

Living Hope Baptist Church Articles of Faith

The following statements represent a consensus concerning the beliefs and teachings of Living Hope Baptist Church. These statements, while not exhaustive, seek to communicate the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith that are taught in the Scriptures. Affirmation of these doctrines is required for church membership. It is important that members know and understand them; however, they are not required to be able to articulate these beliefs fully. The explicit rejection of any of these statements in word or deed is justification for entering a process of discipline and reconciliation or removing someone from membership.

I. THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible were written by men inspired by God. It is God's only, final and complete written revelation of Himself, His ways, purposes, and standards for mankind. It is without error in the original manuscripts, worthy of our trust, sufficient for explaining salvation, and authoritative for faith and life. Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is the focus of divine revelation.

Psalm 19:7-11; Isaiah 40:8, 55:10-11; Luke 24:27, 44-45; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:21; Revelation 22:18-19

II. GOD

We believe in one God, who exists eternally in three persons – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three persons are equal in divinity, authority, and glory and yet each has personal attributes and distinct functions. Because of His triune nature, God is both transcendent over all of creation and personally involved in this world as the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe.

Genesis 1:1-2, 26, 31; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2

A. God the Father

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, holy, and loving being, who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-wise. He sovereignly reigns over the affairs of this world, He hears and answers prayer, and He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 6:1-8, 40:9-31, 43:15; Psalm 47:8; Proverbs 2:6-7; Habakkuk 2:20; Matthew 6:9-13; Romans 8:28-39; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 1:1-14; 1 Timothy 1:17; 1 John 4:8

B. God the Son

We believe in Jesus Christ, the one and only eternal Son of God, who, while remaining fully divine, became fully man that He might reveal God and redeem mankind. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, Mary. He lived a sinless life and died a substitutionary death in order to provide redemption, serving as the one and only mediator between God and man. He was buried and then physically resurrected from the grave. He ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father, where He remains as an intercessor for His people until the day in which He will return in power and glory to judge the living and the dead. He will then reign in glory for eternity.

Isaiah 7:14, 53:1-12; Matthew 24:30-31; John 1:1-4, 14; Acts 1:6-11; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-20; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 1:3, 4:14-15, 9:28

C. God the Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of God, a fully divine Person and not merely a spiritual essence or power. He inspired the Scriptures, enables men to

understand truth, and exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, regenerates the heart to believe, and is the means by which the believer is sealed until the day of final redemption. Every believer fully receives, or is baptized with, the Holy Spirit at the moment of regeneration. He then dwells within believers to develop the fruit of Christ-like character and holiness, to guide, to assure, to comfort, and to intercede for them. He empowers them for life and mission and equips them to serve God through the church by spiritual gifts.

Genesis 1:2; John 14:26; 15:26, 16:8,12-13; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:9-11, 14-17, 26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:11,19-20; 12:1-11; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Peter 1:20-21

III. HUMANITY

We believe that God created humanity in His own image, as male and female. Each human being is an eternal soul purposed to exist for God's glory.

A. The Essence of Humanity

God made human beings of only two genders / sexes, male or female, each full of dignity and equal in worth, yet with distinct qualities and roles. All persons are responsible to faithfully steward God's creative purpose for humanity in the world. The sacredness of creation affirms that all of this is true of every person of every race, from conception to natural death. All persons are to be treated with profound respect and are never to be degraded or abused physically, emotionally, verbally, sexually, or in any other way.

Genesis 1:26-28, 2:7, 4:8-10; Psalm 8, 139:13-16; Isaiah 43:7; Ephesians 4:31-32; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Revelation 4:11

B. The Fall of Humanity

Having been tempted by Satan, man chose to sin against God and thereby incurred physical and spiritual death, which is separation from God's fellowship. As a result, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and also willfully choose to sin which brings them under the just condemnation of God.

Genesis 3:1-24; Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 1:25, 3:23, 5:12; Hebrews 9:27

C. The Technology of Humanity

Artificial Intelligence and all its associated technologies are tools that are to exist for the good of human beings and for the glory of God. Like all technology produced by humans, it may either be applied to the flourishing of humanity in many areas or distorted by sin to our detriment or destruction. Thus, it must be interpreted and used with thoughtful and godly wisdom.

Artificial Intelligence must not be used to usurp, replace, or be assigned any aspect of humanity's God-given design, essence, purpose, dignity, or authority. It is not to be viewed as an object of human redemption, a replacement for human responsibility to make moral/ ethical decisions, a means of pursuing a humanity beyond God's design and limits, a substitute for any proper biblical expression of sexuality, or a means of controlling, manipulating, or harming oneself or others.

All Scripture above plus Proverbs 16:4; Matthew 22:37-40; Philippians 2:4; James 1:17; 2 Peter 1:5-8; 2 Tim. 1:7-9

IV. SALVATION

We believe that salvation is the free gift of God, whereby God, by grace regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies an individual through his or her faith in Jesus Christ.

A. Regeneration is the new birth, whereby God gives a person a new heart that responds to Him both with repentance that turns away from sin and with faith that expresses wholehearted trust in Christ alone as Savior and Lord.

Ezekiel 36:26-27; John 3:3-8, 16-18; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 1:3

B. Justification is the act whereby God declares a person innocent and righteous by counting the righteousness of Christ to his or her credit through faith in the completed work of Christ.

Romans 3:21-26, 5:1-11, 8:1, 30-34, 10:9-13; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Titus 3:4-7

C. Sanctification is the lifelong process whereby the believer is wholly set apart for the Lord and transformed into the image of Christ through progressive growth in holiness - in thought, attitude, character, and action.

Romans 6:4-14, 22-23; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 2:6

D. Glorification is the culmination of the salvation process at the time of Christ's return that ultimately results in the believer experiencing perfect communion with God throughout all eternity.

Romans 8:30, 35-39; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 1 Peter 1:4-7; 1 John 3:2

We believe there is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ. In order to be saved, individuals must respond by faith to the call of God by repenting of their sin, believing in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and committing themselves to follow Christ. Those whom God has redeemed in Christ and sanctified by the Spirit will persevere to the end and can never lose their salvation.

John 14:6; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 10:13; Matthew 24:13; John 10:27-30

V. THE CHURCH

A. The Nature and Mission of the Church

We believe that a New Testament church consists of the redeemed and called-out people of God and is the Body of Christ. The universal Church is made up of all believers in all places at all times existing under the headship of Christ. The local church is a unique community of baptized believers who have entered into covenant with one another in their shared faith, to live on mission to make known the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The local church has been entrusted by the Risen Christ with the mission of taking the Gospel to all the people of the world. Each local church is to be faithful to gather for worship, teaching, fellowship, service, and disciple-making. In the pursuit of that mission, a local church is free to cooperate with like-minded churches, associations, and Great Commission ministries. The biblical offices of the church are elder / pastor and deacon.

Matthew 16:18; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27; Ephesians 2:19-21, 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; Rev.5:9-10, 7:9-11

B. The Ordinances of the Church

The church of Jesus Christ observes two ordinances.

- 1. Believer's Baptism:** We believe that Christian baptism is an act of obedience to the command of the Lord Jesus to make a public and individual declaration of faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as Savior, and of allegiance to Him as Lord. Baptism is immersion into water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit following a personal profession of faith in Jesus Christ. It is symbolic of the initial work of the grace of God in the heart of the believer and is neither a work that achieves salvation nor a repetitive act for repentance. It is a prerequisite to the

privileges of church membership.

Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; Acts 8:12, 35-38; Romans 6:3-4; Eph.2:8-9; 1 Corinthians 1:13-17

2. **The Lord's Supper:** We believe that the Lord's Supper is given by the Lord Jesus to those who have repented of sin and trusted Him for salvation in order to commemorate His sacrificial death, confirm the unity of His church, and anticipate His glorious return. The Lord's Supper is to be preceded by each believer's prayerful examination and confession. It involves believers partaking of bread (symbolizing His incarnation and broken body) and the fruit of the vine (symbolizing His blood of the new covenant poured out for the forgiveness of sin). The Lord's Supper is to be observed with the local church family on a regular basis until Jesus returns.

Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:23-28

VI. THE LAST THINGS

We believe that under God's sovereign hand, this world will come to an end. The Lord Jesus Christ will suddenly, physically, and visibly return to earth, conquer all enemies and establish His glorious eternal kingdom. All persons will be physically resurrected and face the final judgment. Those who have not trusted in Jesus Christ will be raised to eternal punishment and will spend eternity in hell. Those who have trusted in Jesus Christ will be raised to eternal reward and dwell forever in the presence of the Lord, enjoying the new heaven and earth, and joining together to proclaim the glory of the God who makes all things new.

Matthew 16:27; 24:27, 36-44; 25:31-46; John 11:25-27, 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44; Philippians 2:10-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-16, 20:11-22:13

VII. CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

We believe every true Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who actively works to shape the heart, transform the mind, and guide the will to conform disciples of Jesus to the image of Christ (see Articles II-C and IV). Though temptation to sin remains a reality, as Christians obey the leading of the Spirit and order their lives by the Word of God in all matters of faith and life, they will be enabled to battle the flesh, grow in the knowledge of the Lord, bear the fruit of the Spirit, and keep His commands. A Christian is called to be holy as God is holy, do everything to the glory of God, make disciples of all people and nations, pursue love and do good to everyone, act according to God's justice on behalf of all people affected by unjust persons or circumstances, and be a faithful steward of all that God has entrusted to him/her.

Psalms 89:14; Amos 5:24; Micah 6:8; Matthew 22:39, 23:23, 28:19-20; Luke 10:25-37; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:5-11, 12:1-3; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Galatians 5:16-25; Titus 2:11-12; 1 Peter 1:15-16, 4:1-2, 10-11; 1 John 2:3-6; Romans 12:1-3; James 1:27

VIII. MARRIAGE, THE FAMILY, & SEXUALITY

We believe that though various cultures and governments may develop evolving views on marriage, the family, and sexuality, God alone as Creator and eternal King has authoritatively defined them in His unchanging Word.

Malachi 3:6; Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 5:18

A. Marriage

Marriage has been ordained by God to be the union of one biological man and one biological woman in a sacred, life-long covenant. This is marriage sanctioned by God and is the only legitimate meaning for the term "marriage".

Men and women are created by God as spiritual equals (see Article III), and are also designed to have different, yet complementary roles in marriage that display the gospel's profound mystery of the relationship between Christ and His Church. As disciples of Jesus, husbands and wives are to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Husbands are called to humbly lead, protect, and love their wives with Christ's radically sacrificial love and tenderness. Wives are called to compassionately help, respect, and submit to their husband's leadership as the Church yields to Christ and His model of trusting submission to God's good and sovereign design for life.

With His good gift of marriage, God provides husbands and wives with intimate companionship; an exclusive path for sexual purity, expression, and fulfillment; the means for the procreation of the human race; and the basis for healthy families and the raising of children.

Genesis 2:18-24; Mark 10:2-12; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11; Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:7

B. The Family and Children

We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Children, from conception, are fully human and a blessing from God. God has given parents the primary responsibility to train their children to know, love, and obey the Lord by providing a consistent example of the faith, loving discipline, and faithful instruction in God's Word.

Parents alone, and not the State or any other governing institution or organization, have the God-given responsibility and authority to raise their children. The State retains its God-given responsibility to protect children in instances of abuse, abandonment, and/or neglect.

Children are to honor and obey their parents in the Lord.

Genesis 1:28; Exodus 20:12; Psalm 127:3-5, 139:13-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Proverbs 22:6; Psalm 78:4-8; Ephesians 6:1-4

C. Singleness

We believe that God calls some individuals to singleness, while others may be single by reason of death or other circumstance. Singleness gives a special testimony to the sufficiency of Christ. Unmarried Christians have a unique availability to focus on the Great Commission and build up the church with their gifts and callings.

Matthew 19:11-12; 1 Corinthians 7:8,17, 32

D. Sexual Identity and Expression

We believe that the physical body is a creation of God by which He established only two genders / sexes for human beings: male and female (see Article III). Thus, gender / sexual identity is biologically determined at the chromosomal level and not a matter of personal preference or social construct.

Transgenderism or any attempt to intentionally redefine, verbally affirm, present oneself outwardly, or change by surgery one's sexual identity in opposition to one's created, biological sex is sinful and offensive to God because it is an intentional distortion and rejection of His design.

A Christian's identity is in Christ alone and is to reflect the transformation of the Spirit. Nothing God expressly forbids is to be used by a disciple of Jesus to describe their identity or standing as a Christian (see Article IV-C). Gender dysphoria, same-sex attraction, and other disordered sexual desires are temptations to sin and are to be battled with the resurrection power of Jesus Christ by the indwelling Holy Spirit and the help of the church.

Genesis 1:27; Romans 1:26-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 11:14-15; Colossians 3:1-11

E. Sexual Intimacy and Immorality

We believe that God gave sexual intimacy as a good gift to be pursued and enjoyed only between one biological man and one biological woman who are married to each other. Sexual immorality (any intimate sexual activity outside the boundaries of a covenant marriage) is sin and is clearly and expressly prohibited by the Lord.

As a consequence of this, we believe that any and all forms of sexual immorality, including but not limited to abuse, adultery, fornication, polygamy, polyamory, homosexual or bisexual conduct, pedophilia, bestiality, incest, transgenderism, sexual activity facilitated by artificial intelligence, pornographic practice or consumption, and the lustful attitudes that lead towards them are sinful perversions of God's good gift of sex.

Genesis 2:24-25; Proverbs 5:15-23; Matthew 5:27-30; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, 7-8; Hebrews 13:4

F. Gospel Hope

As with any sin, we believe that by the gospel, God assures redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sinful sexual expression and /or action, seek mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ, and trust and obey Him. He offers His resurrection power in the Spirit for the battling of temptation.

So, as we follow Christ and live in accordance with His Word and these doctrines, we affirm that our church family has a calling to welcome in love those wrestling with all kinds of temptation (including sexual temptation), to point them to Jesus, and to help them in their fight to live in obedience, holiness, and wholeness in Jesus. This requires speech and actions that express compassion and respect, and that avoid harassment or hateful attitudes toward any person.

Galatians 6:2-3; Hebrews 3:12-13, 4:15-16; Matthew 11:28-30

Living Hope Baptist Church also affirms [The Baptist Faith & Message, 2000](#). In the case of any real or perceived discrepancy, The Living Hope Articles of Faith will have precedence.

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