

CORE BELIEFS: BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH

God's Word

We believe the Bible is the written Word of God, revealed by the Holy Spirit through human authors, and is without error in the original documents. We believe the events and people are part of actual history. God's Word is absolute truth and the sole standard by which to determine our beliefs, conduct, and knowledge of right and wrong. It is the truth by which God brings people into a saving relationship with Himself, and leads them to Christian maturity. (*Word of God: Matthew 4:4; Truth: John 8:31-32; Life: John 20:31; Inspired by God: II Timothy 3:16-17; Given by Holy Spirit: II Peter 1:20-21*)

Triune God

We believe there is one God who eternally exists in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All three are equal in deity and therefore are worthy of our faith, love, and worship. (*One: Deuteronomy 6:4; Trinity: Matthew 28:19; Worthy: I Timothy 1:17*)

Father: We believe the Father absolutely reigns over all life and history in the universe. We rejoice that He concerns Himself in the affairs of people, and that He hears and answers prayer. He initiated salvation by sending His Son, and He is Father to those who, by faith, accept the payment for the penalty of their sins made on the cross by His Son, Jesus Christ. (*Answers prayer: Matthew 7:11; Sovereign: Psalm 103:19; Adopts us: Ephesians 1:5; Answers prayer: Philippians 4:6-7; Calls us children: I John 3:1; Knows all: I John 3:20; Sent Son: I John 4:9-10; Reigns: Revelation 19:6*)

Son: We believe the only Son of God became the man Jesus Christ, who was born of the virgin Mary. Being fully God and fully man, He revealed God through His teachings, His miracles, and His sinless life. As a man, He perfectly kept God's Law. His death on the cross was sufficient to pay the penalty for the sins of the whole world. His body was resurrected on the third day according to the Scriptures. After 40 days He ascended to the right hand of the Father, where as High Priest, He continually represents and intercedes for His people. We believe in His imminent return, as He promised. All who have placed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will meet Him in the air to be with Him forever. (*Virgin birth: Matthew 1:18; Miracles: Matthew 4:23-24; Only Son: John 3:16; Return: Acts 1:11; Intercession: Romans 8:34; Burial, Resurrection: I Corinthians 15:3-4; Rapture: I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Mediator: I Timothy 2:5; High Priest, Sinless: Hebrews 4:14-15; Advocate, Payment: I John 2:1-2*)

Holy Spirit: We believe the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin. When we accept the payment of Jesus Christ for our sin, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us. He gives us spiritual life, spiritual gifts, teaching, guidance, correction, and the power to live a godly life. (*Convicts: John 16:8; Indwelling: Romans 8:9-11; Teaches: I Corinthians 2:10-13; Gifts: I Corinthians 12:1-4; Fruit: Galatians 5:22-23*)

Man

We believe God created Adam and Eve in His image, with mind, will, and emotion. They were created without sin and innocent. Adam's disobedience of God's command caused all of humanity to be born with a sin nature, separated from God, and all of creation to be cursed. (*God's image: Genesis 1:26-31; Sinned: Genesis 3; All sin: Romans 3:9-12, 23; Adam representative: Romans 5:19; Death: Romans 6:23*)

Salvation

God promised Adam that He would send a Savior to conquer sin. It is for this reason that the Lord Jesus Christ came to Earth and entered humanity as our representative. He lived a perfect life, and obeyed all of God's laws completely. While on the cross, God the Father made God the Son, Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in

Jesus Christ. Each person must make a choice. They can either reject Jesus Christ's payment and eternally be separated from God, or accept His payment and spend eternity with God. His payment is offered to us as a free gift, and we accept it by faith alone. Jesus Christ is the only mediator through whom God may be approached. (*Promise: Genesis 3:15; Payment: Romans 3:23-26; Love: Romans 5:8; Life: I Corinthians 15:22; Knew no sin: II Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 2:20; Free gift: Ephesians 2:8-9; Mediator: I Timothy 2:5*)

Church

We believe that all who have put their faith in Jesus Christ are members of the one body of Jesus Christ, the Church. We believe that the members of the body of Jesus Christ are to meet together in local congregations for the purpose of glorifying God in worship, prayer, instruction from Scripture for spiritual growth and development, and fellowship. By means of the Holy Spirit and this instruction, our members will know how to and will seek to live godly lives. They will desire to be an example of a believer to those around them and will be ready to answer those who ask the reason for their faith in Jesus Christ. They will take the message of Jesus Christ to the community in which they live and work and support those who take the message of Jesus Christ to other parts of the world. (*Witness: Matthew 5:16; Share message: Matthew 28: 19-20; Purpose: Acts 2:40-47; Body of Christ: I Corinthians 12:12; Support: Philippians 4:10-19; Assembly: Hebrews 10:25; Testimony: I Peter 3:15*)

Ordinances

We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only ordinances of the church, and that they are a Scriptural means of testimony for the church in this age. Neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper are a means of salvation but are acts of obedience. (*Baptism: Acts 10:48; Lord's Supper: I Corinthians 11:23-26*)

Baptism: Baptism is the immersion of the believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an outward sign of an inward change in those who have accepted the payment for their sins by Jesus Christ on the cross. Through baptism, we identify ourselves with His death, burial, and resurrection, and commit ourselves to walk in newness of life. (*Commanded: Matthew 28:19; For believers, In name of the Lord: Acts 10:47-48; Sign of inward: Romans 6:3-4*)

Lord's Supper: We celebrate the Lord's Supper as a reminder of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. Eating the bread and drinking from the cup symbolize His body and blood. Any person who has put their faith in Jesus Christ has the privilege to share in this celebration. (*Reminder, Symbols: Luke 22:19-20; Remembrance, Until return: I Corinthians 11:23-26*)

Governance

Under the authority of Jesus Christ and His Word, our church governs itself congregationally. In order to assist in meeting the spiritual and physical needs within our congregation, church members have organized teams to serve in specific areas of ministry. These ministry teams are led by elders and deacons and/or deaconesses, who meet together as a Church Council, manage the affairs of the church, and present major matters to the church membership for a vote. All final decisions will be determined by a vote of the church membership. (*Court of appeal: Matthew 18:15-20; Work together: Acts 6:3-6; Orderliness; I Corinthians 14:40*)

Lord's Return

We believe in the bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ to meet His Church in the clouds. We believe that after a tribulation period on this earth, Jesus Christ will return to this earth with us, the Church. He will set up His kingdom, and judge the world in righteousness. (*Judge: Psalm 96:13; Kingdom: Zechariah 14:1-11; Bodily and tribulation: Matthew 24:27-30; Bodily return: Acts 1:11; Judge: Matthew 25:31-46; Caught up in the air: I Thessalonians 4:16-17*)