

INDEX OF CONTENTS

		<u>Page #</u>
<u>Introduction</u>	1
<u>Article I</u>	<u>Theme; Church Purpose; Mission Statements; Vision Statement</u>	2
<u>Article II</u>	<u>Our Basic Doctrinal Position</u> (<i>What We Believe</i>)	2
I	The Scriptures.....	2
II.	God	3 – 4
III.	Man	4
IV.	Salvation	5
V.	The Doctrines of Grace	5 - 7
VI.	The Church	7
VII.	Baptism and the Lord’s Supper	7
VIII.	The Lord’s Day	8
IX.	Last Things	8
X.	Evangelism and Missions	8
XI.	Education	9
XII.	The Christian and the Social Order	9
XIII.	The Family	10
XIV.	Biblical Stewardship	10
<u>Article III</u>	<u>Church Belief & Practice for Marriage & Baby Dedication</u>	11
Belief & Practice 001	Our Belief Concerning Marriage & Ceremonies.....	11
	002 Baby Dedication	12

Introduction:

This guide is not intended to be an all-encompassing document, but an effort has been made to discuss the more important things a member should know. This guide does not supersede the Holy Scriptures but attempts to clarify the functioning of our church in accordance with the Scriptures. This guide is intended to empower, equip, and encourage the Saints of Mt. Zion Baptist Church to succeed in living out her purpose, mission, and vision, for the glory of God. This guide should be read with your Bible.

Article I ... Theme; Church Purpose; Mission Statements; Vision Statement

A) Mt. Zion Baptist Church Church Theme

“Holiness Unto The Lord” Exodus 28:36

B) Mt. Zion Baptist Church Purpose Statement

The Gospel of John 5:23 “That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent me.”

1. Reverence the Lord in Mind, Body, Soul and Spirit.

C) Mt. Zion Baptist Church Mission Statement

(What the church is supposed to do in fulfilling her Mission)

1. Hold fast to the truth of the Word of God. Eph. 6:14
2. Live a holy life as being true lights in a dark world. Matt. 5:14; Eph. 1:4
3. Committed to Discipleship. Matt. 28:18-20; Col. 1:23-29

D) Mt. Zion Baptist Church Vision Statement

(How the Church is to see and be seen fulfilling her Vision)

Serving Jehovah Faithfully. 1Samuel 12:24 “Only fear the Lord and **SERVE** Him in truth with all your heart: for consider what great things He hath done for you.”

1. Lifelong devotion and service unto the Lord.

Article II ... Our Basic Doctrinal Position (“What We Believe”)

Below is a combination of excerpts from the Baptist Statement of Faith, “TULIP” by Duane E. Spencer and Doctrines of Reformed Theology. This is intended to give the reader a general overview of the basic tenets of our faith, that are taught and nurtured at Mt. Zion Baptist Church.

I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. The Bible is the Word of God. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God saves us, judges us, and therefore is and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

II. God

There is one and only one living and true God. The very essence of God's being is Spirit. God is Sovereign. That simply means that He can do what He wants to do; when He wants to do it; to whom He wants to do it and how He wants to do it. God is self-existent, self-sufficient, unlimited, infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, for He is eternal. He is the Creator of the heavens, the earth and all therein. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God of the Bible reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personhood attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being. In other words, the one God is three-persons, existing all at the same time and enjoying a personal relation with each other. God's New Testament name is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2). This three-in-oneness concept of God distinguishes Christianity from all other religions. *The term "Trinity" is used to describe this three-in-oneness, though the term is not in the bible.*

A. God - the Father

God, as Father, (*first person of the "Trinity"*), reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. In redemption, the Father foreordained the work of redemption of the Son as Savior of an elect group out of every nation, tribe, and tongue as recipients of grace, whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God in Sovereign faith in Jesus Christ. He is Fatherly in His attitude toward all his creation, but particularly so to His elect and adopted children.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17-20; 1 John 5:7.

B. God - the Son

Christ (*the second person of the "Trinity"*) is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He became the God-man, fully God and fully man. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross. He completed His mission to redeem all the elect of God. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, the God-man. In His Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He is Lord and now dwells in all believers as the living and ever-present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

C. God- The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit (*the third person of the "Trinity"*) is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration, He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His indwelling presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers his church, the body of believers, in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

III. Man

First of all, man was created by God. He is not, therefore, the evolutionary product of blind chance. Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. Scripture teaches that God created them, male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man (Adam, who is the federal head of the human race) sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan, man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherited a fallen nature in a fallen environment, captive in the bondage of sin. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, from our human perspective, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man and is offered freely to all who believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine sorrow of personal sin and turning from sin toward God. Faith is believing in Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8, Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14, 29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9, 28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32, Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18, 29-39; 10:9-10, 13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12; 8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22; 5.

V. The Doctrines of Grace

Total Depravity

Because of the fall, man is unable, in his own natural condition, to come to a saving knowledge of God. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature; therefore, he will not--indeed he cannot--choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ--it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not something man contributes to in order to effect salvation but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation--it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God.

Genesis 2:15-17, Romans 5:12, Psalm 51:5, 1 Corinthians 2:14, Romans 3:10-18, Jeremiah 17:9, John 6:44, Ephesians 2:1-10.

Unconditional Election

God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected. These acts are the result, not the cause of God's choice. Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man. Those whom God sovereignly elected, He brings, through the power of the Holy Spirit to a willing submission to Christ. Thus, God's choice of the sinner, not the sinner's choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation.

Romans 9:10-21, Ephesians 1:4-11, Ephesians 2:4-10, Romans 8:29-30, Acts 11:18, Acts 13:48.

Limited Atonement

Christ's redeeming work was intended to save God's elect and secured salvation for them. His death was a substitutionary atonement for the penalty of sin in the place of elect sinners whose names are written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith which united them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died.

Matthew 1:21, Romans 5:12-21, Romans 3:21-26, Ephesians 2:8-10, Titus 3:5-6, Philippians 1:6, John 10:11-30, John 17:6-12, Romans 8:28-30, John 6:44, Acts 20:28.

Irresistible Grace

God has ordained that the gospel must be preached. The human vessel does not know whom God has elected for salvation, so the gospel is to be preached to everyone. In His sovereignty, God, through the power of the gospel and the workings of the Holy Spirit, extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The general summons (which is made to all without distinction) can be, and often is, rejected; whereas the effectual call cannot be rejected, and it always results in conversion. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon man's cooperation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ. God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended.

John 3:16, Matthew 22:14, Acts 17:29-31, Matthew 23:37-39, John 6:44, Romans 8:28-30, John 1:12-13, John 3:1-8, Ephesians 2:8-10.

Perseverance of the Saints

All who were chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end.

John 3:16, John 6:35-40, John 6:44, Philippians 1:6, Philippians 2:12-13, Jude 24-25, Ephesians 1:13-14, Romans 8:28-30, Romans 8:35-39.

VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers. So, the Mt. Zion Baptist Church is an autonomous body of believers. A church is not simply a conglomerate or assembly of people. It is an assembly of people who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The first church was made of those “that gladly received His word” (Acts 2:41), those “that believe” (Acts 2:44) and those “who are saved” (Acts 2:47). In Paul’s writings to the churches, he addressed them as “the called of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 1:6), “them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus” and who “call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:2) He calls them “saints” (1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1), “the faithful brethren in Christ” (Col 1:2). All these expressions indicate that the churches were made up of people who believed in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. This is our creed at Mt. Zion Baptist Church. Additionally, the church is a spiritual organism, not merely an organization. This implies that as a church we march to the beat of a different drummer. Our methods, practices, and policies will in many cases differ from the norms of our worldly society.

Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord and to each other as brothers and sisters. If one looks with spiritual eyes one can see the essence of the “cross” in the fiber of the very intent of the church, vertically and horizontally. The scriptural officers of the church are Pastors / Elders and Deacons. At Mt. Zion Baptist Church we hold to this biblical teaching.

VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his/her faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Baptism is not necessary for salvation as some believe. Baptism is an outward representation of an internal reality. The Gospel is what saves. For someone to insist that baptism is necessary for salvation is to, in fact, be adding a work to the finished works of Christ.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming. This is commanded by our Lord to do this in remembrance of Him.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

VIII. The Lord's Day

Every day is a day that the Lord has made in which we can and should honor and worship God. However, following New Testament teaching, the time set up as the day that the local body assembles for the purpose of corporate worship is the first day of the week. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities of the Lord's Day should be in keeping with Christian conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

IX. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, and according to the sequence given in scripture, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly and in glory. According to God's Sovereign order, the dead will be raised; the righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever with the Lord; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

X. Evangelism and Missions

Firstly, the church has a mission to the world. Here the church's primary mission is the proclamation of the gospel in evangelism as dictated by the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20). Secondly, the church has a mission to itself. This mission is that of edification of one another. It refers to the building and developing the members in the life and faith (Eph. 4:16; 1 Cor. 14:26). Every individual member has a responsibility or part to play in edifying the whole body. This is done through, teaching, exhorting, encouraging, and comforting one another. This concept is clearly pointed to in our **Theme, Church Purpose, Mission and Vision** in **Article I.**

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

XI. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Each church should have an adequate system of Christian education to effectively complete spiritual nurturing for Christ's people. Mt. Zion Baptist Church has many avenues for education for all age groups such as: Sunday School (all ages), Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting and Church Bible Study (6:30pm), Monday Evening Study Session (5:45pm), Wednesday Night (BYF) Baptist Youth Fellowship (5:45pm) and Thursday Night Women's Ministry Biblical Conversation Series (7:00pm).

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

XII. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose all things which oppose the Word of God.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16; 43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

XIII. The Family

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

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. There is an ordained order with roles as defined by God. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

XIV. Biblical Stewardship

God works by plans. He has a plan for everything. He had a plan when He made the universe. He had a plan when He created man, and He had a plan for the human family on the earth. He had a plan of salvation and a plan for the work of His church. He had a plan also for the financing of the great program that He gave His church to do.

God gives only one plan of church finance in the Bible, and that is tithes and sacrificial offerings from His people. The tithe is the tenth, meaning that God's people are to bring a tenth of their incomes to the Lord and his work. Offerings are the amounts that are given above the tenth. This is the plan that God teaches in His Word, and it is the one scriptural plan that will work as the people of God trust Him and are obedient.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4; 19-21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21, 42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

Article III...Church Belief & Practice for Marriage and Baby Dedication

Belief & Practice No. 001

(January 1, 2020)

Our Fundamental Belief Concerning Marriage & Ceremonies

The Mt. Zion Baptist Church as an autonomous congregation and under the Lordship of Jesus Christ believes that the meaning of Marriage is clearly defined in the Holy Scriptures as a union between a Man and a Woman. We believe that Scriptures clearly teach that God, in creating the world, gave marriage to be the life-long union of one man and one woman as seen in Gen. 2:24. Indeed marriage is also a gift to be held in honor and kept pure (Heb. 13:4; 1Thess. 4:2-5). As a man and woman freely commit themselves to one another, God Himself joins them as one.

We believe that Marriage is far more than a mere civil relationship or social contract or just an interpersonal bond. It is an act of God the Creator, confirmed by the words of our Lord in Matthew 19 (verses 4-6): where He said, *“Haven’t you read that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be united to his wife and the two shall become one flesh’?”*

We believe that a marriage between a man and a woman depicts a beauty that is so holy and great that the scriptures in Ephesians 5:21 even draws an analogy of it to the church’s relationship with Christ our Lord wherein the church is described as His *“bride.”* Thus, marriage is more than a political opinion or a civil right but is a sacred union of one man and one woman. We therefore cannot bless same-sex marriage just as we cannot bless any sin such as murder, stealing and sex outside of the marriage of one man and one woman. Indeed, we cannot bless what God has so clearly called sin. To do so would defeat the need for repentance and forgiveness and thereby place those who engage in such behavior outside the need for repentance and forgiveness and in some instance the need for salvation that was provided at great cost by our Lord Jesus. To not care about this would make us fail in our primary mission to be faithful to His Word and to lead others by His power and presence to salvation.

We are reminded that such changes in the civil law do not, and moreover cannot, change the moral law that God has established. Sex has been ordained by scripture as between a husband and wife more clearly defined as a man and woman.

Consistent with these fundamental beliefs, The Pastor will not employ his clerical authority to perform marriages between two people of the same sex, and the Mt. Zion Baptist Church does not permit its meeting houses to be used for ceremonies, receptions, or other activities associated with same-sex marriages. Yet we must keep in mind that we are all sinners and that all visitors are welcome to our Church and premises so long as they respect our standards of conduct while there.

However, we believe that Scripture requires that every person should be shown compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Mt. Zion B. C. Baby Dedication Practice

Question: What is Baby Dedication?

We must begin by stating what Baby Dedication is not. It is not a christening nor is it a case of infant baptism, both of which we find no biblical basis. There is no implied salvation in the baby dedication ceremony.

What we (Mt. Zion B. C.) practice is:

A baby dedication is a ceremony in which believing parents, along with chosen others of the parents' discretion, make a commitment before the Lord to raise their child according to God's Word and God's ways.

We acknowledge that children are gifts from God (Psalm 127:3). As believers we are called to recognize that children belong first and foremost to God, and that parents are charged with the awesome responsibility of caring for these gifts (Deut. 6:4-7; Eph. 6:4), because children belong to God and are given by grace as gifts to parents, it is proper and appropriate that children be dedicated back to God. Dedicating a child acknowledges God's sovereignty not only over the child, but also over the parents.

Christian parents who dedicate a child are making a promise of commitment to the Lord to do everything within their power to raise the child in a godly way.

The idea of dedicating a child to the Lord is certainly a biblical concept. We have examples in scripture in both the Old Testament and the New Testament of such activity.

- In 1 Samuel 1, Hannah was a barren wife who promised to dedicate her child to God if He would give her a son. Upon Samuel's birth, Hannah presented him to the Lord.

- In Luke 2:22, we read that Mary and Joseph brought their baby, Jesus, to the temple in Jerusalem to present him before the Lord.

Additionally, we (Mt. Zion B. C.) practice:

1) Baby dedication ceremonies are conducted by request and by Pastoral consulting and approval, generally on Sunday mornings as part of the regular worship service.

2) In matters of "shepherding" concern, alternative dedication times and places will be determined individually on a case-by-case basis.