

## Expanded Resources

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## ARBOR ROAD

### **The Story of Arbor Road Church**

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

WHERE WE ARE

WHERE WE'RE GOING

### **ARBOR ROAD CHURCH**

5336 ARBOR RD. LONG BEACH, CA 90808 | [ARBORROAD.COM](http://ARBORROAD.COM) | 562.420.1471



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ARBOR ROAD

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# A Letter from Our Pastors

The story of Arbor Road Church is a story of people - God's people who originally banded together in a local home to share and teach the Word of God. It's a story of faithfulness - the faithfulness of people and pastors who, for almost 80 years, have helped foster the spiritual growth, health, and genuine community that have enabled Arbor Road to have a historical impact. This story is also one of family - as Arbor Road is a spiritual family that has learned the importance of valuing the tremendous variety of ages and stages represented among us.

The decades of ministry in our rearview mirror are marked by enormous sacrifice, prayer, faithful preaching and teaching, unprecedented growth, spiritual training and equipping, musical excellence, amazing outreach, and impact across the entire demographic of our city.

Over the past 80 years, we have also experienced heartache, hurts, brokenness, reconciliation, peacemaking, joy, and brotherly/sisterly love. Together, we've experienced the ups and downs of doing ministry together for the long haul. But through it all, God has remained faithful, and His hand has remained over this ministry.

Now, as we look through the windshield of faith into the decades ahead, we do so with a heightened sense of what God will do in and through us as we continue striving to be a church that deeply seeks to Know God and Make Him Known!

We're grateful to share this story with you and look forward to seeing your life make an important impact throughout the halls of Arbor Road Church! Thanks for taking the time to DISCOVER ARC (or maybe ... discover *more* about us)! We're glad to have you and yours worship and serve alongside us!





# PURPOSE OF ARBOR ROAD

**To Know God and  
Make Him Known**

## **Our Purpose: “To Know God and to Make Him Known”**

Our purpose statement chiefly describes who we are. In essence, our purpose statement tells people “what we’re all about!” In 2008, we spent several months searching the scriptures and times in prayer as a leadership team; we rested on the statement of purpose above – “To know God and to make Him known!” Whenever we encounter an opportunity to enter into ministry or pursue a missional course of action, we start by asking: Will this opportunity help us to remain on mission in our pursuit of knowing God and making Him known?

These two key Biblical texts gave us clear direction for how to articulate our purpose:

### **Text #1: John 17:3**

It is God’s desire that we “know Him”. The Greek word “Gnosko” speaks of intimate knowledge. That’s exactly what we want for those who call Arbor Road their home church. We desire that each one of us would know God deeply and truthfully. Again, it’s not just a matter of “knowing God” in an intellectual way. Though knowing God will invariably include “information” - what we’re desirous for everyone at Lakewood to get is what it means to know God intimately and personally.

We get to know God more and more deeply when we:

- Spend consistent time in His Word, the Bible.
- Spend consistent time praying - bringing our thanks and requests to Him.
- Spend consistent time in relationship with each other pursuing a common goal.

### **Text #2: Matthew 28:18-20**

Alongside of “knowing God” comes the second part of our purpose statement, “making Him known.” God’s primary vehicle for disseminating the gospel message is His people – you and I! We believe with all our hearts that God has put the ministry of Arbor Road right where we’re at here in Long Beach to tell people in our direct area and throughout the world of the person and work of Jesus Christ. God has given us the knowledge of eternal life through His Son. Jesus’ commission to His disciples at the end of His earthly time was to take that message to the world! We are simply continuing to engage that great charge. And, we move forward in faith knowing that God is with us – “even to the end of the age.”

***Everything we do as a church will have in its crosshairs the two-fold desire of knowing God and making Him known!***



# STATEMENT OF BELIEFS



## Statement of Beliefs

### The Word of God

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

### The Trinity

We believe that there is one living and true God - eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son & Holy Spirit. These are equal in every divine perfection, and they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the word of creation, providence, and redemption.

### God The Father

We believe in God, the Father - an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

### Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth.

### The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit - who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher, and guide.

### Regeneration-New Birth Matthew 19:22 & Titus 3:5

We believe that all men are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

## **The Church**

We believe in the universal church - a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, be baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.

## **Christian Conduct**

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellow men, that his conduct should be blameless before the world, that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions, and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ.

## **Religious Liberty**

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God alone in all matters of faith, that each church is independent and must be free from interferences by any ecclesiastical or political authority, and therefore, that Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions - each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other.

## **The Last Things**

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His Kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal happiness of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked.



# DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS

## Pastor Brent’s Doctrinal Statement

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## I. The Trinity

### A. Statement of Faith

I believe there is One God eternally existing in Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, yet the Father is not the Son or the Holy Spirit, the Son is not the Father or the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father or the Son. Each person of the Triune God exists as three personal beings, independent in their persons but One in essence.

### B. Father

God the Father is the first person of the Trinity, and orders all things according to His purpose (Ps. 145:8; 1 Cor. 8:6). His role as Father is purposed not only in the Trinity but works in relation to all mankind (Eph. 4:6). He saves from sin all who would come to Him (John 1:12), and adopts as His own those who He calls to Himself (Rom. 8:15).

### C. Son

God the Son came down and became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man (Matt. 1:18-25; Lk. 1:26-38). He possessed at the same time two distinct natures, both of which retained their integrity and remained unchanged and unconfused. The Son has always existed as God, yet, took on the full nature of a man becoming man, yet remaining in every way God (Phil. 2:6-8). The Son is impeccable. Though he has been tempted in every way, He is incapable of sinning, as that would contradict His eternal nature (Heb. 4:15).

Because He alone is perfect in every way, and impeccable as God, the Son became the perfect sacrifice for man's sin (Lev. 22:20; Is. 53:9; 1 Pet. 2:22-24). By laying His life down as a sacrifice, rising from the dead, and ascending into Heaven, God the Son solely possesses the power over sin and rightfully is the Judge of the living and dead (1 Cor. 15:3-8; John 20:22; Acts 1:9-12).

### D. Spirit

God the Spirit, with the Son and the Father, is eternally worshipped and glorified (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Heb. 9:14). He has always existed (as a person) as God with the Son and the Father, and will forever possess all the characteristics as God very God.

The Spirit regenerates believers at the time of salvation (John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5). The Spirit also prays for believers (Rom. 8:26-27), teaches them (1 John 2:27), guides them (Rom. 8:14), sanctifies them (2 Cor. 3:18), fills them (Eph. 5:18), and gives gifts to them (1 Cor. 12:1-31). Simultaneously, the Spirit bears witness to Christ and convicts unbelievers of their sin, of the righteousness of Christ, and of the coming judgment of humanity (John 15:26-27; 16:8-11).

## E. Nature of God

In God, two types of attributes exist simultaneously: communicable (those which, to a degree, can be shared by man) and incommunicable (those which cannot be shared by man in any way).

God's communicable attributes include the following: God is holy (Is. 6:1-7; 1 John 1:5), God is righteous (1 John 1:9), God is loving (Rom. 8:38-39; Eph. 2:4-7), God is merciful (Titus 3:5; Heb. 4:16), God is truthful (Rom. 3:4; 2 Cor. 1:20), God is patient (2 Pet. 3:9).

God's incommunicable attributes include the following: God is omnipresent - Able to be everywhere at the exact same moment (Ps. 139:7-12); God is omnipotent - All-powerful (Matt. 19:26; Phil. 3:21); God is omniscient - Has always had perfect knowledge (Ps. 139:1-6); God is immutable - Never changing (Mal. 3:6; Jas. 1:17; Heb. 13:8).

## F. Work and Creation of God

God created the Heavens and the Earth. He alone is responsible for creating the universe out of nothing (Gen. 1) for His glory (Ps. 19:1-6; Rev. 4:11). As Creator of the Earth, God alone is the sustainer of all things; meaning, everything depends on His power for its existence (Ps. 104:27-30; Acts 17:28; Col. 1:7).

In regards to man, who alone was made in God's image, God's primary work is that of reconciliation. The chief purpose of God is to bring man into a right relationship with Him - this being done through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1-11).

## II. Bibliology

### A. Statement of Faith

I believe that the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is the divinely revealed Word of God. I believe that God's Word is the product of His own verbal inspiration. In its original form, the Bible is perfect and without error, and is furthermore incapable of leading us astray when clearly understood through a sound method of interpretation. I believe that the Bible alone stands as God's final written revelation to us today and is the only authority for genuine faith in God.

### B. Revelation

According to the Bible, God reveals Himself to mankind through two distinct types of revelation: general revelation (Ps. 19:1-6) and special revelation (Ps. 19:7-11)

God's general revelation is primarily seen through His creation. God's creation allows the heart of every man to correctly identify that He is the Creator of the

universe even though they do not acknowledge Him as such (Rom. 1:20- 23). Though general revelation points the heart of man to God, man cannot come into a salvific relationship with God through this type of revelation alone (Rom. 10:17).

God's special or "specific" revelation is seen in three lights: historical events (Deut. 26:5-9), divine speech (Jer. 18:1, Hos. 1:1, Rev. 1:1-3, 2 Pet. 1:16-21) and the incarnation (Heb. 1:1-2). In the church age, all three of these revelations have been comprehensively established and communicated through God's Word, the Bible.

### **C. Inspiration**

God's Word is divinely inspired in that, through a supernatural process, God influenced the Biblical writers to record the words of Scripture, thus giving to the readers the very Words of God (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

God's Word is divinely inspired to each word ("verbal inspiration") of the Scriptures, giving us His exact words and not merely His thoughts or ideas on a matter (2 Pet. 1:20-21). His Word is also equally inspired ("plenary inspiration") allowing for His divine inspiration to extend to all parts of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16, Matt. 5:18).

### **D. Illumination**

Because of the depravity of man, we are unable to correctly see God for all that Scripture says of Him without the power of the Holy Spirit enlightening us. The Holy Spirit helps believers to see and understand God's Word correctly (1 John 2:27) and is responsible for the application and teaching of God's Word in the lives of all who follow the Lord (Rom. 8:26-27).

### **E. Authority**

The ultimate authority of Scripture, (all 66 books), is given by God Himself. He alone has the right to establish the standard of faith and practice. The Bible is God's final Word to us - being completely inerrant and infallible. God has delegated His direct authority to His written Word, allowing it to convey His message with the same weight as if He was speaking to us personally (Matt. 5:17-19; 24:35).

## **III. Anthropology**

### **A. Statement of Faith**

I believe man is the most unique of God's created order, being the only of His creation to be made in His image (Gen. 1:26-27). God created man and woman in complete perfection and moral purity, but because of the decision of Adam and Eve to directly disregard God's intended plan for their lives, sin (which God did not author, but rather allowed) became a permanent fixture in the life of everything on the face of the Earth (Gen. 3, Rom. 5:12-21). As a result of the sin problem, all of mankind is born into the world innately separated from God (Rom. 3:23).

## B. Human Nature

The nature of man can be found through observing both his material and immaterial nature (body, soul and spirit). Being a specific creation of God, as well as being made in His image (Gen. 1:26-27, 5:1-2; 6:6-7; Ps. 100:3; 1 Cor. 11:12), man shares a rational, moral, spiritual, and social likeness to God.

The material nature of man (body) refers to that of the outer man (2 Cor. 4:16), while the inner man is marked by soul and spirit, which are two different functional attributes of the same immaterial nature (Lk. 1:46-47; John 13:21). Mankind was created with intellectual ability (Gen. 2:19-20), emotions (Rom. 10:1-2) and will (Gen. 3:6). Though sin has marred the image of God in man, the image of God remains an integral part of every man (Gen. 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Js. 3:9).

## C. Human Destiny

Because of the far-reaching implications of sin, death is inevitable to every man (Rom. 3:23; Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:22). As the due penalty for the sin that inhabits our fallen world, God has appropriated physical death. Though each person dies in his or her flesh, believers in Christ will be given glorified bodies (1 Cor. 15:51- 58) and will enjoy an eternity focused around the presence of God in Heaven. All unbelievers will also be given a body suitable for their God-less eternity in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:12-15).

## IV. Hamartiology

### A. Statement of Faith

I believe that sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God. I further believe that it is both the innate nature of mankind to be sinners and also the choice of all people to sin and act in rebellion to the righteousness of God (Rom. 3:23; Gal. 5:19-21). Because of the sinful nature and choice of mankind, it is impossible for anyone to do anything in line with the righteousness of God, and were it not for the redemptive work of Christ on the cross, mankind would be mastered by his sin forever (Eph. 2:3).

### B. Nature

Sin is a failure to conform to the righteousness of God in any way, including any act, attitude, or nature. Sin can show itself to be evident in both internal (Matt. 5:22, 28) and external ways (Gal. 5:19-21). Sin can take on a variety of forms such as unbelief (John 16:9), selfishness (2 Tim. 3:2), jealousy (1 Cor. 3:3) and sensuality (Eph. 4:19). It can be recognized by either doing something in direct opposition to God's way, or failing to do what one knows to be right (James 4:17).

### C. Effects

The direct effect of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). To unbelievers, sin is the condemning element that will ultimately lead them to a Godless eternity in the lake of fire forever because of their rejection of Jesus' work of redemption on the cross (John 16:8-9). To believers, the stain and penalty of sin is taken away (Rom. 5:9; 8:1) because of Jesus' substitutory death (1 Pet. 2:24). However, though the forgiven status of a Christian who sins is unchanged, sin in the life of a believer can still affect his relationship with God by displeasing God (Eph. 4:30). Sin can also greatly affect the believer's ability to serve Him (John 15:4).

### D. Original Sin

Sin entered into the world when Adam followed his wife Eve in disobeying God's commands (Rom. 5:12-14). As a result of their sin, to all mankind sin is imputed, (that is, all human beings are born with a sin nature they will pass on to their offspring). therefore, man (apart from Christ) is totally spiritually dead before God because of his innate sin problem (Rom. 3:10-18).

## V. Soteriology

### A. Statement of Faith

I believe that anyone who, in recognition of their sin, calls upon God to forgive them through Jesus Christ, is forgiven once and for all of all past, present, and future sin (Rom. 10:9; 1 John 1:9). I believe that the salvation that brings us near to our Heavenly Father is only found by grace through faith in His Son as the propitiation for our sins (1 Pet. 2:24; Eph. 2:8-9).

### B. Plan

Because of his sinfulness, man is incapable of doing anything worthy of being saved from the death sentence hanging over him (Rom. 3:10-12, 23). Through God's redemptive plan, He has sent for us His Son who knew no sin to take on the penalty of sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 5:8). Because God alone is Holy, He is able to take on the penalty of sin for us. This being true, He has been, and always will be, the only way to the Father (John 14:6). The death of Christ fully satisfies the wrath of God towards a believer's sin, and once and for all takes that sin away (1 John 3:5, 4:10).

### C. Process

Salvation is not the work of any man, but is rather the free gift of God through Christ for all who believe (Eph. 2:8-9). It is a personal act of faith by which a person both believes in Christ (John 3:16) and confesses Him as Lord (Rom. 10:9). Once a person is in Christ, the inward workings of the Holy Spirit safeguard that person's life in Christ forever (John 10:27-28; Rom. 8:38-39).

## D. Election

Election is the phase in God's plan of redemption for mankind in which He (in eternity past) chose (or "elected") those who would be saved, without any foreseen merit from them or personal work on their part (Acts 13:48; Rom. 8:33; Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13). Those God elected, He predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son (Eph. 1:4-5, 11; Rom. 8:29).

## E. Atonement

The atonement is solely based on God's holiness (Lev. 11:44-45) and is an expression of His love for sinful man (Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:8). The atonement provides the only way that man can again have fellowship with God and be released from the sin that consumes him. The death of Christ pays all legal demands of God's righteousness as Jesus Himself takes on the penalty of mankind's sin (Is. 53:4-6; Matt. 16:21; Rom. 4:25; 2 Cor. 5:21).

## F. Regeneration

Regeneration is the act of God in which He bestows new spiritual life to the one who believes in His Son as Savior and Lord (John 3:3-8). Regeneration is fully the work of God, and has always been a part of His redemptive plan for mankind (Ez. 36:26-27). Regeneration is an instantaneous event that happens once at the moment of salvation (1 Cor. 2:14-16; 2 Cor. 5:17).

## G. Conversion

The subsequent act of man to the call of Jesus Christ (Matt. 11:28-29) is man's willful turning from his sinful ways (1 Pet. 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:17). This repentance is a personal decision that follows genuine faith in Jesus Christ. True conversion can be seen in both the life and mind of the one who has been changed (Acts 20:21; 2 Cor. 7:9-11).

## H. Justification

Justification is the legal declaration by God that He views us (in Christ) as being righteous (Rom. 3: 21-22, 26, 28). Justification not only involves the forgiveness of previous sin (Rom. 4:6-8), but also the imputation of the righteousness of Christ (Rom. 5:19), giving us perfect standing with God today and forever. Justification is solely an act of God, not merited by any human thought or deed (Rom. 3:23-24).

## I. Sanctification

Sanctification is the process in the life of a believer by which the Holy Spirit stirs us to become more prone to emulate Christ and less desirous to sin (1 John 3:9; Rom. 6:11-14). At the moment of conversion, the Holy Spirit enters the believer's life beginning the process of sanctification, which continues throughout the believer's

entire earthly life (Phil. 1:6; 2 Cor. 3:18). Sanctification is an act of the Spirit (1 Pet. 1:2) that involves the participation of man to set aside his sin and strive for personal holiness (Phil. 3:12-14).

## **J. Glorification**

The final act of God's redemptive work is that of the believer receiving his resurrected (or "glorified") body with Christ (Rom. 8:23-24, 30; 1 Thess. 4:14-17). Among other things, our new bodies will be imperishable (1 Cor. 15:42-44), free from corruption (Matt. 13:43), glorious (Phil. 3:21) and immortal (1 Cor. 51-53). At the glorification of our bodies, we will inhabit the heavenly city with the Lord Jesus Christ forever (1 Thess. 4:17-18; 2 Pet. 3:13).

## **VI. Ecclesiology**

### **A. Statement of Faith**

I believe that there is one church, which exists in two manifestations: the universal church and the local church. I believe that the universal church includes all those who have professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The local church consists of a company of believers who willingly gather together under the leadership of the Holy Spirit for worship, fellowship, prayer, instruction, evangelism, encouragement, and the participation in the ordinances of communion and baptism.

### **B. Nature and Function**

The nature of the universal church is that it includes all believers without concern to their location (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25). The local church exists as a group of people in a certain location band together as believers (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Acts 9:31; Rev. 2-3).

The primary function of the church is to bring glory to God (1 Cor. 10:31; Eph. 1:3-14; 1 Pet. 4:10-11). This is accomplished through displaying His character (1 Pet. 2:9-10), through the stimulation to grow in Christ by putting to practice the spiritual gifts given to all believers (Eph. 4:1-16), and through the evangelizing of the world (Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:18-20).

### **C. Government**

Scripture seems to best support a form of government where each of the local churches is recognized as an autonomous unit, with no person or organization above it except Jesus Christ Himself. In this model, the church is self-directing, self-governing, and self-propagating in that ultimate authority is vested in the church members themselves as a democratic body.

In this context, the New Testament: 1) recognizes the authority of the local church, as it presents no church organization above the local church (Matt. 18:15-17; Acts 6:3-5); 2) points to basic church democracy where all members have equal rights and responsibilities (1 Cor. 12:12-27); 3) demonstrates that internal conflicts are settled among the membership (1 Cor. 6:1-5).

### **D. Leadership**

The New Testament gives light to two main offices of leadership in the local church: Elders and Deacons. An Elder (which is a synonymous term with those of “Bishop” and “Overseer” and is also widely known as the role of “Senior/Lead Pastor”) is the primary office of leadership in the construct of the local church, and deals with the general care and oversight of the church. Among the responsibilities of the Elder are instruction (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9), administration (1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:17), and spiritual leadership (1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28-29).

The role of a Deacon is a practical role of service in the church body and seeks to meet the physical and tangible needs of those in the church (Acts 6:1-6). Both roles, Elders and Deacons, are identified and profiled in scripture as to the qualifications for such roles. Among their qualifications are aspects of their personal holiness, character, family leadership, community rapport, and spiritual depth (1 Tim. 3:1-13).

### **E. Ordinance**

There are two sacraments given to the church: Baptism and The Lord’s Supper. Baptism is an outward symbol of a Christian’s identification with Christ and other believers (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12; 10:47; 16:14-15). Though Christ commands that all believers be baptized (Matt. 28:18-20), baptism does not save someone from his sin, but rather gives public testimony of what Jesus has already done in his life. By being baptized, a believer identifies with the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord (Rom. 6:3-5). This is why the New Testament “mode” of baptism is immersion – portraying the death and burial (going into the water) as well as the resurrection (coming out of the water) of Jesus.

The second sacrament, The Lord’s Supper (or “communion”), is to be observed by the church repeatedly as a sign of continuing fellowship with Christ. Jesus instituted communion on the night He was betrayed by symbolically showing His body and blood as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin (Matt. 26:26-29). When communion is taken, it is an act, both individually and corporately, in which Jesus’ sacrificial death is remembered and the new covenant is affirmed (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

## VII. Eschatology

### A. Statement of Faith

I believe in the literal and imminent return of Jesus Christ to claim His bride, the church. I believe that the rapture of the church will precede a seven-year period of tribulation, followed by the return of Christ and His angels to rule the Earth for a thousand years. Following this, I believe the earth will be destroyed and all unbelievers judged and given to a Godless eternity in the lake of fire. Also at this time, a new Heaven and Earth will be created and inhabited by the people of God for all eternity.

### B. Death

As a result of sin, every human being is under a sentence of death (Rom. 5:12). To the believer, death has no power over him because Jesus has conquered death giving the believer victory in their resurrection (1 Cor. 15:54-57). To the unbeliever, death is the final separation between them and God. Judgment immediately follows death (Heb. 9:27; John 5:28-29).

### C. Intermediate State

This is a period of time between the physical death and the final resurrection. It is a period in which the soul exists without the body. For the believer the soul is with Jesus in paradise (Lk. 23:40-43; 2 Cor. 5:6-8). For the unbeliever, the soul enters torment that will never cease. Scripture indicates that during this time, the soul of the person, though not physical, is identifiable, able to speak, and conscious (Lk. 16:19-31; Matt. 17:1-5).

### D. Resurrection

All human beings, both righteous and unrighteous, will one day be resurrected (Dan. 12:2). For those who have faith in Jesus Christ, the resurrection from the dead will be one to life everlasting, while the unbeliever will be resurrected to a contemptible eternity of condemnation. The resurrected bodies each of the two groups will receive are distinctly different from the bodies of humans on earth.

The resurrected bodies will be suitable for the eternity that awaits them (Lk. 16:22-31; 1 Cor. 15:35-49; Rev. 20:11-15). The resurrection of the believer occurs at the second coming of Christ (1 Thess. 4:13-17), while the resurrection of the unbeliever occurs after the millennium just prior to their being cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:1-15).

### E. Rapture and Tribulation

The rapture of the church involves the literal, physical, and imminent return of Jesus to the Earth to take those who have believed in Him (both living and dead) as their personal Savior (Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:16).

Though other views are possible, it seems that Scripture best paints a picture of the rapture of the church occurring before the seven-year tribulation period. This seems to be the case for the following reasons: 1) There is no evidence that the church will exist during this period (Dan. 12:1-2; Matt. 24:15-31; 1 Thess. 1:9-10; 5:4-9; Rev. 4:19); 2) The purpose of the tribulation is to purge and judge Israel and destroy the world system of darkness, not to prepare the church for glory (Deut. 4:29-30; Jer. 30:4-11); 3) The comfort and encouragement that Paul seeks to communicate fits best within the context of a pre-tribulation rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18); 4) Passages like Titus 2:13 and 1 John 3:2-3 lose their respective significance if tribulation precedes the rapture; 5) The church is never spoken of in terms of being appointed to divine wrath (1 Thess. 1:9-10; 5:4-9; 2 Pet. 2:6-9; Rev. 3:10).

Following the rapture of the church, a time of judgment occurs when Christ will reward those who have been faithful to follow Him. This event, known as the judgment (or “Bema”) seat of Christ will be a time of individual reward and/or loss for those things both done in Christ’s name, or alternatively done for personal gain (1 Cor. 3:10-15; 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:10).

The seven-year period of tribulation (the seventieth week of Dan. 9:24) will begin with a relatively tranquil time of false peace for three and a half years. This will be followed by another three and a half year period of unrestrained sin, terror, and catastrophe where God will utterly destroy the Earth (Rev. 6:16-17; 11:18; 14:7; 15:1, 7; 16:1, 7, 19).

During this time, Satan will have an unrestrained ability to deceive the nations (through the work of the anti-Christ, the beast and the false prophet as seen in Rev. 13) and many will follow him to their eternal destruction. The culmination of the tribulation period climaxes with the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:16; 19:19), in which those who join Satan’s band of followers will attempt to conquer the Armies of God, yet themselves will suffer the most horrific loss and total defeat of any war ever fought.

## **F. Second Coming**

After the final war at the end of the tribulation period, Jesus Christ will return to judge the Earth (Matt. 24:29-31). At this time, all unbelievers will be removed from the Earth, Satan will be bound (Rev. 20:1-3), and the remaining believers will enter the Millennial Kingdom of Christ (Rev. 19).

## **G. Millennium**

This is a period of a literal thousand years where Jesus Christ will reign as King on the Earth (Rev. 20:1-6). During this time, Satan will be bound and unable to manipulate the inhabitants of the earth (Rev. 20:1-3). This time will be marked by the righteousness of God (as the curse will be lifted) allowing for justice (Ps. 45:6-7; Is. 11:5-9), peace (Ps. 72:2-3; Is. 2:4), provisions (Joel 2:21-27), health (Is. 33:24; 35:5-10), and long life (Is. 65:20) to prevail.

At the end of the thousand-year reign of Christ, Satan will be loosed to deceive the nations, tempting many to rebel against Christ (Rev. 20:7-9). Along with Satan, these rebels (being born of righteous parents during the millennium) will be thrown into the lake of fire where they will suffer forever (Rev. 20:10).

## **H. Judgment**

Following the final rebellion of Satan and his followers will be the final judgment of God at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15). At this point, all those who have died in rebellion and rejection of Christ will be physically raised from the dead to stand before Him and confess once and for all that He truly is the Messiah and Savior of the world (Phil. 2:10-11). At this time, anyone whose name is not in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire and forever be separated from fellowship with the Lord (2 Thess. 1:9; Matt. 8:12; 10:28).

## **I. Eternal State**

After God destroys the old Heaven and the old Earth, He will create new ones where the people of God will live forever (Rev. 21-22; John 14:1-3). Our eternal dwelling with the Lord will be marked by endless joy and bliss in the presence of God forever (1 Thess. 4:17-18; Rev. 21-22).

## Men and Women in Ministry

### The Brief...

Arbor Road Church holds the position that Scripture limits to qualified men the roles of Elder and Lead Pastor (or "Senior" Pastor) in the local church. We also affirm the ministry of qualified men and women as Pastors in roles that do not involve teaching the assembled congregation. Likewise, the local church, denominational structures, parachurch organizations and ministries, educational institutions, and missions agencies all present strategic ministry opportunities for men and women alike.

### The Not So Brief...

At Arbor Road, we celebrate the reality that God has bestowed spiritual gifts upon all people who call His Son Savior and Lord. We recognize ministry gifts have been given to both men and women alike.

Regarding spiritual gifts, the Bible teaches that God gives a variety of gifts to men and women indiscriminately through His divine authority and knowledge (1Cor. 12:4-12). Furthermore, the Bible teaches that every Christian has at least one spiritual gift, and the purpose of those gifts is to edify the church (Rom. 12:3-8; 1Pet. 4:10). Like a human body, which has numerous members all needing each other to function together, the body of Christ needs its members using their spiritual gifts to maximize their effectiveness as the bride of Christ.

Among the great variety of spiritual gifts mentioned in the Bible (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:8-11; 28; Eph. 4:7-12; 1 Pet. 4:11) is the gift of the ability to shepherd God's flock. While shepherding gifts can be used in many different contexts, their chief place of ministry is within the local church. The Greek word that is translated Shepherd [poimen] is also once translated "Pastor" in some translations/versions of the Bible (Eph. 4:11). In that context, Paul is speaking about various gifts that God has given and is describing those who serve in the context of the local church, building up the saints.

The Bible teaches us that God has directed that a particular post in the church be filled (very specifically) by godly men. That ministry post is named and defined in the Bible as Elder [presbyteros] in Titus 1, or Bishop/Overseer [episkopos] in 1 Timothy 3, and it is widely referred to in today's culture as the post of "Senior Pastor." Though the title "Senior Pastor" is not a Biblical title for a role in the church (the closest title being Chief-Shepherd [archipoimen] in 1 Peter 5:4, which speaks of Jesus Christ), we recognize that the title Senior Pastor helps clarify that this post is for the Elder who serves as the primary leader of the congregation (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Tim. 3:1-7).

These terms (presbyteros/episkopos) are used interchangeably in Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3 to describe the same post (Elder/Overseer/Bishop) and should not be confused with the ministry role of poimen (Pastor/Shepherd). While Elders are indeed called to “shepherd the flock of God” (Acts 20:28; 1Pet. 5:1-3), the Bible never instructs Shepherds to “elder the flock.” In other words, Elders are called to pastor, but Pastors are not called to “elder” or “oversee” the church.

Thusly, we maintain the Biblical distinction between the two roles.

- Elders/Overseers/Bishops: Men who “rule” and minister in the church.
- Shepherds (Pastors): Men and Women who serve/minister in the church.

The title “Pastor” is held by Arbor Road Church to be what the Bible teaches it to be: A descriptor of one who uses shepherding gifts to serve the people of God in the context of the local church.

A person who holds the title/position of “Pastor” at Arbor Road Church is one who:

- Has been affirmed and appointed to that role by the Elders
- Has demonstrated shepherding/pastoral gifts
- Is serving at a vocational level in their ministry post

The post of “Elder” is held by Arbor Road Church to be what the Bible teaches it to be: A descriptor of one who leads and protects the people of God in the context of the local church.

A person who holds the title/post of “Elder” at Arbor Road Church is one who:

- Has demonstrated the Biblical qualifications of Eldership
- Has been affirmed and voted into that role by the church body (voting Elders) or
- Has been appointed to that board by the Lead Pastor (non-voting staff Elders)

We align ourselves with the distinction between these two roles in the Bible, encouraging both men and women to serve as Shepherds/Pastors (as the Bible does not exclude women from that role or set of gifts) while maintaining that the post of Elder is one the Bible reserves uniquely for godly men. The term “Pastor” is very simply a different term from that used to describe the key leadership post defined in Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3 - the post of “Elder.” Thus, we use the title “Pastor” to describe a person on our staff who serves others as a minister in the church, and “Elder” to describe someone who oversees its ministries. As indicated above, some of the qualified men on our Pastoral staff also serve as non-voting members of the Elder board at the discretion of the Lead Pastor.

While we encourage women to serve in ministry posts throughout the church where they are gifted to do so, it is clear that the roles of teaching and leading in the context of the main gathering fall on the shoulders of the Elders exclusively (Titus 1:9; 1 Tim. 3:4-5; 1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Tim. 2:12). Thus, the chief arenas of preaching and Biblical instruction to the gathered congregation (i.e. preaching in our main church worship service) and leading (on our Elder board) are reserved for men who are qualified and appointed to serve as Elders/Overseers/Bishops in accordance with Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3.

While the Bible precludes women from serving in these specific local church ministry posts (Elder and Senior Pastor), it at the same time teaches that women and men are equal in moral value and enjoy the same status before the Lord as children of God (Gal. 3:26-28) and ambassadors of Christ (2 Cor. 5:20).

### **The Summation:**

1. Scripture teaches that presbyteroi and poimenes should minister in the church, but English (and sometimes even Greek) usage sometimes makes the distinction confusing.
2. Presbyteroi oversee the ministries of the church while poimenes carry out those ministries.
3. The former role is limited to men while the latter is open to both men and women, also according to scripture.
4. The Lead Pastor (and some members of the lead team) fulfills both roles.
5. Together these teams provide healthy and balanced servant-leadership for the congregation.

## Instructions Regarding Order in the Church

*A Synthesis of 1 Corinthians 11-14 and 1 Timothy 2-3*

### The Brief...

At Arbor Road Church, we believe the Scriptures teach that the church is to be marked by order and peace. When Paul noted that there were disruptions in the Corinthian church, he provided corrective measures that he expected to be acknowledged and implemented (1 Cor. 11-14). When a need arose for him to address leadership and authority in the congregation, Paul did so by highlighting the created order as normative in both the local church and the home (1 Tim. 2-3).

### The Not So Brief...

In 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 Paul writes: “for God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.”

The context of 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 indicates that Paul’s instructions are corrective rather than normative. Disorder and marital conflict were disrupting public worship in the Corinthian church. As is true for the proper interpretation and application of all passages of Scripture, what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 must be taken in the context of that specific section of 1 Corinthians as well as the whole of the New Testament, which is itself to be understood in relation to the Old Testament.

Since in 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 Paul instructs women to “pray and prophesy” with “their heads covered” (11:5,6), it is clear that women did regularly minister and “speak” with some authority in the Corinthian church. Paul’s concern in 1 Corinthians 14, therefore, is not that women should never speak or minister in church services. Rather, he wishes these Corinthian women to follow the standards common to all churches and “remain silent” and refrain from asking certain questions in front of the congregation. We do not know what these questions were, but Paul’s direction that they should be asked again in the privacy of the home indicates that their content itself was not objectionable.

Instead it appears that the context in which they were asked was causing disorder within the congregation. Some of the Corinthian women were usurping the authority of the men who were leading the church, so Paul wrote to correct this error.

A second important passage with similar content is 1 Timothy 2:11-3:15. Here, Paul teaches Timothy how authority and leadership should be ordered within the Christian home and the local church. Both here (1 Tim. 2:13) and in the previous passage (1 Cor. 11:3-16) Paul uses the creation account (Gen. 1-3) to distinguish between the leadership responsibilities proper to men and women in the home and church.

It is in this context that Paul writes: "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent" (1 Tim. 2:13). As in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, this silence is not absolute but relative. The created order of Genesis 1-3 places men in positions of leadership in the home and in the church, and Paul teaches that women should remain silent on occasions when speaking would disrupt that order.

The disruption of properly ordered authority in the early church was hardly a problem unique to women. Paul criticizes men even more harshly for doing the same in Galatians 5 and 2 Corinthians 11, to name only two examples. Likewise, the direction to remain silent in deference to duly constituted authority does not prevent just criticism of the actions of those in authority, as Paul demonstrated when he opposed Peter's teaching on circumcision (Gal. 2:11).

While there are many opportunities for women to express spiritual gifts of teaching, service, and leadership within the local church, it is clear from these passages that the Bible limits the post of Elder (or Lead Pastor) to qualified men and places on their shoulders the overarching responsibilities of leadership and authority in the church. For a more detailed look at these roles and responsibilities, see Arbor Road Church's position paper entitled "Men and Women in Ministry."

## Pastor Alan's Doctrinal Statement

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## I. Trinity

### A. Statement of Faith

I believe there is one God (Deut. 6:9) who eternally exists as three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Each person of the Trinity is God, possessing all the attributes of deity, yet are distinct. The Father is God but is not the Son or the Holy Spirit. The Son is God but is not the Father or the Holy Spirit (John 5:18). The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:4) but is not the Father or the Son. The Trinity is inseparable, unified in every work. Every person is involved in every work. At the same time, there are certain things that are attributed to each person of the Trinity.

### B. Father

God the Father is the First Person of the Trinity. When it comes to the works of God, He is the source. This is true in both creation (1 Cor. 8:6) and redemption (John 3:16). In creation, all things flow from the Father (1 Cor. 8:6). In salvation, He is the One who initiates (Eph. 1:3-6). It is also from the Father we receive every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). One other way the Father is distinguished from the Son and the Holy Spirit is that He is never sent in Scripture. He sends the Son (John 17:3) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:16), but is never Himself sent.

### C. Son

God the Son is the Second Person of the Trinity. It is through the Son the works of God are accomplished. In creation, He is the Word of God through whom creation was created (Gen. 1:3, John 1:3). It is through the work of the Son of God that salvation was accomplished (Eph. 1:7-11).

God the Son is the One who took upon Himself a human nature, being born of a virgin (Luke 1:31-33). Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 1:14), who is fully God and fully man. He is one person with two natures. As the Son of God, Jesus Christ possesses all the attributes of God (Heb. 1:3). As the God-man, He experienced the limitations of humanity such as being tired (John 4:6), hungry (Matt. 4:2), thirsty (John 19:28) and tasting death (Heb. 2:14).

By being both truly God and truly man, Jesus is the Mediator, qualified to reconcile God and sinners (1 Tim. 2:5-6). He represents God to humanity and humanity to God. As God, Jesus Christ can offer Himself as the sacrifice for sin that pays for the infinite debt we owe to God (Heb. 9:11-15). As man, He can take upon Himself the wages of sin, which is death for God cannot die (1 Tim. 6:16).

Currently, Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father (Eph. 1:20, Rom. 8:34), making intercession for the saints. He will one day return (Matt. 24:30-31) for His people and judge the living and the dead (2 Tim. 4:1). He is the head of the church (Col. 1:18), the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:16), He has been given the name above all names and one day every knee in heaven and on earth will bow to Him (Phil. 2:10).

## D. Holy Spirit

God the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity. The Spirit of God is sent by the Father (John 14:15) and the Son (John 16:7). The Holy Spirit is the One who completes the works of God. In creation, if the Father is the initiator, the Son the One through whom the act is done, it is by the Spirit that the work is completed (Ps. 33:6).

This is true in salvation. The Father plans, the Son accomplishes, and the Holy Spirit applies it to believers (Eph. 1:13-14). In both creation and redemption, the work of giving life is attributed to the Holy Spirit (Job 33:4, John 3:6). In the work of salvation, the Holy Spirit is the One who gives new life (John 3:6), dwells in believers (John 14:17), and becomes the down payment for our inheritance (Eph. 1:14).

As the Holy Spirit indwells believers, He sanctifies believers (Gal. 3:3), gives spiritual gifts and empowers for ministry (1 Cor. 12:11), guides us into truth (John 16:13), convicts us of sin (John 16:8), and glorifies Christ (John 16:14).

The Holy Spirit is also the One who inspired the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:16) and illuminates it for the believer helping them to understand and apply it to their lives (John 16:13).

## E. Nature of God

The attributes of God have historically been divided into two categories: the incommunicable and communicable attributes of God. The incommunicable attributes are those that are only true of God Himself. He shares them with no one.

- Omnipotence: God is all-powerful able to accomplish His sovereign purposes (Ps. 115:3).
- Omniscience: God is all-knowing. All knowledge belongs to Him. There is nothing that is hidden from Him. He knows the secrets of man's hearts (Ps. 139:4). Everything that can be known He knows. He knows all possible situations.
- Immutability: God never changes. He is constant. He is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8).
- Omnipresence: God is present everywhere (Ps. 139:7-8). There is nowhere we can flee from His presence.
- Self-Existent: God is not dependent on anyone or anything for His existence. (Ex. 3:14). He has no needs.
- Eternal: God has always existed. He has no beginning and no end (Ps. 90:2).
- Sovereign: God is in control of all things. Nothing happens apart from His will (Prov. 16:33).

The communicable attributes of God are the attributes that can be shared by humanity to some degree.

- Mercy/Grace: God does not treat believers as their sins deserve (Ex. 34:6, Ps. 103:8-10). For those who have faith in Jesus, He forgives them of their sins through Christ's sacrificial death on the cross.
- Patient: God is slow to anger, patient with sinners. (Ex. 34:6, 2 Pet. 3:9).
- Love: God always does what is good and best for His people. His love was most clearly displayed in giving of Himself to us in Christ Jesus. His love is always for us, and it begins with Him (Ex. 34:6, Rom. 5:8, 1 John 4:8).
- Holy: God is set apart from the rest of creation. He is wholly other. He is also pure, without any stain or blemish of sin (Is. 6:3, Lev. 19:2).
- Just: God always does what is right. He hates evil and punishes wrongdoing (Ex. 34:6, Deut. 32:4).
- Truth: God does not and cannot lie (Titus 1:2).
- Wise: God has all knowledge and understanding and does what is best (Ps. 104:24, Rom. 11:33).
- Good: God is what is best. He is our highest good. There is nothing else in all creation that is greater than Him. He always does good (Ps. 100:5, Ps. 119:68).
- Faithful: God keeps His promises. Whatever God says He will do, He does (2 Tim. 2:13, Heb. 10:23).

## F. Work and Creation of God

The works of God are summed up in the works of creation and redemption. God is the Creator (Gen. 1:1) and Sustainer (Heb. 1:3) of all things. He created the world out of nothing through His Word (Gen. 1:3, John 1:3) and brought order from chaos (Gen. 1:2). There is nothing in creation that has not been created by God (John 1:3). God created all things good (Gen. 1:4), and made humanity the pinnacle of His creation giving them dominion and authority (Gen. 1:26-27). God is not detached from His creation but intimately involved working all things out according to the counsel of His will (Gen. 50:20, Rom. 8:28).

God is the Redeemer who reconciles sinners to Himself (2 Cor. 5:18) through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of His Son Jesus Christ. Through Jesus Christ, God also redeems all of creation (Rom. 8:20, 21). The plan of salvation is one God planned (Eph. 1:3-6), accomplished (Eph. 1:7-11) and applies to believers (Eph. 1:13-14). God is working all things out for His people to be reunited with Him in the New Heavens and New Earth where God will dwell with mankind forever (Rev. 21:3).

## II. Bibliology

### A. Statement of Faith

I believe the Bible, the Old and New Testaments, is the very Word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16), inerrant in its original manuscripts. It is authoritative and sufficient for life and godliness (2 Tim. 3:16, Ps. 19:7-14). The Word of God is authoritative because it has been breathed out by the God who is truth itself (John 14:6). Though the Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit, He used human authors to write down the Scriptures (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

### B. Revelation

There are two ways God reveals Himself to humanity. The first is called general revelation. General revelation is what is revealed about God through creation. It's called general revelation because this is available to all. The apostle Paul says God's invisible attributes, His power and divine nature, can be clearly perceived through creation (Rom. 1:19-20). The Psalms are filled with declaration of how the heavens and creation itself declares the very glory of God (Ps. 19:1-2).

Another reason, it's called general revelation is because it is not sufficient. A person cannot come to know God fully through general revelation. General revelation reveals God as Creator, but not as Redeemer (Rom. 1:20). So, the second way God reveals Himself is through what is called special revelation, which is the Scriptures. God reveals Himself most clearly in His Word. In the Scriptures, God reveals the way to receive salvation and be reconciled to Him (2 Tim. 3:15-16). In His Word, we come to know God as Creator and Redeemer.

### C. Inspiration

The Bible, the Old and New Testaments (66 books) are inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16) and written down for us by human authors (2 Pet. 1:20-21). The Bible is a work of God and man. The Holy Spirit worked through human authors using their different personalities, writing styles and backgrounds to record exactly what God wanted to communicate (2 Pet. 3:16). Every single word has been breathed out by God and is authoritative.

### D. Illumination

The Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures is the One who illumines it for us (John 16:13). The doctrine of illumination has to do with the Spirit of God giving believers understanding, belief, and a delight in the Scriptures (1 Cor. 2:13-16). In illuminating the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit also leads us in how to apply it to our lives. Though it is possible to have an intellectual understanding of the Scriptures apart from the Spirit (James 2:19), it is impossible to delight in and submit to the Word of God apart from the Spirit's work of illumination (1 Cor. 12:3).

## E. Authority

The Holy Scriptures are authoritative because it is the very breath of God. Since He is the Creator of all (Col. 1:15-17) and the Head of the Church (Col. 1:18), His Word is the standard for the believer and the church. We stand under the Word of God, submitting (Rev. 22:7) to it for it contains the words of life (John 6:68) and it is true (Heb. 6:18, Titus 1:2). The Scriptures are unlike any other book. It is living and active able to pierce the soul, discern thoughts and intentions of the heart (Heb. 4:12). When the Christian and the church submits to the Word, they are submitting to God Himself. The Scriptures are the final authority, and it should not be added to (Deut. 4:2, Rev. 22:18-19).

## III. Anthropology

### A. Statement of Faith

I believe every human being is created by God in His own image (Gen. 1:26). He created humans, male and female to glorify Him, represent Him, and to exercise dominion on the earth (Gen. 1:26). Humans are created, dependent beings. We owe our existence and life to God (Acts 17:28). Humans were created for relationship with God (John 17:3). God is what satisfies the human heart (John 4:13-14). Humans are also created for relationship with others (Gen. 2:18).

### B. Human Nature

Every single human being, because they were created in God's image, has worth, dignity, and value, and should be treated accordingly (James 3:9). Humanity is distinguished from the rest of creation; the only ones receiving the privilege of being created in God's image (Gen. 1:27). To be created in His image is to reflect and represent God. This is seen as humanity was given authority to rule and exercise dominion in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 1:26, Ps. 8:6). Humans as those created in God's image can share in the communicable attributes of God, though not perfectly nor in the exact same way as God. Though the image of God has been marred by sin, humans are still image-bearers of God.

God created humans, male and female, and both are needed to reflect the image of God (Gen. 1:26). Both males and females are created equal in worth and value, yet different. This was God's intent.

### C. Human Destiny

Though humans are created beings, they will live forever. Humans will either be in the joyful presence of God (Phil. 1:21-23) through faith in Christ Jesus or endure eternal torment in Hell away from the blessed presence of God for those who reject Him (Jude 1:7). God created humans with body and soul (2 Cor. 4:16), and He will

reunite both body and soul in the New Creation. Believers in Christ Jesus will receive imperishable bodies (1 Cor. 15:42-49) like Christ Himself at His resurrection, and we will rule with Him (Rev. 3:21).

## IV. Hamartiology

### A. Statement of Faith

I believe sin is a lack of conformity to the will of God (1 John 3:4) in thought, motive (Matt. 5:18-19), word (Eph. 4:29), and action. Sin is rebellion against God (Isa. 1:2), believing there is a better way to live than what God has decreed. I believe every person is born a sinner (Rom. 5:12), separated from God due to Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden. Sin has affected all of creation causing brokenness in relationship with God (Isa. 59:2), with people (Eph. 2:14) and creation (Gen. 3:18). As sinners, there is nothing humans can do to remedy their problem (Luke 18:27).

### B. Nature

God created humanity to reflect God, yet due to sin they desire to rival Him (Gen. 3:5-6). At its root, sin is idolatry. Sin is exchanging the truth about God for a lie and worshipping the creation rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25). The nature of sin is seen clearly in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-7), as well as in the wilderness temptations of Christ Jesus (Matt. 4:1-11). In both these accounts, the tactics of Satan are the same.

- He casts doubt upon God's commands as for our good (Gen. 3:1, Matt. 4:3).
- He twists the Word of God (Gen. 3:4, Matt. 4:6).
- He makes us believe God is holding out on us (Gen. 3:5, Matt. 4:3).

### C. Effects

The effects of sin on this world are devastating. The curse of sin has affected every aspect of creation. As a result of sin, death entered the world (Rom. 6:23), and along with it, suffering (Gen. 3:16). Sin has affected our relationship with God, separating us from Him. Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, humanity is dead in their sins (Eph. 2:5), enslaved to sin (John 8:34), and deserving of His wrath (Eph. 2:3).

Sin has affected our relationship with humanity as well. Instead of humans dwelling peaceably together in unity (Psalm 133:1), there is conflict (James 4:1). Sin has affected creation. Creation is currently in bondage and groans for the day it will be set free along with believers (Rom. 8:18-23). Illnesses, diseases, physical limitations, decay, unsatisfactory work, natural disasters, and wars are all the results of sin's entrance into the world (Gen. 3:17, Rom. 8:19-20, Rev. 21:4).

## D. Original Sin

I believe every single person is born a sinner (Rom. 5:12). Every human is born “in Adam” because he is the representative of humanity (Rom. 5:18). Adam, as the representative has brought judgment and condemnation upon all (Rom. 5:18). His sin affects all (Gen. 3:16-19). Humanity has inherited his guilt and sinful nature. As a result of Adam’s sin, humanity was born with hearts of stone (Ez. 36:26), unable and unwilling to submit to God’s law (Rom. 8:8). Though humanity suffers the consequences of Adam’s original sin, we are all complicit in it.

## V. Soteriology

### A. Statement of Faith

I believe salvation is a work of God alone to reconcile sinners with Himself (Jonah 2:9). There is absolutely nothing humans contribute to their salvation. God is the One who saves. Salvation is planned by the Father (Eph. 1:4-5), accomplished through the Son (Rom. 8:3-4) and applied by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9-11). The motive for salvation is His own glory (Eph. 1:3-4) and love for His own (John 13:1). God accomplishes a full salvation saving us from the penalty (Rom. 6:23), power (Rom. 6:14), and presence of sin (1 John 3:2).

### B. Plan

God the Father planned salvation in eternity past (Eph. 1:4-5), accomplished it in history through His Son Jesus Christ (Gal. 4:4), and gives us the Holy Spirit as a down payment of our inheritance (Eph. 1:14) until Christ returns for us (Rev. 22:20) and takes us to be with Him forever (John 14:3). Immediately after Adam’s sin, God promised a Redeemer, an offspring of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15).

The offspring of the woman is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who took upon Himself a human nature to be the perfect mediator (2 Tim. 1:15) and sacrifice for sin (John 1:29). Due to our sin, every person has been separated from God, for God cannot dwell in the presence of sinners (Hab. 1:13, Ps. 5:4). Yet God made a way (John 14:6) for sinners to dwell in His presence through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Through His perfect life (Heb. 4:15) Jesus was qualified to be the spotless, blameless sacrifice for sins. His blood was the propitiation of our sins satisfying the wrath of God (1 John 2:2), granting us access to the Father (Matt. 27:51, Eph. 2:8). Through the sacrificial death of Christ Jesus, God maintains His righteousness in punishing sin and extending mercy and forgiveness to sinners (Rom. 3:25-27). The resurrection of Christ was the Father’s approval of Jesus’ sacrifice (1 Cor. 15:12-15) and Jesus is currently seated at the right hand of the Father interceding on our behalf (Rom. 8:34). One day, He will return for us (Acts 1:11) and bring us into His presence forever (Rev. 21:3).

### C. Process

Salvation is a gift of God that is to be received by faith alone (Eph. 2:8-9). A person comes to faith as they hear the gospel word and believe it to be true through the work of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 10:9-13, John 10:4, Gal. 3:1-5). To have faith is to believe in the promises of God (Heb. 11:1). When it comes to salvation, it is to confess what Jesus said is true of Himself—that He is the Son of God (Rom. 10:9, John 20:31)—and to believe in the promise that what He accomplished through His life, death and resurrection is sufficient for eternal life (Acts 16:30-31, John 5:24, John 3:16). Salvation is found in Jesus alone (John 14:6, Acts 4:12). A person comes to faith as they hear the gospel word and believe it to be true through the work of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 10:9-13, John 10:4, Gal. 3:1-5).

### D. Election

Election is God's choosing (electing) in eternity past those whom He would save (Eph. 1:4-5, Rom. 8:29-30). God's election is not based on any work or foreseen merit of the individual (Rom. 9:11-12, 2 Tim. 1:9). His election is based solely upon His mercy and sovereign will (Rom. 9:14-16). The purpose of God's election is to demonstrate His power and to make known the riches of His glory so that it will result in praise of His grace (Eph. 1:5-6, Rom. 9:22-23). For the believer, God's purpose of election is to conform us to the image of Christ Jesus, making us holy and blameless before Him (Rom. 8:29, Eph. 1:4).

### E. Atonement

Atonement is what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross for our sins to reconcile sinners to the Father (1 John 2:2, 1 Peter 3:18). The wages of sin is death and payment had to be made (Rom. 6:23). Throughout the story of the Bible atonement for sin was always through the shedding of blood, for there is no forgiveness without it (Heb. 9:22). Yet, unlike under the old covenant system where priests had to make sacrifices daily for sin, Jesus Christ made a once-and-for-all sacrifice, never to be repeated (Heb. 9:26, 10:12).

Jesus' atonement accomplishes two things. First, He satisfies the wrath of God for us. The Father's anger towards sin was poured out upon Christ His Son (1 John 2:2, Mark 14:36, Rom. 3:25). This is referred to as propitiation. Secondly, He cleansed us from our sin and guilt (1 John 1:9, Lev. 16:16). This is referred to as expiation. Both concepts are clearly demonstrated in Leviticus 16 on the Day of Atonement.

On the Day of Atonement, two goats were required for the sin offering. One of the goats was to be killed and sacrificed representing the appeasement of God's wrath. The other goat was to be presented alive. The high priest would confess the sins of Israel while holding its head and sent away into the wilderness representing our sin and guilt being removed from us (Lev. 16).

On the cross, Jesus accomplishes both, being the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29).

## F. Regeneration

Regeneration is a work of God to give new life to believers. It is often referred to as the new birth (John 3:1-8). As one cannot make themselves physically born, one cannot make themselves spiritually born. This work is attributed to the Holy Spirit who indwells believers (1 Cor. 3:16, Rom. 8:9), exchanging their hearts of stone (Ezekiel 36:26) with new hearts able to see the glory of Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 3:18) and turn towards Him in faith. The gift of regeneration, the new birth, is a gift that every single believer in Christ Jesus has received (John 3:6, 1 Peter 1:23).

## G. Conversion

A person is converted to Christ when they respond to the proclamation of the gospel with repentance and faith (Mark 1:15, Rom. 10:9-11). Through the preaching of the gospel, a converted person will sense their utter spiritual poverty before God and desire to seek refuge in Christ (Matt. 5:3-6, Acts 2:37-38, John 3:14-16). This is a gift granted by God (2 Tim. 2:25, Acts 11:18). Once a person is converted to Christ, they are forever united to Him by the Spirit (Eph. 1:13). No one can pluck them from His hand (John 10:28, Rom. 8:30). A person who is converted to Christ continues to fight sin yet demonstrates fruit of a transformed life (1 John 1:8, Gal. 5:22). God accomplishes a full salvation, saving believers from the penalty, power, and one day, the presence of sin (Rom. 8:1, Rom. 8:28, 1 John 3:2).

## H. Justification

Justification has to do with our legal standing before God. By faith, the Christian has been declared righteous before God (Rom. 5:1, Rom. 3:22). They are no longer guilty for the sins they committed because Christ Jesus suffered the consequences of their sins on the cross, cancelling the record of debt that stood against them (Col. 2:14-15). They have been set free from the penalty of sin, no longer under condemnation (Rom. 8:1). Not only are believers considered not guilty before God, but righteous. Christ's perfect record of righteousness has been imputed to them or credited to their account through faith in Him (2 Cor. 5:21, Rom. 4:3). The believer is one who has been united to Jesus Christ, so what is true of Him is true of those who are in Him (Col. 3:3-4, Rom. 6:3-5).

## I. Sanctification

Sanctification is used in a few different ways in the Scriptures. It can be used in a similar way as justification. The Bible says believers are already sanctified in a legal sense (1 Cor. 6:11). Another way to speak of sanctification has to do with growing and maturing into the image of Christ (1 Thess. 4:3). This is called progressive sanctification. God not only justifies us, setting us free from the penalty of sin, but sanctifies us, setting us free from the power of sin (Rom. 6:12-14).

Unlike justification, sanctification is a work that believers participate in. God is ultimately the One who sanctifies us (Gal. 3:1-3, Rom. 8:28), yet we play a role (Phil.

2:13-14). The role believers play in their sanctification is using the means of grace God has given us such as Scripture, prayer, fellowship, and the ordinances to conform us into the image of Christ Jesus (John 15:1-11, 2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Cor. 3:18, Acts 2:42). As we abide with Christ through these means, He is the One who causes the growth (Col. 2:19, John 15:4).

## **J. Glorification**

Glorification is the final stage of the believer's redemption where they will be made perfect, completely free from the presence of sin at the Second Coming of Christ (Rom. 8:30, 1 John 3:2). Not only will believers be freed from the presence of sin, but they will also receive glorified, imperishable bodies (1 Cor. 15:42, Phil. 3:20-21). Through their union with Christ, believers will experience what Christ experienced. He is the first fruits of all that believers will enjoy (1 Cor. 15:20, Col. 3:4). As with justification, glorification is a work of God alone (Phil. 1:6).

## **VI. Ecclesiology**

### **A. Statement of Faith**

I believe in one church, the people of God purchased by the blood of Christ Jesus (Acts 20:28, Matt. 16:18). In Scripture the church can be spoken of in two ways: the universal and the local church. The universal or invisible church refers to all believers from every nation and tribe and throughout all time (Rev. 7:9-10). Every person who confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior in the past, present, and future belong to the universal church (Eph. 5:25-27, Heb. 12:23). The local or visible church is a gathering of believers in a specific place at a particular time led by qualified leaders to worship Christ through the proclamation of the Word and the ordinances (Rev. 2-3, Matt. 18:17, Titus 1:5, Matt. 28:19, 1 Cor. 11:26).

### **B. Nature and Function**

The church is the people of God from every tribe, nation and tongue throughout all time ransomed by the blood of Christ Jesus (Eph. 5:25-27, Rev. 7:9-10). Jesus Christ is the head of the church, and He will one day present the church holy and blameless before the Father (Col. 1:18, Eph. 5:27). In the present on earth, a physical, visible expression of the universal church is the local church.

A local church is a group of believers that gathers to worship Christ through the proclamation of the Word of God and the ordinances led by qualified leaders (Rev. 2-3, Titus 1:5, Matt. 28:19, 1 Cor. 11:26, Acts 2:42). The leaders of the church have been called by God and the church to shepherd and to equip the saints, who have been given spiritual gifts, for the work of ministry so that the body of Christ will be built up in love (Eph. 4:11-12, 16, 1 Cor. 12:4-6, Titus 1:5, Acts 6:3). The church is the family of God that is called to love, serve and care for one another (Eph. 2:19,

John 13:34, Gal. 5:13). The mission of the local church is to evangelize and disciple believers baptizing them in the name of the triune God, and to teach them to obey Christ in all areas of life (Matthew 28:19). To sum it up, a local church is to worship God, care for believers, and to reach the lost.

### **C. Government**

A local church should be led by a plurality of qualified elders, of which the “Lead Pastor” is a first among equals (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5). This seems to be the pattern of the New Testament. The apostle Paul, when he established a church, called them to appoint elders in the plural (Titus 1:5). When describing the role of elders in the church, it is always in the plural form (James 5:14, 1 Tim. 4:14, 1 Peter 5:1-2).

The elders of the church are appointed by congregation and the congregation is to submit to their leadership as long as it is guided by the Holy Spirit and under the authority of the Scriptures (Acts 6:3, 1:23, 15:22). Though the elders are the leaders who exercise authority, the members of a local body have a voice and in certain major decisions, it should be voted on by the congregation (1 Cor. 5:4, Matt. 18:17). A local church should be autonomous and self-governing (Titus 1:5).

### **D. Leadership**

There are two offices of leadership in a local church: elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9). The qualifications of elders are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

Most of the qualifications have to do with character. Elders are to be mature believers and examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:3). When it comes to function elders are to exercise oversight, pray, teach, rule, protect, lead and shepherd the flock (1 Pet. 5:2-4, James 5:14, 1 Tim. 5:17-19). The call of an elder is a high calling where they will give an account for the ways they have watched over the souls under their care (Heb. 13:17).

The qualifications of deacons are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. When it comes to function, deacons complement the work of elders. Deacons are focused on serving and supporting the work of elders. A good example of the different, yet complementary functions of these two offices is found in Acts 6:1-6. The elders’ primary calling is to focus on the ministry of the Word and prayer, while the deacons were focused on meeting the physical, practical needs of those in the church (Acts 6:1-6).

### **E. Ordinance**

There are two ordinances in the church: baptism and the Lord’s Supper (Matt. 28:19, Luke 22:17-19). Baptism is a visible sign of what God has done in the heart of a believer. It represents how a believer has been united with Christ in His death and

resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5). Baptism is symbolic of being cleansed of our sins and receiving new life through the Holy Spirit (Acts 22:16, 1 Cor. 12:12-13). Therefore, those who can be baptized are those who confess faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38-41).

Baptism is the initiation into the Christian faith and the family of God (Acts 2:37-38, 1 Cor. 12:12-13). With it being the initiation, there is no need for another baptism (Eph. 4:5). In baptism, a believer demonstrates their identification with Christ and Christ's identification with them that they have received a new family name (Matthew 28:19, Col. 2:11-13).

The Lord's Supper (communion) was instituted by the Lord Jesus during the Passover meal on the night He was betrayed (1 Cor. 11:23). The two signs of communion are the bread and the cup. The bread represents His body that was given for us, and the cup filled with wine represents His blood that was shed for the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26:27-28). Like baptism, those who are believers can partake of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:18, 27-29).

The purpose of communion is to remember and proclaim the Lord's death until He returns (1 Cor. 11:25-26). As believers, we must approach the table reverently by examining ourselves, confessing sin, and reflecting upon Christ's sacrifice so that we do not drink judgment upon ourselves (1 Cor. 11:27-29). As we partake, not only do we remember, but we look forward to partaking it with Him in glory (1 Cor. 11:26, Luke 22:15).

## VII. Eschatology

### A. Statement of Faith

I believe in a visible, bodily return of Christ Jesus who will come to judge both the living and the dead (Acts 1:11, 2 Tim. 4:11). In His first coming, He came as a suffering servant, but in His Second Coming, He will come as a conquering King. His return will be a day of great judgment for unbelievers, but one of great joy for believers (John 5:29, Heb. 9:27) Like Christ, we will receive imperishable bodies and dwell with God for eternity in the new heavens and new earth (1 Cor. 15:52-53, Rev. 21:1).

### B. Death

The wages of sin is death and all will experience the sting of death until Christ returns (Rom. 6:23, Eccl. 3:20). When a person dies, their soul is separated from their physical bodies temporarily as they await their final judgment. For the believer, because of Christ's victory over the grave through His death and resurrection, they have hope. Death is not to be feared, but to be seen as gain (Phil. 1:21, 2 Cor. 5:8). While for the unbeliever, death is the beginning of their experience of judgment (Heb. 9:27).

### C. Intermediate State

The intermediate state is the period of time between a person's physical death on earth and the final resurrection. When a believer dies, their physical body is buried on earth while their soul is in the presence of God (Phil. 1:21, 23, 2 Cor. 5:8). When an unbeliever dies, they experience judgment and conscious torment in Hell away from the blessed presence of God (Luke 16:23, Heb. 9:27).

### D. Resurrection

At death, our physical bodies and our souls are separated. Yet, there is coming a day in the final resurrection where our souls and bodies will be joined together (1 Cor. 15:42-44). This is for both the believer and the unbeliever. Believers will be resurrected unto life, while unbelievers will be resurrected unto judgment (John 5:28-29, Dan. 12:2). Believers will receive resurrected bodies like Christ Himself that are imperishable, unable to die (1 Cor. 15:23, 53-54). Believers will finally be able to mock death (1 Cor. 15:54-55).

### E. Rapture and Tribulation

The rapture is the belief that believers, both dead and alive, will be caught up or transported to meet Christ in the air (1 Thess. 4:16-17). Though this definition is recognized by all, there is disagreement over when and the nature of the rapture itself. The pre-tribulation premillennial position believes this rapture of the church takes place before the 7-year tribulation period (Rev. 3:10, Daniel 9:24-27).

Others believe the rapture is not a removal of the church from the tribulation period, but it is what happens at the Second Coming of Christ. In this view, most would believe the rapture of the church would take place after the tribulation period (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

The tribulation period is a time of intense suffering preceding the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:21, Daniel 12:1). During this period will also be the presence of the Antichrist. The Antichrist will set himself up as God, deceiving people, making them worship him and persecuting those who do not (2 Thess. 2:3-4, Rev. 13:4). Though tribulation and "antichrists" are present even now, there is coming a day where it will be intensified before the Second Coming of Christ Jesus (Matt. 24:11, 1 John 2:22, Rev. 1:9).

### F. Second Coming

The Second Coming of Christ is what we as believers are waiting for. In His first coming, He came as a suffering servant to atone for our sins, but in His Second Coming, He will return as a conquering King. Unbelievers will be judged, and the believer's redemption will be complete (Heb. 9:27-28, 1 Thess. 5:1-3). His return will be bodily and visible, not being able to be missed (Acts 1:11, Rev. 1:7, Luke 21:25-28). We can be assured of His return, knowing what He endured to prepare a place for us in His Father's home (John 14:1-6).

The timing of Christ's Second Coming is unknown, though there will be signs that precede it (1 Thess. 5:1-3, Matt. 24:36, Mark 13:22-25). Our responsibility is to wait patiently, to be watchful and prepared by living holy lives, for He will return at any moment (1 Thess. 5:2, Luke 12:40, Matt. 25:13, Titus 2:12-13).

## G. Millennium

The millennium refers to a period of time mentioned in Revelation 20:1-6 where Satan is bound for a thousand years and where some who were dead in Christ have come to life to reign with Him (Rev. 20:1-6). This much is agreed upon by the major views. Differences occur on when it occurs, and if it is literal or symbolic. The three major views on the millennium are premillennialism, amillennialism, and postmillennialism.

Premillennialism believes in a literal thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth. This view believes Christ returns before (pre) the millennium. During the millennium, Satan will be bound, and the ones who will reign with Him are believers who have died. Premillennialists believe this would be a time of great peace and righteousness.

Amillennialism does not interpret the millennium as a literal thousand-year reign. Their reasoning would be that the genre of Revelation is apocalyptic, and John uses symbolic language throughout it. In the amillennial position, Satan is not completely bound but is restricted in his ability to deceive the nations (Matt. 12:29, Rev. 20:3). They would argue that the advancement of the gospel throughout the world as proof of that. In this view, Christ is not reigning on earth, but in heaven with those who have died (Matt. 28:18). So, the millennium is the current age between the resurrection of Christ and His return.

Postmillennialism also does not interpret the millennium as a literal thousand years. This view believes Christ returns after (post) the millennium. Postmillennialism shares much in common with amillennialism in that they see the present age between Christ's resurrection and His Second Coming as the millennium. The difference is found in what the millennial period looks like. Postmillennialism is very optimistic. They believe a large population of the world will be drawn to Christ through the preaching of the gospel and Christians will have great influence in society and culture.

## H. Judgment

In the final judgment, Jesus Christ will judge both believers and unbelievers (2 Tim. 4:1, Rev. 20:11-15, Acts 17:30-31). Yet, it will be for different reasons. Unbelievers will receive their sentence of condemnation (Rom. 2:5-7, Rev. 20:12-13). The works of unbelievers will be judged as well, and it will determine the level of their punishment (Rev. 20:12-13, Luke 12:47-48). Unbelievers will then be cast into their eternity of judgment in the lake of fire, a place of eternal conscious torment (Matt. 25:46, Rev. 14:11, Mark 9:48, Rev. 20:14).

For the believer, the final judgment is not a day to fear for they will not be condemned. Their sins have already been condemned in Christ (John 5:24, 1 John 4:18, Rom. 8:1). Yet, like the unbeliever, the believer's works will be judged to determine their level of reward (2 Cor. 5:10, Rev. 20:12, 1 Cor. 3:12-15). The beauty of being with Christ in glory is that He is the reward (Matthew 13:44-45). Those who receive great rewards will receive it with humility and will lead to greater worship of Christ (Rev. 4:10-11). The final judgment of Christ is good news. It is in the final judgment God will judge evil and wickedness and right every wrong (Rom. 2:6-8, Deut. 32:35, Rom. 12:19).

### **I. Eternal State**

After the final judgment, believers will live in the new heavens and new earth with God (Rev. 21:1, Isaiah 65:17, 66:22). In this place, there will be no more tears, pain, nor death (Rev. 21:4). The greatest joy of the new heavens and new earth is to dwell in the presence of God (Rev. 21:3, 22:3-4). The new heavens and new earth is better than Eden, for, we are in a glorified state unable to fall into sin and be cast from His presence ever again (Rev. 21:7, Rev. 22:3)



# **BASICS OF A BAPTIST CHURCH**

## Basics of a Baptist Church

### Is Arbor Road a Baptist Church?

In short, yes. Arbor Road Church was founded as First Baptist Church of Lakewood in 1947.

### Why did the church change its name?

Since 1947, the way people view the term “Baptist” has changed dramatically. In 2014, we had great dialogs about our times of engaging new believers and non-Christians alike. It became clear that we were frequently finding ourselves (more and more) standing at that line of defense, not of being “Christians,” but of being “Baptists” because of negative connotations that had developed over many years. After months of conversations among the entire congregation, we made the collective decision to change our name to Arbor Road Church.

### There are different types of Baptist Churches, what kind is Arbor Road?

Arbor Road is an **Independent Church** that chooses to affiliate with **Converge Worldwide**.

Converge Worldwide was founded in 1852 and was known as the Baptist General Conference. The denomination changed its name in 2008 noting that “Our historic beliefs and values stand unchanged, but the new name helps new generations to continue the mission begun many generations before.”

Converge Worldwide consists of over 1,300 churches around the world. We are an independent church as is every Converge church. There is no denominational control or hierarchy, as there are in most other denominations. Each church is self-governed and determines its own affairs.

- Every Converge church chooses its own pastor
- Every Converge church owns its own buildings and assets
- Every Converge church determines its own programs

### What are the advantages of affiliating with Converge Worldwide?

Maintaining this affiliation allows us to identify with other Christians around the world who are known for their commitment to the Bible. It also creates partnership opportunities with a dynamic and growing missionary movement.

### What makes a Baptist church a Baptist church?

- Biblical Authority  
We believe the Bible is God’s inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

- **Autonomy**  
Churches are independent bodies accountable to the Lord Jesus (2 Cor. 8:1-5, 19-24)
- **Priesthood of Believers**  
We all have a part to play in ministry (1 Pet. 2:5-9, 4:10)
- **Two Offices**  
No man-made hierarchy, just Elder and Deacon (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Tim. 3:1-13)
- **Individual Soul Liberty**  
As servants of Christ, we are free from the chains of legalism (Romans 14:5-12)
- **Separation of Church and State**  
Understood (Matthew 22:15-22, 28:18-20; Romans 13:1-7)
- **Two Ordinances**  
Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-32)
- **Saved and Baptized for membership**  
Our oneness in Christ unifies us (1 Cor. 12:12; 2 Cor. 6:14; Acts 2:41-47)

## What is Baptism?

Baptism is an outward expression of an inward faith.

### 1. It illustrates Christ's death and resurrection and my new life in Him.

"By our baptism then, we were buried with Him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead ... so also we may live a new life!" Romans 6:4

### 2. Jesus set an example in Baptism and calls believers to be baptized.

"At that time Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river." Mark 1:9

"Jesus said, 'Go then, to all people everywhere and make them my disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and then teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.'" Matthew 28:19-20

- Baptism doesn't make you a believer - it shows that you already believe.
- Baptism does not "save" you, only your faith in Christ does that.
- Baptism is like a wedding ring - it's the outward symbol of commitment.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith ... it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

## Does Arbor Road baptize babies?

No. Because we believe that baptism is a demonstration of an individual's faith, we want to ensure that those that are baptized can personally proclaim Jesus as their Savior. We choose to have Baby Dedications that show the parents commitment to raising their children up in the faith and pointing them to Jesus.

## What is Communion?

Jesus instructed His disciples to remember His death and resurrection and gave them an object lesson known as Communion or The Lord's Supper.

The Apostle Paul defines The Lord's Supper in **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**

1. **It is a reminder.**

*"... and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; eat it **in remembrance** of me.'" (vs. 24)*

2. **It's a symbol.**

*"In the same way, He took the cup, saying, '**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood; drink it to remember me.'" (vs. 25)*

3. **It is a statement of faith.**

*"For whenever you eat the bread and drink the cup, **you proclaim the Lord's death** until He comes back." (vs. 26)*

## Who Should Take the Lord's Supper?

Only those who are already believers. (Mark 14:22-26)

*"For anyone who eats and drinks **without recognizing the body of the Lord** eats and drinks judgment upon himself." 1 Corinthians 11:29*

## How Do I Prepare Myself For The Lord's Supper?

1. **Self-Examination:** 1 Corinthians 11:27
2. **Confessing My Sins:** 1 John 1:9
3. **Recommitment:** Romans 12:1
4. **Restoring Relationships:** Matthew 5:23-24

## When does Arbor Road Observe The Lord's Supper?

Jesus never said when or how often believers should observe The Lord's Supper. We typically celebrate The Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of the month; however, that may vary because of occasional special events such as Good Friday.



# CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

# Constitution and By-Laws of First Baptist Church of Lakewood

Adopted October 17, 2010

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**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS  
OF  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF LAKEWOOD**

**Adopted October 17, 2010**

**CONSTITUTION**

**ARTICLE I | CORPORATE NAME**

This organization is a religious corporation organized in 1948 as provided in Division 1, Part IV, Title XII, of the Civil Code of the State of California, and is to be known as **First Baptist Church of Lakewood**, Long Beach, California, a non-profit organization.

**ARTICLE II | PURPOSE**

The purpose of this church shall be to utilize every possible media through the power of the Holy Spirit:

- A. To worship Almighty God
- B. To proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- C. To disciple and equip the believer for ministry
- D. To promote and maintain educational agencies for the development of consistent Christian character
- E. To promote and support missionary enterprises at home and abroad

**ARTICLE III | CHARACTER AND GOVERNMENT**

**SECTION 1 | Policy**

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual cooperation among churches, and to that end, may maintain fellowship with the Southwest Baptist Conference and the Baptist General Conference of America.

**SECTION 2 | Affirmation of Faith**

**The Word of God**



We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

### **The Trinity**

We believe that there is one living and true God—eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These are equal in every divine perfection, and they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption.

### **God The Father**

We believe in God, the Father—an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

### **Jesus Christ**

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary, atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal, visible return to earth.

### **The Holy Spirit**

We believe in the Holy Spirit—who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher, and guide.

### **Regeneration**

We believe that all men are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

### **The Church**

We believe in the universal church—a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.

### **Christian Conduct**

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellow men, that his conduct should be blameless before the world, that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions, and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ.

### **The Ordinances**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for the commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Religious Liberty**

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God alone in all matters of faith, that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; and, therefore, that Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions—each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other.

### **Church Cooperation**

We believe that the local church can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise cooperate with inter-denominational fellowships on a voluntary, independent basis.

### **The Last Things**

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His Kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked.

## **SECTION 3 | Our Church Covenant**

Having been led by the Holy Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and to confess Him as Lord, and on confession of this faith—having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit—we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully covenant with one another as the body in Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit, to strive to lead a life worthy

of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, with Jesus Christ as our model. We promise by the Holy Spirit's power to forsake the ways of sin, to walk together in Christian love in the paths of righteousness, and to avoid every form of evil.

We will strive to give and receive admonition and correction with meekness and affection. We will also strive to be slow to take offense and always be ready for reconciliation, and being mindful of the scriptures (especially Matthew 18), to seek it without delay. With this in view, we'll strive together for peace and purity within the church supporting its worship, ordinances, doctrines, and discipline. We will also strive together as faithful stewards to contribute our time, talent, and money in the measure that God prospers each of us, so that the work of the church and the worldwide ministry of spreading the Gospel will be faithfully and effectively accomplished.

We will strive to maintain spiritual disciplines in our personal and family life. We will seek to honor Jesus Christ in all we do and to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-26). Finally, we will strive to encourage one another in the faith that we share and in the blessed hope of our Lord's return.

## **ARTICLE IV | MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION 1 | Qualifications**

This church shall consist of baptized believers who take the Bible as their rule of faith and practice and subscribe to this Constitution and By-Laws.

### **SECTION 2 | Duties**

Members shall strive to demonstrate a positive and growing commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord by continued study and obedience to the Bible in all areas of life, and by maintaining a regular experience of forgiveness, renewal, and surrender to the Holy Spirit by demonstrating Christian love and service, honesty, personal integrity, recognition of the rights of others, defense and advocacy of justice, response to the needs of the poor and oppressed, and an emphasis upon glorifying God in all thought and action. Members shall strive to use their spiritual gifts and talents to fulfill the purpose of First Baptist Church of Lakewood, as set forth in Article II:

- To worship Almighty God
- To proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- To disciple and equip the believer for ministry
- To promote and maintain educational agencies for the development of consistent Christian character

- To promote and support missionary enterprises at home and abroad

### **SECTION 3 | Voting Qualifications**

The right to vote shall be vested in active members, age 18 years and over.

### **SECTION 4 | Member Status**

The two levels of member status are as follows:

- A. Active Member
- B. Inactive Member

### **SECTION 5 | Grievances, Church Discipline, and Dismissal**

All cases of grievances between members shall be dealt with in accordance with the process given in Matthew 18, and no public complaint shall be heard until this course has been pursued. Matters that remain unresolved or matters that involve sin shall be subject to the church discipline as set forth in the By-Laws. Restoration of a member under church discipline shall take place according to procedures set forth in the By-Laws, Article III–Church Discipline.

## **ARTICLE V | CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

### **SECTION 1 | Board of Elders**

The governing body of this church shall be known as the Board of Elders and shall serve with delegated authority of the membership, by virtue of their election, for the spiritual oversight, direction, and policy in all matters pertaining to the life of the church.

### **SECTION 2 | Deacons and Deaconesses**

The Deacons and Deaconesses shall assist the Board of Elders and Pastors by performing ministries of service, guidance, encouragement, organization, and implementation.

### **SECTION 3 | Corporate Officers**

The Officers of this corporation shall be the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Assistant Secretary of the Board of Elders, and Treasurer of the church.

### **SECTION 4 | Pastoral Staff**

The Pastoral Staff shall consist of the Lead Pastor and all other salaried staff commissioned to oversee the pastoral care, worship, teaching ministries, and church

operations.

## **ARTICLE VI | FINANCES**

Necessary finances for conducting this church, its programs, and missionary outreach shall be obtained through voluntary tithes and offerings. Additional pledges and free-will offerings may be taken as deemed advisable by the Board of Elders. Lakewood Christian Schools and church projects, whose primary financing is independent of the church budget, may hold fund raising projects, if approved by the Board of Elders.

## **ARTICLE VII | DISPOSITION OF CHURCH PROPERTY**

### **SECTION 1 | Division**

In case of internal division of the church membership, the church property shall belong to those members who abide by this Constitution and By-Laws, whose position is held by the majority of the actual voting membership of the church.

### **SECTION 2 | Dissolution**

Should conditions arise that the work of this church cannot continue, the church property shall be transferred to the Southwest Baptist Conference or the successor organization with the Baptist General Conference.

### **SECTION 3 | Consolidation**

Should conditions arise that a merger with another church of like faith be advisable, the Board of Elders shall be authorized to negotiate the terms of such a merger, in so far as the property is concerned. A report of any proposed agreement shall be made to the church membership and approval granted by the church membership before any commitment to or consummation of the merger.

## **ARTICLE VIII | CHURCH FISCAL YEAR**

The church fiscal year shall begin on the first day of July and close on the last day of June.

## **ARTICLE IX | ADOPTION**

Upon adoption, this Constitution and/or By-Laws supersedes all previous Constitutions/By-Laws.

## ARTICLE X | AMENDMENTS

### SECTION 1 | Articles

Any Article or section of this Constitution and/or By-Laws, except the Affirmation of Faith, may be amended by vote of two-thirds of the active members present at a special meeting. Public notice of such amendment must be given at least four weeks prior to said meeting.

### SECTION 2 | Affirmation of Faith

The Affirmation of Faith shall not be changed except by a three-fourths vote of all active members of First Baptist Church of Lakewood at a meeting called for that purpose, and of which written notice shall have been given to all members at least four weeks prior to such meeting.

### SECTION 3 | Miscellaneous Corrections

Editorial changes may be made to the Constitution or By-Laws without requiring a vote of the congregation. Such corrections shall not change or alter the content or meaning of the documents, but only correct obvious spelling, grammatical, and punctuation mistakes. Such editorial corrections shall be reported at the next possible Elder Board meeting. The Elder Board shall review and take action on any such revisions and shall record the action in the minutes.

## BY-LAWS

### ARTICLE I | DEFINITIONS

- A. An Active Member is one who has been received into membership and regularly attends and participates in the life of this church.
- B. An Inactive Member is any member who has been absent from this church for a period of one year without showing any interest therein by communication with this church, or contribution to its support.
- C. Baptism is understood as the immersion of the believer in water, upon their confession of faith.
- D. An Ex Officio Committee Member is one who serves by virtue of his or her position or office held in this church, as designated by the Board of Elders.
- E. A Standing Committee is a committee created by the Board of Elders to meet ongoing organizational and/or administrative needs for ministry.
- F. A Task Committee is a committee created by the Board of Elders to achieve a specific goal.
- G. A Resource Team is comprised of individuals chosen by a Pastor, Deacon, or Deaconess to help support and carry out ministry programs.

### ARTICLE II | MEMBERSHIP

#### SECTION 1 | Admission

Persons may be received into membership by:

- profession of faith and baptism; or
- letter of recommendation from another church of like faith and order; or
- statement of Christian experience and having previously been baptized

Persons satisfying the qualifications for membership shall become members upon recommendation of the Board of Elders.

#### SECTION 2 | Transfer/Withdrawal of Membership

Upon approval by the Board of Elders, a member may transfer to the fellowship of another church by a letter of recommendation. Any member may withdraw his or her membership by making a request in writing to the Board of Elders. Upon such request, the name of the member shall be removed from the membership roll.

### SECTION 3 | Inactive Status

Action by the Board of Elders is required to declare a member inactive. Any inactive member desiring to change his or her status shall make a request to the Board of Elders. An action by the Board of Elders is required to reinstate a member to active status. An inactive member shall not vote and shall not be nominated for or hold elected office.

The Board of Elders will make a good faith effort to contact any member declared inactive to encourage and determine his or her intent. If a good faith effort does not result in contact with an inactive member, the Board of Elders shall remove his or her name from the membership roll.

### SECTION 4 | Authority

Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the congregation of the church is the final authority within this local church. This authority is normally exercised through the election of Elders to govern the church. However, the vote of the membership of this church shall be required to effect the following actions:

- A. Electing Elders of the church
- B. Disciplining members by dismissing them
- C. Disciplining Elders by removing them from office
- D. Approving annual budgets of the church, authorizing any expenditure of the funds of the church when such expenditure is not covered by an approved budget and exceeds the authority given to the Board of Elders, as specified in Article IV Section 4, and approving all transactions regarding real property
- E. Accepting, rejecting, or otherwise disposing of matters submitted to the membership of the church by the Board of Elders or raised by motion at a business meeting, consistent with the Articles of this Constitution and its By-Laws
- F. Adopting, amending, or repealing the Constitution or By-Laws of this church (see exceptions in Article X, Section 3)
- G. Approving the call of the Lead Pastor

## ARTICLE III | CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The discipline of members shall be a responsibility of the Board of Elders under the guidelines of Scripture, including Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1. The intent of any discipline shall be the restoration of persons involved and the unity of the church body. Should efforts at reconciliation and unity be unsuccessful, the Board of Elders may take disciplinary action. Any action of dismissal (excommunication) shall require

congregational approval.

Discipline involves three components or phases:

1. God commands all Christians to make every effort, with His help, to discipline themselves and lead godly lives (Ephesians 4:25; II Peter 1:5-11);
2. If a Christian fails to discipline himself and is trapped in a sin, God commands other brothers and sisters in Christ to lovingly confront, counsel, and encourage him toward repentance (Matthew 18:15-16; Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 10:24-25);
3. If these personal efforts do not correct an offense, God commands the church leaders to intervene and exercise their ecclesiastical authority to resolve the matter, protect the church, and, if possible, restore the offender (Matthew 18:17; I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Timothy 4:2; Hebrews 13:17). This third phase, which may be referred to as judicial or formal discipline, involves a formal proceeding before the Board of Elders. Such a proceeding shall be carried out according to the following procedures, which are designed to provide due process for the offender and promote a just resolution.

No charge may be accepted if it is filed more than two years after the commission of the alleged offense, unless it appears that unavoidable impediments have prevented an earlier filing of the charge.

Every charge must be submitted to the Board of Elders in writing.

A person may be censured for filing a charge that the Board of Elders determines to be without merit.

An offense is serious enough to warrant formal discipline if it is:

- An offense in the area of conduct and practice that seriously disturbs the peace, purity, and/or unity of the church;
- An offense in the area of doctrine that would constitute a denial of a credible statement of faith reflected in the church constitution.

Just as a good shepherd will go after a sheep that has wandered from the flock (Matthew 18:12-14; Ezekiel 34:4, 8), so shall the Board of Elders and members of this church seek to restore a wandering member to the Lord through Biblical discipline.

Therefore, discipline may be instituted or continued either before or after a member seeks to withdraw from membership, if the Board of Elders determines that such discipline may serve to guard and preserve the honor of God, protect the purity of the church, or restore the wandering member to the Lord. While the church cannot force a withdrawing person to remain in the congregation, the church has the right and the responsibility to encourage restoration, to bring the disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion, and to make a final determination as to the membership status of

the person at the time withdrawal is sought or acknowledged. In doing so, the Board of Elders, at its discretion, may temporarily suspend further disciplinary proceedings, suspend any or all charges pending against the accused, or proceed with discipline and pronounce an appropriate censure as described below.

**Admonition** consists of tenderly and solemnly confronting the offender with his/her sin and its effect on the church body, warning him of his danger, and exhorting him to repentance and to greater fidelity to the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Rebuke** is more severe than admonition. It consists of setting forth the serious character of offense, reproving the offender, and exhorting him/her to repentance and to more perfect fidelity to the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Suspension** is an act of discipline by which one is deprived of the privileges of membership in the church, of said person's office, or of both. It may be for a definite or indefinite period of time. While under suspension, a member of the church shall be the object of deep solicitude and earnest dealing from the Board of Elders and the church to the end that he/she may be restored.

**Excommunication** is the most severe form of discipline and is resorted to only in cases of offenses aggravated by persistent impenitence. It consists of a solemn declaration by the church that the offender is no longer considered a member of First Baptist Church of Lakewood.

Since the church is a body made up of many parts what happens to one member of the church affects and is of legitimate concern to other members (Romans 12:15-16; I Corinthians 5:6-7; 12:12-27). Therefore, the indefinite suspension or excommunication of a member shall be announced to the church, so that its members will be able to pray for, encourage, and exhort the accused as opportunities arise, as well as be on guard against any gossip or divisiveness that might arise from the offense or censure (I Corinthians 5:11; II Thessalonians 3:6,14; Titus 3:10). The public announcement of censure shall always be accompanied by prayer that God will graciously use the discipline for His own glory, the restoration of the offender, and the edification of the church. This announcement may be made during any meeting of the congregation or by letter.

If an accused leaves the church during the disciplinary process or while a censure is still in effect, and if the Board of Elders learns that he/she is attending another church, the Board of Elders may inform that church that the person is currently under church discipline and ask that church to encourage the accused to repent of his/her sin and to be restored to the Lord and to any people whom he has offended. Such communications enhance the possibility that a person may finally repent of his/her sin, and at the same time, serve to warn the other church to be on guard against the harm that the accused might do to its members (II Thessalonians 3:6,14; II Timothy 2:16-17).

If a person who has been censured through suspension or excommunication comes

to repentance, the church shall warmly and lovingly restore him to fellowship within the body (Matthew 18:13; Luke 15:20-24). Once the Board of Elders is persuaded that the person has sincerely confessed his wrongs and sought forgiveness from God and the person or persons offended, it shall announce his restoration. That announcement shall be accompanied by a solemn admonition to the congregation that the restored person's offenses have been forgiven and are not to be held against him or otherwise hinder his fellowship within the church (II Corinthians 2:6-11). When deemed appropriate by the Board of Elders, however, the restored person may be restricted from certain responsibilities within the church until he has demonstrated the requisite qualities for those responsibilities (I Timothy 3:2-13; Titus 1:5-9).

## **ARTICLE IV | BOARD OF ELDERS**

The Board of Elders shall consist of nine elected members of the church and the Lead Pastor. Other pastors may be designated by the Lead Pastor to sit on the Board of Elders as non-voting, ex-officio members.

### **SECTION 1 | Qualifications**

Elders shall be men who possess the qualifications as described in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, and the spiritual gifts of leadership according to Romans 12:6-8.

Furthermore, he shall have been an active member of First Baptist Church of Lakewood for a minimum of two years and shall be at least 21 years of age.

### **SECTION 2 | Election**

A Task Committee shall be appointed to prepare and present a single slate of Elder candidates to the Board of Elders for approval. The Board of Elders, upon approval, shall post the single slate of candidates two weeks prior to the Annual Business Meeting. The slate of Elder Candidates shall be elected by a majority vote of the active members present at the Annual Business Meeting.

### **SECTION 3 | Term**

- New Elders shall take office on the first day of the church Fiscal Year following their election at the Annual Business Meeting
- The term of office shall be three years, on a rotating basis, so that approximately one-third of the Board will be elected each year
- No Elder shall be eligible to serve two consecutive terms

## SECTION 4 | Duties, Responsibilities, and Authority

- The Board of Elders shall develop, in cooperation with staff and congregation, a strategy and vision for ministry. The Board of Elders shall facilitate appropriate resources to accomplish the strategy and vision for ministry.
- The Board of Elders shall hold all areas of ministry accountable for implementation and progress, in accordance with the strategy and vision for ministry in the church.
- The Board of Elders and the Lead Pastor shall be mutually accountable to each other.
- In order to facilitate appropriate resources, the Board of Elders shall be authorized to approve expenditures up to 5% beyond the approved General Fund Income, as defined by the Annual Budget, without requiring a vote of the membership.
- The Board of Elders shall meet as often as needed to carry out their duties and responsibilities, but not less than ten times annually. In order for the Board of Elders to vote on an action, a quorum of at least 60% of the voting Board members must be present.
- In order for the Board of Elders to approve an action, a simple majority is necessary of those present, unless otherwise specified.
- If the church has no Lead Pastor, pulpit supply is the responsibility of the Board of Elders.
- At the first Board meeting of the new fiscal year, the Board of Elders shall elect new Board officers.

## SECTION 5 | Removal or Resignation

An Elder may be removed from office if he ceases to be an active member, or if he fails to attend regular meetings of the Board of Elders without reasonable cause, or for conduct impairing his effectiveness. Action may be taken to recommend to the church such removal by a vote of three-fourths of the Board of Elders. Resignation of an Elder shall be in writing to the Board of Elders and will be effective on the date specified.

## SECTION 6 | Replacement

If a replacement is desired for the unexpired term of an Elder who has resigned or has been removed from office, the Board of Elders, by simple majority vote of the Board members present, may recommend a replacement candidate to the church. The church membership, by simple majority, may vote to elect the replacement at any

regular meeting of the church. If a replacement is not desired for an unexpired term of less than 12 months, the Board of Elders may operate with less than nine elected members for the duration of the unexpired term.

## **ARTICLE V | DEACONS AND DEACONESSES**

Deacons and Deaconesses function as ministering agents to serve the church.

### **SECTION 1 | Qualifications**

- The number of Deacons or Deaconesses shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and their call and giftedness, as outlined in Romans 12:6-8.
- A Deacon or Deaconess shall have been an active member of First Baptist Church of Lakewood for a minimum of one year.
- A Deacon or Deaconess shall demonstrate spiritual maturity consistent with their calling, as outlined in I Timothy 3:8-13.

### **SECTION 2 | Appointment**

Deacons and Deaconesses shall be appointed by the Board of Elders.

### **SECTION 3 | Term**

Deacons and Deaconesses serve at the discretion of the Board of Elders.

### **SECTION 4 | Duties and Responsibilities**

- Deacons and Deaconesses shall serve in a way that augments the ministry and vision of the church, and enables the various ministries of the church to go forward in an effective manner.
- The Deacons and Deaconesses shall meet a minimum of four times per year.
- The Board of Elders shall select one of its own members or a pastoral staff member to preside over the Deacon and Deaconess meetings.

## **ARTICLE VI | PASTORAL STAFF**

The church shall have a Lead Pastor and any number of pastors that the Board of Elders may approve.

### **SECTION 1 | Lead Pastor**

The Lead Pastor shall be an ordained, male minister, and shall meet the qualifications as set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

### A. Calling

When it is necessary to call a Lead Pastor, a Pastoral Search Committee shall be formed, under the supervision of the Board of Elders, to seek out qualified candidates to fill the position.

When a suitable man has been found, the Committee and the Board of Elders shall recommend him to the church membership at a special meeting for consideration. The decision to call a Lead Pastor requires a 10% quorum of the active membership and a 75% affirmative vote of the members present. The vote shall be by written ballot.

1. Salary, vacation, conference attendance, and so forth, shall be established by the Board of Elders at the time of calling.
2. Upon accepting the call to become the Lead Pastor, he shall become a member of the church.
3. The Lead Pastor shall serve for an indeterminate term.

### B. Duties

1. The Lead Pastor of the church shall be the leader and visionary for the church in all of its activities, shall preach the gospel regularly, administer the ordinances, function as a member of the Board of Elders and of all departments and committees, unless otherwise indicated.
2. The Lead Pastor shall tenderly watch over the membership and spiritual interest of the church, and organize and develop its strength for the best possible service.
3. The Lead Pastor and the Board of Elders shall be mutually accountable to each other.

### C. Resignation and Dismissal

1. The Lead Pastor may end his term with 30 days written notification of resignation.
2. The Lead Pastor shall give his resignation to the Board of Elders before it is presented to the church.
3. Action to dismiss the Lead Pastor must be approved by a signed and recorded roll call vote of a majority of the total members of the Board of Elders, before a recommendation for action is taken to the church membership.
4. The Board of Elders shall be required to present to the church, for a vote, any written request for the dismissal of the Lead Pastor, when signed by 20% of the active membership of the church.

5. Any such action to dismiss shall be taken at a special business meeting called for that purpose. Notice and purpose of said meeting must be given in writing to the active members two weeks prior to the meeting. The vote shall be by written ballot.

## SECTION 2 | Other Pastoral Staff

- A. The calling of pastoral staff to new positions shall be based on need, budget, and the recommendation of the Lead Pastor, and subject to approval by the Board of Elders.
- B. The calling to fill existing staff positions shall be based on need, budget, and the recommendation of the Lead Pastor.
- C. Pastors shall meet the qualifications in the job description and character qualities described in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- D. Pastors shall become members of the church at the time of employment.
- E. Pastors shall be ordained or licensed if deemed appropriate by the Board of Elders.
- F. Pastors shall be under the general supervision of the Lead Pastor.
- G. All resignations shall be submitted in writing at least 30 days prior to the last day of service. The order of said notification shall be: first, to the immediate supervisor; second, to the Lead Pastor; third, to the Board of Elders. These notifications shall be made prior to disclosure to any other person or group.

## ARTICLE VII | SUPPORT STAFF

- A. The employment of support staff shall be based on need, budget, and the recommendation of appropriate Team Leaders (department heads), and subject to approval by the Lead Pastor.
- B. Responsibilities and job descriptions shall be approved by the Lead Pastor and appropriate Team Leaders, and the Human Resources Director.
- C. They shall meet the qualifications set forth in the job description.
- D. Responsibility and terms of employment, termination, and dismissal shall be set at time of employment.
- E. They shall be under the general supervision of the Lead Pastor.

## ARTICLE VIII | ORGANIZATIONS FOR MINISTRY

Whereas all believers have been given spiritual gifts for the betterment of the church as a whole, the ministry of First Baptist Church of Lakewood shall be organized to provide the opportunity for the gifts of as many members as possible to be used to best fulfill the purpose of this church.

### SECTION 1 | Qualifications of Lay Leaders and Teachers

Persons may be lay leaders or teachers who agree with the Affirmation of Faith as set forth in this document, and who are approved by the appropriate pastoral staff member.

### SECTION 2 | Committees and Resource Teams

- A. Standing Committees
  - 1. The following are representative, but not inclusive, church activities that are supervised by Standing Committees: Finance, Missions, and School.
  - 2. The Board of Elders has the authority to create or dissolve Standing Committees as the needs of the church may require.
  - 3. Each Standing Committee shall have an Elder as a voting member.
  - 4. Each Standing Committee shall operate under a written policy statement approved by the Board of Elders.
- B. Task Committees

The Board of Elders may create Task Committees to accomplish specific goals. Such committees are responsible to report their results to the Board of Elders in the

manner determined at the time of formation. Upon completion of the assigned task, the committee is dissolved.

### C. Resource Teams

Resource Teams serve at the discretion of Pastoral Staff or Deacons/Deaconesses to support and carry out ministry programs.

## ARTICLE IX | BUSINESS MEETINGS

### SECTION 1 | Types of Meetings

#### A. Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting shall be held at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the fiscal year. At that time, the slate of candidates for the office of Elder shall be elected by written ballot. Public notice of the time and place of the Annual Meeting shall be given from the pulpit, four weeks in advance, during a regular worship service. The annual budget shall be presented at the Annual Meeting for adoption.

#### B. Special Meeting

Special business meetings may be called by the Board of Elders or upon written request of 10% of the voting membership, having first been submitted to the Board of Elders. Public notice shall be given at least one week in advance, stating in general terms the business to be transacted.

#### C. Ordinary Meeting

Any ordinary matter of business requiring action by the church membership may be presented and acted upon at any regular meeting of the congregation.

### SECTION 2 | Meeting Protocol

- A. Action items brought to a business meeting from the Board of Elders, for a vote of the membership, are motions from the Board and only require a second from an active member in attendance to be eligible for discussion and vote.
- B. Action items brought from the floor during a business meeting require a motion presented by an active member and a second by another active member to be eligible for discussion and vote.
- C. During a business meeting, action items brought from the floor that would normally require a recommendation by a Standing Committee or the Board of Elders, shall be automatically tabled until a properly-noticed, Special Meeting is called for the purpose. The committee whose area of responsibility the motion addresses shall deliver to the Board of Elders a report of that committee's findings and recommendations regarding the motion. At the

Special Meeting the Board of Elders shall then present the findings of the committee’s report and the Board of Elders recommendation. The motion will then be opened for general discussion and vote.

- D. The notification of the Special Meeting (date, time, location, and subject of the meeting) shall be issued within ten days after the original motion was made.
- E. E. For items not elsewhere specified within this Constitution and By-Laws, the following table shall represent proper protocol:

TYPE OF MEETING	QUORUM	VOTE REQUIRED
Annual Meeting	10% Active Members	Majority Present
Special Meeting	10% Active Members	Majority Present  On calling a Lead Pastor a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority present
Ordinary Meeting	Active Members Present	Majority Present

### ARTICLE X | ANNUAL BUDGET

- A. The Finance Committee shall work with the Pastor of Administration in preparing a proposed budget.
- B. Annual Budget to be presented to the Board of Elders.
- C. The proposed Annual Budget shall be approved by the Board of Elders and shall be made available to the membership two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting.



## POSITION STATEMENTS

Approved by the Elder Board to provide clarity of our church's position on these matters.

### Regarding Human Sexuality

Legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage. Hence, sexual activities, such as, but not limited to, adultery, fornication, incest, homosexuality, pedophilia, and bestiality are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the Church. Further, lascivious behavior, the creation and/or distribution and/or viewing of pornography, and efforts to alter one's gender are incompatible with Biblical witness. Genesis 2:18-25; Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 18:8-23; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:18; Ephesians 5:3

### Regarding Marriage

Marriage has been ordained by God. This church recognizes marriage as exclusively the legal union of one man and one woman, in which such union is a lifetime commitment. Marriage was first codified in the Levitical law. The Old Testament prophets compared it to a relationship between God and His people. Examples of it are in the historical narratives, and the wisdom (poetic) books discuss the unique unity of this relationship. Jesus explained the original intention and core elements of marriage, and several New Testament Epistles give explicit instruction on this union. Marriage is a typology of Christ and the Church. As such, the Church views marriage as a profound spiritual institution established by God. Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:8-9; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7; Hebrews 13:4

## Letter to Congregation Regarding 2015 Supreme Court Ruling

On Friday June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court issued a ruling to legalize same-sex marriage nationwide. And you may be wondering where we, as a church, stand on this issue. Before I answer that briefly, I just want to say a couple things.

First of all, as a church, we believe that all people matter to God. People of all backgrounds, ethnicities, socio-economical standings, AND orientations. All people matter to God, thusly all people matter to us.

Second, Arbor Road Church (ARC) is not a political organization. We are a religious organization. We're a church. We're a house of prayer. Which is why we don't engage public debates on political issues in worship services. However, we are always grateful to unpack what God's Word has to say on any variety of issues before our community, our country, and our world as opportunities arise.

With that said, I want to be very clear that the Bible is our authority on all matters in life. We have always stood - and will always stand - on Biblical truth on all matters. With regard to same-sex marriage specifically: We acknowledge that there are now officially multiple concepts of marriage in America, here at ARC, and throughout our denomination. Yet, along with our denomination, at ARC we adhere to the Biblical position that marriage is between one man and one woman. That will never change in this church, because the Bible is our guide - and God's Word remains the same. It has not changed, is not changing, and will not change.

But there's one final thing I want to say regarding this topic: God's Word tells us in Ephesians 4:15 that we should always speak the truth, yet speak it in love. Now, I believe there are individuals, churches, and Christian organizations, who are really, really big on truth ... but lacking in love.

Conversely, I believe there are some individuals, churches, and Christian organizations that are really, really big on love ... and have practically abandoned the truth. Jesus balanced them perfectly. As John 1 says, He was "full of grace and truth." Paul gives us God's Word on the matter: that we ought to always speak the truth - because there is such a thing as truth - but we always ought to speak it in a spirit of love - because God is love.

I believe as a guiding principle that if we speak the truth in love, we can be assured that God's Spirit will take it from there - on this issue, and on all other issues that will inevitably arise as we anticipate the return of Jesus.



# VALUES



## Values

In addition to the distinctives that mark our church, the practical values at Arbor Road are our points of passion that guide us as we seek to Know God and Make Him Known in our context. The values shared below are important to us in helping to shape our ministry culture.

### Intergenerational Community

As a 70+ year old church, you can probably imagine that we have a very diverse grouping of people in terms of ages and stages of life. We love and embrace the unique challenge of being together as often as possible. We like to think of our Worship Center as a Thanksgiving table. A solid Thanksgiving table has all generations celebrating together – kids, teens, young adults, newlyweds, young families, empty nesters, grandparents, great-grandparents, great-great --oh you get the idea. The point is ... when it comes to the generations represented at ARC, our saying is: Don't just accommodate ... CELEBRATE.

### Shepherding

A major value of our pastoral staff is the important work of shepherding the flock. Shepherding involves meeting people where they are. Sometimes, pastors can come off as being a bit untouchable or uninterrupted. Our staff (as well as our volunteers in these types of roles) make it a huge point be involved in the congregational life of those who call ARC home. This includes things like counseling, visiting the sick, caring for the elderly, and being sensitive to unique needs that inevitably arise in people's lives.

### Authenticity

We deeply desire to be a church that is real. It can become very easy to simply sneak into church and sneak out. But God's Word calls us to bear each other's burdens (Galatians 6:2) and be vulnerable with each other. Authenticity means putting aside all pretense and just being honest, through good times and bad. In the words of the great 16th century theologian, Martin Luther: "We are all mere beggars showing other beggars where to find bread." It's our desire for all who attend ARC to walk with the Lord and with each other - authentically.

## Life Transformation

Simply put, we deeply value the process of one's spiritual life growing deeper and wider. The Bible calls this process Sanctification. It's the process by which God's Spirit makes us to be more and more like the image of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Life Transformation starts at salvation and presses into a person's life as they grow into the man or woman of faith God intends for them to be. The ministries of ARC are carefully constructed to achieve this very important calling of God to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2).

## Shared Leadership

As you've probably noticed, Arbor Road Church doesn't focus on any one particular Pastor with the SOLE EXCEPTION of: Our Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Our ministry staff greatly enjoys empowering and encouraging those who serve around us as we pursue the great commission side-by-side. Our team leadership approach to church ministry has helped to unleash the amazing gifts of the pastors and volunteers who lead as we regularly learn from (and are hugely inspired by) other's abilities and passions. You'll see this demonstrated across the spectrum of leadership from Sunday morning preaching, worship leading, and other areas of service.



# TEAM

**Church Staff**

**Interns + Ministry Associates**

**School Staff**

**Elders**

Last updated - February, 2026





**Abby DeJong**  
Pastor of Local Missions  
+ Young Adults



**Alan Kim**  
Co-Lead Pastor



**Alex Rocha**  
Pastor of Music + Technical Arts



**Amberly Meiter**  
Pastor of Missions



**Amy Atkinson**  
Executive Administrative  
Assistant



**Brent Eldridge**  
Co-Lead Pastor



**Brody Austin**  
Pastor of High School Ministry



**Ciara Eldridge**  
Creative Director



**Dana Arredondo**  
Director of Business



**David Riseley**  
Ground Operations



**Emily Deems**  
Pastor of Worship  
+ Digital Media



**Grace Goff**  
Director of Ministry Support



**Haley Tyler**  
Pastor of Connection



**Jacob Unger**  
Pastor of Assimilation



**Jennifer Andriese**  
Early Childhood Coordinator





**Jillian Courtney**  
Coordinator of Hospitality  
+ Event Liason



**Kyle O'Neill**  
Pastor of Middle School Ministry



**Liv Doyle**  
Pastor of Access Ministry



**Marian Anderson**  
Administrative Assistant



**Meagan Peterson**  
Childcare Coordinator



**Megan Marshman**  
Pastor of Women



**Miah Diaz**  
Worship Coordinator



**Michelle Collins**  
Pastor of Kids Ministry



**Moises Garay**  
Ground Operations



**Nicholas Gisler**  
Pastor of Business Administration



**Nicole To**  
Creative Director



**Paco Ramos**  
Pastor of Deaf Ministries



**Pannah Sun**  
Ground Operations



**Phoebe Morris**  
Pastor of High School  
+ Prayer Ministry



**Rich Baker**  
Pastor of Men + Communities



**Rony Sanchez**  
Pastor of Spanish Ministries





**Sam Fuentes**  
Director of 4th and 5th Grade  
+ Young Adults



**Sam Zabel**  
Kid's Church Coordinator



**Tony Landini**  
Pastor of NextGen + Teaching



**Ashleigh Dellos**  
Global Missions Ministry  
Associate



**Cat Ricker**  
Local Missions Intern



**Christine Virtue**  
Women's Ministry Associate



**Copper Abbott**  
Tech Intern



**Emma Luke**  
Kids + Spanish Ministry Intern



**Evalynn Ford**  
Access Ministry Intern



**Jacob Ziegler**  
Middle School Ministry Intern



**Kassidy Echnoz**  
High School Ministry Intern



**Kevin Lanflisi**  
Men's Ministry Associate



**Lindsey Comer**  
High School Ministry Associate



**Megan Lichlyter**  
Middle School Ministry Intern





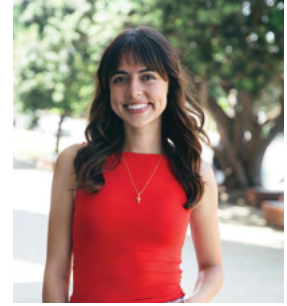
**Nat Butler**  
High School Ministry Intern



**Nathan Greer**  
Young Adults Intern



**Nicole Greer**  
Missions Intern



**Rosalinda Tomich**  
Kids Ministry Intern



**Sydney Graves**  
Middle School Ministry Associate



**Toby Johnson**  
Young Adults Ministry Associate



**Vivian Tavera**  
45 Ministry Intern



**Brenda Barton**  
Elementary School Principal



**David Gantt**  
Head of School



**Kristy Winbauer**  
Middle School Principal



**Melissa Clayton**  
Preschool Director



**ELDERS  
25-26**



**PAUL ARMSTRONG**



**AARON BRAKE**



**LEE CRANE**



**GREGG FRANCABANDERA**



**GEORGE HILLIS**



**JESSE MACIAS**



**MIKE POPP**



**GARY WAHLSTROM**



**DAVID WATSON**





# STRATEGY, SERVING, + MEMBERSHIP

## Strategy, Serving, + Membership

### Strategy

To accomplish our purpose and ensure those who call Arbor Road their “home church” have a clear sense of participation, we have a simple strategy built around 4Gs.

- **Gather**  
Gathering regularly for worship and learning from God’s Word.
- **Grow**  
Growing through cultivating my relationship with Christ and others.
- **Give**  
Giving sacrificially of my time, talents, and resources.
- **Go**  
Going into the community and world as an ambassador of Christ.

### Serving

The church functions through the leadership and volunteerism of the Priesthood of Believers that the Lord has brought to our local church, and we all have a role to play and a way to utilize the gifts that God has given us.

*“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.” 1 Corinthians 12:4-6*

#### ***How can I start serving at Arbor Road?***

##### **1. Have an idea of a ministry you’d want to serve with?**

Connect with the ministry leader directly. Go to [ArborRoad.com/serve](https://ArborRoad.com/serve)

##### **2. Don’t know where to even start?**

Reach out to our Connect Team. A few simple questions will help you discern where to start using your gifts. Send an email to [GetConnected@ArborRoad.com](mailto:GetConnected@ArborRoad.com) to get started.

## Membership

Membership is a commitment to joining together in accomplishing the purpose of our church.

Membership is not about being in an exclusive club and receiving benefits. The phrase Member comes from the word picture in 1 Corinthians 12 of the church being the body of Christ:

*“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.” 1 Corinthians 12:12*

### Membership is...

- Affirming the church beliefs and purpose
- Committing to participation and partnering in the ministry
- Submitting to the teaching that God’s Word brings (2 Tim 3:16-17)

### ***What are the qualifications for membership?***

Believers who have been baptized submit to the authority of scripture and our local church leadership, as clarified in our church constitution.

### ***How do I become a member?***

1. Fill out a simple form, sharing your personal testimony and commitment to the community of ARC. This is available online at [Membership.ArborRoad.com](http://Membership.ArborRoad.com) or a print copy is available in the main lobby.
2. We will reach out within a few days to follow up and/or answer any questions you may have about our church.
3. We will welcome you to membership as soon as possible and follow up with you when we do! Don’t worry, we won’t make you get in front of the entire church or speak in public! :)



# FINANCIAL + BUDGET OVERVIEW



## Financial + Budget Overview

### General Fund

The vast majority of giving goes into this General Fund as it supports all our ministries, operations, and payroll for the church. We set a goal each year and that number is voted on and approved each year at the annual meeting by our members. This is what our budget is based on. This number has historically increased from 3 - 7% each year based on our church's needs.

### Designated Funds

Monies set aside for a specific purpose or project but not for a specific person. The congregation can give directly to these funds and the Elder Board can choose to set aside a certain percentage of the General Fund. Examples are our Benevolence, Capital Improvement, Missions, and Student Camp Scholarship Funds.

### Giving Unit

A Giving unit is the donation given by a single family at Arbor Road Church. For reference, at this point in our 2025-2026 fiscal year, we have over 900 giving units.

### Annual Budget

Our fiscal year begins on July 1st and the Constitution lays out the approval methods necessary for our budget. These are the steps we follow in the months that approach our annual meeting

1. The budget is drafted by the church staff based on the reflection of the overall strategy, focus, and goals of the church for the following year.
2. Then the draft is brought to the Finance Committee for detailed review.
3. Next the Elder Board discusses and approves the budget.
4. Finally the budget is presented to the congregation for approval.

Our facility is 100% paid for, and we currently do not have any outstanding debt. This lets us put 100% of our donations back into our church, which is such a blessing. Like many churches, our budget is heavily based on staffing and missions.

- 65% of our budget is staff and other personnel items.
- 10% of our General Fund budget is for Missions.
- 10% is for Facilities.
- 15% is for ministries and administration

Additionally, there is an assessment that is built into the tuition costs of Lakewood Christian Schools to cover facility and personnel needs. During the 2025-2026 school year, there are approximately 500 students from Preschool to 8th grade on campus each day.

## Budgeted Expenses

### General Administration

This budget area covers normal business operating expenses including postage, office supplies, printing, and advertising.

### Personnel

This budget area includes all staff salaries, as well as health, disability, and workers compensation insurance payments.

### Facilities

This budget area includes all maintenance and utility costs for the entire church campus. It also includes hazard and liability insurance.

### Youth Ministries

#### *Early Childhood & 1st-3rd grades*

This budget item includes all ministry events designed for children: Kidstuf, sunday school, Wednesday nights (Kid U and Preppies), Fall Festival, VBS, and other planned events.

#### *4th-5th grades*

This budget item includes all ministry events designed for 4th & 5th Graders: Sunday mornings, Wednesday nights, and planned events.

#### *Middle School 6th-8th*

This budget item includes all ministry events designed for Middle school students: camps, trips, service projects, Sunday mornings, small groups, rad day, VMAS, and other outreach activities.

#### *High School 9th-12th*

This budget item includes all ministry events designed for High school students: camps, trips, mission trips, Sunday mornings, small groups, LBKT, VMAS, and other outreach activities.

**General Ministries***Young Adults*

This budget item includes all ministry events designed for college-aged: retreats, trips, service projects, midweek meetings, and other outreach activities.

*Communities*

This budget area includes ministries designed to connect and equip adults. These ministries include: adult classes, small groups, Men & Women's Ministries, seminars, and retreats.

*Care*

This budget area includes ministries designed to meet people who need our support. They include Griefshare, Olive Crest, Serving our Shut-ins, and His Nesting Place.

*Serve*

This heading speaks for itself! First Impressions (ushers, greeters, hosts, parking), Food Prep team, LB Rescue Mission, emergency response, and Prayer Room team are just a few—and there are more opportunities every year!

**Worship**

This budget area includes all ministries relating to Worship & Arts. Music, drama, seasonal presentations, media technology, and repair are some of the areas for which Worship & Arts is responsible.

**Missions**

Our Global and Local Missions budget supports missionaries globally from various missions, parachurch organizations, and Converge Worldwide church plants.

**Up-to-date budget amounts are posted in May each year, ahead of our annual business meeting on the first Sunday of June.**