize such men (Acts 6:3; 14:23; Eph 4:11-12; 1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9).

We believe the office of Deacon is limited to qualified men (see Article IV, §3 of the *By-Laws*), gifted and appointed to serve the needs of the body.

We believe the office of Elder is limited to qualified men (see Article II, §5 of the *By-Laws*), gifted and appointed to shepherd the local body. We believe that the biblical terms "overseer" or "bishop," "elder" or "presbyter," and "pastor" or "shepherd," all refer to the single office of Elder (cf. Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Pet 5:1-2). It is a plurality of Elders who are to teach, shepherd, oversee, and rule, in each local church, and no single Elder holds greater authority than any other Elder.

Article XI – Marriage and Human Sexuality

We believe that human gender and human sexuality are God's creation and His good gift to mankind and that they exist for His glory and to fulfill His purposes. We believe that gender (male or female) is objectively fixed at conception and is not changeable, nor is it a matter subject to personal opinion or self-perceived identity (Gen 1:26-28; 2:24; Rom 1:26-29; 1 Cor 6:9-10).

We believe that God instituted marriage for His own glory and purposes. We believe that marriage has been given to all peoples and that the only legitimate marriage is the covenant union between one man and one woman (Gen 2:24; Eph 5:22-23; Col 3:18-19).

We believe that the marriage relationship is the only legitimate place for the expression of human sexuality. We believe that any deviation from this divinely instituted pattern including, but not limited to, fornication, adultery, and homosexuality, is illegitimate and sinful (1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:3-6; Heb 13:4).

Article XII – Civil Government

We believe civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of human society, and that those in authority are to be remembered in prayer, conscientiously honored, and obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 13:1-7; 1 Tim 2:1-3; 1 Pet 2:13-16).

Article XIII – Resurrection

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men (John 5:28-29). The bodily resurrection of Christ was the beginning of God's resurrection program which will in due time engulf all mankind (1 Cor 15:19-26; 15:57).

Article XIV – Christ's Present Ministry

We believe Christ is at the right hand of the Father during this church age having ascended to the Father following His resurrection and post-resurrection ministry (Acts 1:9-11). During the present age Christ is the High Priest, Intercessor, and Advocate of the believer (Heb 4:14-16; 7:25; 1 John 2:1-2).

Article XV – The Blessed Hope

We believe that the next great event in the fulfillment of prophecy will be the coming of the Lord in the air to receive to Himself into heaven both His own who are alive and remaining unto His coming, and also all who have fallen asleep in Jesus, and that this event is the blessed hope set before us in the Scripture, and for this we should be constantly looking (John 14:1-3; 1 Cor 15:51-52; Phil 3:20; 1 Thess 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14).

Article XVI – The Tribulation

We believe a time of great tribulation will be loosed upon the earth following the rapture of the church. It will last for seven years and will serve to purify Israel as a nation and bring judgment upon the Gentiles (Dan 9:27; Rev 6:1-19:21).

Article XVII – The Second Coming of Christ

We believe the tribulation period will be climaxed by the personal, visible return of Christ to the earthly scene to defeat His enemies, to abolish Gentile authority, to bind Satan, to judge Israel, and to institute the millennial kingdom, (Deut 30:1-10; Isa 11:9; Ezek 20:33-44; 37:21-28; Matt 24:15-25, 46; Rev 20:1-3).

Article XVIII – The Millennial Period

We believe a literal, earthly millennial period will be established upon the earth following the tribulation period. This 1,000 year period has as its foundation in the great unconditional covenants of the Old Testament – Abrahamic (Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:9-18; 17:1-9), the Palestinian (Deut 30:1-10), the Davidic (2 Sam 7:10-16; Ps 89), and the new covenant (Jer 31:31-34). Christ will be the king of this millennial or Davidic Kingdom with the nation Israel occupying an exalted position within the kingdom (Isa 11:1-10).

Article XIX – The Eternal State

We believe Christ will deliver His millennial kingdom up to the Father (1 Cor 15:24), and thereby will the eternal state begin. All the just will be taken into eternal bliss, but all the unjust will be ushered to their just reward in the everlasting lake of fire (Rev 20:11-15). The eternal state will be the fulfillment of God's purpose and plan which has its goal the glory of God (Eph 1:6, 12, 14; Phil 1:23).