

# Doctrines of Benedict Community Church

Benedict Community Church embraces the following statements concerning the truth. The Bible is our all-sufficient rule for faith and practice. This Statement of Fundamental Truths is intended simply as a basis of fellowship among us (i.e., that we all speak the same thing; I Corinthians 1:10; Acts 2:42). No claim is made that it contains all biblical truth, only that it covers our need as to these fundamental doctrines. We do not presume to say the phraseology employed in this Statement of Fundamental Truths is inspired or that it is the final work on Bible truth. However, we are persuaded it is proper and consistent with the Holy Scriptures to “set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us” (Luke 1:1).

**Abortion** We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child in a mother’s womb is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject teachings that the abortions of pregnancies is an acceptable and godly practice. (Deuteronomy 18:9; Ecclesiastes 5:18; Psalms 139:13; Jeremiah 1:5; Exodus 21:22; Hebrews 13:8)

**Alcohol** The Scriptures speak often of the destructive power of alcohol. Noah’s drunkenness brought shame to his family (Gen. 9:20-27). Lot’s drunkenness resulted in an incestuous relationship with his two daughters (Gen. 19:30-38). An inebriated Xerxes sought to humiliate Queen Vashti publicly (Est. 1:9-22). The consumption of alcohol impairs judgment, inflames passions, and invites violence (Lev. 10:8-11; Prov. 20:1, 23:29-35, 31:4, 5).

**Angels and Demons** God created the angels to be His servants and messengers (Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 148:2; Hebrews 1:14). Satan is a fallen angel who led a group of angels in rebellion against God (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:12-15). He is the great enemy of God and man, and the demons are his servants in evil. He and his demons will be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

**Anointing Oil is Administered for Healing** Anointing oil is administered for both physical and spiritual restoration with the laying on of hands when required (Mark 16:18; James 5:14). If sins have been committed against Christ or His Body they are to be confessed.

**Assurance of Salvation** Assurance means that you, a believer in Jesus Christ, have confidence that you are in the family of God and therefore have eternal life. Assurance looks at our eternal salvation from man’s viewpoint. The central passage is 1 John 5:13. Each clear verse about eternal salvation, such as John 3:16, stresses the basis for assurance because God keeps His Word

**Baptism** We believe the New Testament teaches at least three baptisms. First, there is the baptism whereby the repentant sinner, upon trusting Jesus Christ as his Savior, is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). Secondly, there is water baptism. This we believe to be an ordinance of the church, whereby the believer

experiences the reality of co-crucifixion and co-resurrection with the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 6:3-6). Thirdly, there is the filling or baptism in the Holy Spirit by the Lord Jesus Christ, which may occur at or subsequent to conversion. We believe that by the believer's continued submission to the Holy Spirit, his very weakness is transformed into strength to witness for Jesus Christ in power, and to live according to the will of God (Acts 1:5-6; 10:46; 11:28; 19:6).

**Blessed Hope** The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent and the blessed hope of the church (I Thessalonians 4:16-17; Romans 8:23; Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 15:51).

**Christian Service** Christian service is serving God and believers through the power of the Holy Spirit, mainly in the area of one's spiritual gift, through godly love, when abiding in Christ, and to God's glory. We encourage all in our fellowship to serve. The staff and leadership are equippers and disciple makers, who help people identify their gifts and callings and find a place for them to use their gifts in service to both the church and our community. (John 15:1-5; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7; 1 Corinthians 10:31).

**Confirmation** Confirmation is administered to confirm the believer in the faith and service of Christ. This is done after the believer has been instructed and established in the doctrines of Christ (John 7:17; II John 9; Acts 8:17; 14:21-23; 15:32, 41; 19:6, Galatians 2:9, I Timothy 5:24).

## **Creation**

- 1. Of the World:** God spoke into existence the world and all things that it contains, for His own pleasure, and the enjoyment of His creatures (Revelation 4:11; I Timothy 6:17).
- 2. Of Man:** God created man in His image. Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness". So, God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:26, 27. What God has created cannot be changed. Psalm 139:13-16. For you created my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful. I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eye saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

**Death** As a result of original sin, all mankind is subject to the death of the body. The soul does not die with the body, but immediately after death enters into a conscious state of happiness or misery according to the character here possessed either by rejection or acceptance of the Savior (Romans 5:12; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Philippians 1:23).

**Dedication of Children** The dedication of children is the presentation of a child to God, and therefore establishes a covenant between God and parents. God promises blessing and protection to the child whose parents are faithful to rear him/her in the services of the Lord. Such a child is made holy and is part of the covenant family of God by the faith of his parents until he/she reaches the age of accountability, whereupon he/she becomes responsible as an individual before God and is commanded to repent (Psalms 34:11; Isaiah 54:13; Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-16; I Corinthians 7:14).

**Economics** Biblical economics is a free enterprise system with the ownership of private property, the right to accumulate wealth, and proper taxation (Leviticus 27:30-33; Proverbs 3:9; Proverbs 6:6-11; Proverbs 10:5; Proverbs 10:11, 26; Proverbs 13:22; Proverbs 22:22; Proverbs 24:30-34; Ecclesiastes 5:18-20; Matthew 22:17-22.)

**Education** As Christians, one of our responsibilities is to make sure that our children and we are educated in the godliest manner possible. God has entrusted us with children and He will require an accounting of what we did with them (2 Chr. 17:9; Psalm 78:1; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Rom. 1:20; Eph. 6:4; John 1:17).

**Eternal Covenant** The Eternal Covenant leads to the Covenant of Grace. Whereas the Eternal Covenant was made between the Father and the Son, the Covenant of Grace is made between God and man. This latter covenant is where God promises eternal salvation to man based upon Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. The manifestation of that covenant occurs in our world in a sequence of additional covenants that God made with individuals: Adam (Gen. 2:15-17), Noah (Gen. 9:12-16), Abraham (Gen. 17), the Israelites at Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:28), and believers in the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-37).

**Eternal Security** Eternal security means that when a person believes in Jesus Christ as Savior, he can never lose his eternal life. The Bible clearly teaches that once we believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, our eternal destiny is fixed and secure. Security looks at our eternal salvation from God's viewpoint (Ephesians 1:13-14; John 10:27-30).

**Evangelism** Evangelism, the communication of the gospel message, includes a warning, an explanation, and a call. Evangelism includes warning people about sin and the consequences of sin (John 16:8; Acts 24:25; Revelation 20:11-15). It includes an explanation of God's remedy for sin—the gospel (Acts 8:29-35; Romans 3:21-26; 2 Corinthians 5:21), and it includes the clear call to repent (to turn from sin and to turn toward God) and believe the gospel, by faith (Mark 1:15; Luke 13:1-5; Acts 17:29-31; Romans 1:17; Romans 10:9-13).

**Fasting** Believers may fast as long as our motive and attitude is right before God: humility, recognition and expression of our dependence and need for God in our lives, intercessory prayer for others and ourselves, and focusing ourselves on God's will and our ministry for Him.

- a. To show genuine humility, repentance, confession of sin, and need of the Lord (1 Samuel 7:6; Jeremiah 36:9; Ezra 10:6; Nehemiah 9:1-2; Joel 2:12; Daniel 9:2-20; 10:2-3).

- b. To pray for others, especially those ill (Psalm 35:13; 2 Samuel 12:15-23).
- c. To pray for guidance and safety (Esther 4:3, 16; Ezra 8:21-31).
- d. At the hour of one's death (Judges 20:26; 1 Samuel 31:13; 2 Samuel 1:12; 3:35)
- e. To concentrate on service for the Lord (Acts 13:1-4; 14:23).

**Family** The family is the first and most important classroom and training ground for society. The family provides the security, the heritage, and the perpetuation of morality without which no society can survive (Genesis 4:1-2; Ephesians 6:1-4).

**Fellowship with God** Fellowship with God emphasizes the friendship relationship with God the Father and the Son. Sin breaks the fellowship; confession of sin restores the fellowship. When in fellowship with God, believers partner with God in service and enjoy a close friendship. The central passages are 1 John 1 and John 13. Since one is no longer walking in darkness (sin), the Holy Spirit also leads and controls the believer as Galatians 5 teaches. John 15:1-9 uses the term "abide" which also refers to fellowship with Jesus Christ.

**Final Judgment and Eternal State** We believe that at death the spirits and souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ pass immediately into His presence and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the glorified body, when Jesus Christ comes for His own. Whereupon soul and body reunited shall be with Him forever in glory; but the spirits and souls of the unbelieving remain after death conscious of condemnation and in misery until the final judgment of the Great White Throne when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated but to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (Luke 16:19-26; 23:42; II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; II Thessalonians 1:7-8; Jude 6, 7; Revelation 20:11-15). There will be a final judgment in which the wicked dead will be raised and judged according to their works. Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life, together with the devil and his angels, the beast and the false prophet, will be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 19:20; 20:11-15; 21:8).

**Five-Fold Ministry** The church is to be taught and led by the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the purpose of every believer seeing and exercising his/her priestly and kingly ministry as outlined in I Peter 2:5,9 and Revelation 16. The five-fold ministry is to teach and train its people to do the work of the ministry with maturity and unity in mind. Working with these ministries will be elders, deacons, and the gifted men and women of the church (Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:11-13; I Timothy 3:2-12; Titus 2:1-15).

**Gifts of the Spirit** The Spiritual Gifts set forth in I Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 should be and must be operative in the church to enjoy the fullness of God. These gifts are imparted by the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit and only work or are operated by this one and the self-same Spirit (I Corinthians 12:11).

**Giving** Biblical giving is the giving of self and wealth to God and His work, and doing so voluntarily and out of love for God and His work. Central passages of Scripture for giving: Matthew 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 6:6-8; Philippians 4:10-19, 1 Timothy 5:8, 17-18; 3 John 5-8.

**Godly Love or Christian Love** This is God's kind of love in us for others, especially for believers. John 3:16 and Romans 5:8 demonstrate that God's love is sacrificial. Since this is true, godly love—Christian love— is also sacrificial. The Holy Spirit produces it in a believer who is controlled by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23; Romans 5:5). Christian love is not dependent on the person who is loved. It depends on the source. Godly love pleases God (2 John 5-6). The basic idea in godly love is sacrifice for others—thinking of others first and doing for them that which is in accordance with God's will and God's good, and that which is needed. Furthermore, it includes responsibility, which is being accountable to God, to doctrinal principles, and to one's level of spiritual growth; protection of others by way of verbal protection (what we say), mental protection (our thoughts), and physical protection; self-control which relates to sacrifice, responsibility, and protection; and thankfulness. First Corinthians 13:4-7 personifies love by saying what it is and does, and what it is not and does not do. Godly love contrasts with friendship love which is for certain people.

**Help of the Poor** We believe that it is the intent of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to feed the hungry (Matthew 25:34-40; Isaiah 58:7-8); to care for the poor (Matthew 19:21; Psalm 112:9; II Corinthians 9:6-9); and to care for the widows and orphans (James 1:27). We further believe that such ministry should be in His name to both saints and unbelievers (Hebrews 6:10).

**Homosexuality** This organization holds that a homosexual lifestyle is incompatible with God's Word and purpose for humanity (I Timothy 1:10). The Bible instructs that it is a sin that leads to death. Moreover, this organization is instructed to love those living such lifestyles, while abhorring their sin. 1 Cor. 6:9 says the following: "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders." Members of the church are forbidden to practice such sin. Any member found to be in such sin and unrepentant may not hold leadership or a position of influence.

**Infallible Word of God** We believe that the Holy Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, were written by holy men inspired by the Holy Spirit and are God's revealed word to man. They are the sufficient, infallible rule and guide to salvation and all Christian worship and service (II Peter 1:20-21; II Timothy 3:15-17; I Thessalonians 2:13). The Bible is the inspired Word of God, equally in all parts and in the whole; it is totally inerrant in the original manuscripts. It is the supreme revelation from God and of God, superior to conscience and reason, though not contrary to them; and it is therefore our infallible rule in all manners. All the Scriptures center about the Lord Jesus Christ and hence, no portion is properly read nor understood until it leads to Him.

## **Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man**

Jesus was born miraculously of the Virgin Mary (Matthew 1: 23; Luke 1:31, 35). He lived a sinless life (Hebrews 7:26; I Peter 2:22).

He came into the world to save men from the guilt and condemnation of sin (John 3:16), offering His blood as atonement (I Corinthians 15:3; II Corinthians 5:21) and making it available to all who exercise faith in Him. He resurrected from the dead (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; I Corinthians 15:4). He is exalted to the right hand of God (Acts 1:9, 11; 2:33; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1-3). His divinity is proved from His titles, His attributes, and His works (John 1:14; Luke 1:26- 35; Acts 4:12; Acts 16:31). He is presently seated at the right hand of God the Father, interceding for His redeemed. We also acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord over all things in Heaven, and in Earth, and under the Earth (John 1:12-14; I Timothy 3:16; Acts 7:37-38; Philippians 2:9-10; Hebrews 7:25).

**Justification** Justification is the legal act whereby God declares the sinner to be innocent of his or her sins. It is not that the sinner is now sinless, but that he/she is "declared" sinless. This declaration of righteousness means the person is justified before God. This justification is based on the shed blood of Jesus, "...having now been justified by His blood..." (Rom. 5:9) where Jesus was crucified, died, buried, and rose again (1 Cor. 15:1-4). God imputed (reckoned to our account) the righteousness of Christ at the same time our sins were imputed to Christ when He was on the cross. That is why it says in 1 Pet. 2:24, "And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." Also, 2 Cor. 5:21 says, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Additionally, we are justified by faith (Rom. 5:1) apart from works of the Law (Rom. 3:28).

**Kingdom Citizenship** Sovereign God rules all creation, but He favors those that are in faith relationship with Him. He puts them in His kingdom by grace through faith (1 Chronicles 29:11; Psalms 2; Jeremiah 50:17-20; Daniel 4:17, 25, 32; Haggai 2:21-22; Luke 8:22-36). All believers are citizens of God's kingdom and commanded to be patriotic toward His Kingdom (Philippians 1:27; 3:20).

**Laying on of Hands** We adhere to a simple belief that power or anointing of any other necessary quality can be transmitted from one person touching another. The Levitical priesthood first practiced this (Numbers 8:10-11, 27:22-23). Jesus practiced it as a blessing, (Mark 10:13-16) and He, as well as others, used it for healing (Mark 5:22-23; 16:18; Acts 14:3; 19:11-12; 28:8; Luke 4:40), conferring office (Acts 8:16-18), receiving anointing (I Timothy 4:14) and for ordination (I Timothy 4:14).

We believe in the doctrine of the laying on of hands for:

1. The confirming of believers to commitment and ministry in the local church.

2. The confirming of one's call by God to special ministry in the local church (Acts 13:1- 3).
3. The imparting of spiritual gifts (I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:6).
4. The ministry of healing of the sick through the Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 16:16).
6. The blessing and dedicating of children to the Lord (Mark 10:16).

We further believe that, in obedience to the Holy Scriptures, we should lay hands on no man suddenly, but that the laying on of hands confirms a ministry, which is already observable and has been proven (I Timothy 5:22).

**Law and the Gospel** The Law is the do's and don'ts of moral behavior. God gave the Law so that people would have a guide to live by and a standard by which they might recognize God's purity and their sinfulness. There are 613 commandments in the Old Testament. They oversee moral, judicial, and religious behavior. The Law is a reflection of the character of God, because the Law comes forth from the very heart of God. Since it is not possible for us to keep the Law and therefore earn our position with God, we then need the holiness of God given to us ---- because there simply isn't any way for us to attain the standard of God. Therefore, "...The law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith," (Gal. 3:24). God's moral laws do not change.

**Liberty or Freedom** Liberty or freedom includes privacy and personal responsibility, and is the direct application of God's sovereignty and human volition. The Bible teaches both spiritual freedom and human freedom (John 8:31-36). God created man in His image and man therefore received moral freedom and volition, with the result that he was created to live in freedom—to live with free choice or freedom (Genesis 1:26-31). The exercise of freedom requires free people to grant freedom and privacy to others. Personal responsibility, therefore, goes hand in hand with freedom. Tyranny and slavery often occurred due to the sin nature of man, but God willed for human freedom to predominate. For example, when an Israelite was enslaved, "Every Israelite (man or woman) who had become a slave might not only be redeemed at any time by his relatives but, if this did not take place, was bound to receive his freedom without payment in the seventh year, with a present of cattle and fruits (Exodus 21:2; Deuteronomy 15:12-15). Indeed all slaves of Hebrew descent, with their children, obtained freedom without ransom in the Jubilee year (Leviticus 25:39-41)."

(The New Unger's Bible Dictionary, 1988. 444) The very fact of volition and authority argue for human freedom. The Law of Moses outlines human freedom for Israel, God's priest nation (Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 146:7; 119:45; Isaiah 61:1; 1 Peter 2:16).

**Marriage** God created marriage (Gen. 2:22). It is a covenant made between one man and one woman that makes them one (Gen 2:24). The marriage covenant requires the married parties to be faithful, loving, and helpful to each other as long as they both shall live (Mark 10:3-10). Christians should not to marry unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14-18). Those whom God has directed to be joined together shall, after counseling with the pastor concerning what God requires of them, be joined in Christian marriage (Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 5:32;

19:5-6,9; Romans 7:2-3; I Corinthians 7:10-11, 15; II Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:22-23).

This church observes the wedding ceremony as holy and unto God. It is a religious ceremony and cannot be conducted in this church without pastoral consideration. Any couple wishing to conduct their wedding ceremony in this church must first submit to pastoral counseling that is approved by this church. The couple must also live a lifestyle that is consistent with this church's doctrinal views.

**Ministry and Distribution** The Bible relates that covenant partners of the Levitical order were to be paid from the tithes and offerings presented (Numbers 18:21-24; Deuteronomy 12:19; 18:1-2) by the people to the men/women of God at the church. The church believes that the Word of God sets forth that the sacerdotal functions shall be eligible for receipt of the Levitical distribution from the church. The senior pastor with the counsel of the board of directors shall determine the amount of such distribution.

**Missions** Missions are the whole task, endeavor, and program of the Church of Jesus Christ to reach out across geographical and/or cultural boundaries by sending missionaries to evangelize people who have never heard or who have little opportunity to hear the saving gospel.

**Music** Music and song are a product of, reflection of, and appreciation of God's word, works, and person inside a believer. Biblical music honors God, teaches and recalls Bible doctrine, and encourages people. Biblical music expresses the thinking, free will, emotion, conscience, and self-consciousness, though it especially joins the learned doctrine in the soul and human spirit with the emotion of the soul and human spirit. In church assembly, the ministry of music prepares the congregation for the ministry of God's Word (Psalm 30:4, Psalm 57:9, Colossians 3:16, 1 Chronicles 15:16; 25:1, Exodus 15:1-18, 1 Samuel 16:23, Acts 16:25, James 5:13).

**Nationalism** God planned that people would live in groups called nations. These nations would have similar culture including language, geography, and heritage. Each of these national distinctions provides for a balance of power among nations and protects against a monolithic power over many groups. We can look at Genesis 10 and 11 for the beginnings of human government in the post-flood civilization (Genesis 10:32-11:9; Acts 17:26-27).

**New Covenant** This is the new covenant of the Messianic age where the law of God is written upon the hearts of men (Jer. 31:31,33); it was promised in Eden (Gen. 3:15); it was proclaimed to Abraham (Gen. 12:3), and it was fulfilled in Christ (Luke 1:68-79).

**New Heavens and New Earth** We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness" (II Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:22). We believe that the end of this age is rapidly approaching (I Peter 4:7). We believe in "That Blessed Hope" -the personal, imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:13-18). We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and of the

unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting punishment of the lost without Christ (Acts 24:15; Matthew 24:31-46; Revelation 22:11).

**One God** We believe that Scripture teaches there is one and only one true and living God, who is self-existent, and the eternal "I AM," the creator of heaven and earth, and the redeemer of mankind. We believe that He has chosen to reveal Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the same in essence, though distinct in personality (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10-11; Matthew 28:18-19; Luke 3:22). These three are one God, having the same nature, attributes, and perfection and are worthy of the same homage and obedience (Mark 12:29; John 1:14; Acts 5:3, 4; II Corinthians 13:14; Revelation 1:4-6). The mode of His existence, however, is a subject far above the understanding of man. He is the fountain of all perfection and happiness. He is glorified by the whole of creation and is worthy to be loved and served by all intelligence. He, therefore, is the only proper object of worship (Jeremiah 10:10; Exodus 3:14; Psalms 90:2; Matthew 28:19, 20; Job 11:7; Psalms 19:1, 2; 145:10; 150:6; Exodus 34:14).

### **Ordinances of the Gospel**

1. **Baptism in Water:** We believe water baptism is commanded of every believer, and a necessary requisite for going on to spiritual maturity. When done in faith, it is the means whereby those who have been justified by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ receive a circumcision of the heart, are made participants in the death and resurrection of Christ and thus are delivered from the dominion and rule of sin. The ordinance of baptism is a burial with Christ, to be observed, whenever physically possible as commanded in the Scriptures by all who have repented and truly believed in their heart on Christ as Savior and Lord. They declare to the world that they have died with Jesus and that they have also been raised with Him to walk in newness of life. It is the circumcision of the heart by faith and through the working of the Spirit of God. Water baptism is the taking on of a great responsibility, because in it a person makes an everlasting commitment to God (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 10:47-48; Colossians 2:11-12).

2. **The Lord's Supper:** The Lord's Supper is a memorial of the covenant made with God through the blood of Christ. It is a continuation of the Passover Feast, which God commanded His covenant people to observe. Those who have made covenant with God through the blood of Christ and have been water baptized are instructed to participate. The church participates in the Lord's Supper as a body or family, with each covenant partner in fellowship adding to the blessedness of the experience (Exodus 11, 12; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:19-20; I Corinthians 10:16; 11:23-26; John 6:48, 51, 53-57; I Corinthians 2:11-12).

**Ordination** The Bible relates that those who are chosen by God to a specific work should be recognized by appointment and ordination to the work (Mark 3:13-15; I Chronicles 9:22; II Chronicles 11:15; 23:18; I Corinthians 7:17; Titus 1:5; I Timothy 2:7). Thus are those to be set in order in their function as Levites for the ministry of the work and so those in the church might know and receive those who have a position in the work of the ministry.

**Prayer** Understanding and interacting with Scripture is only one half of connecting with God. The community at Benedict Community church understands that prayer is equally important. Without prayer, it is difficult to hear the Holy Spirit speak into our specific situations. Also, we learn from the Bible that prayer moves God. Benedict Community Church prays expectantly and confidently, knowing that our prayers will be answered.

**Primitive Man and His Fall** Our first parents, in their original state, naturally preferred and desired to obey their creator. They had no preference or desire to transgress His will until they were influenced and inclined by Satan to disobey God's commands. Previous to this, the only tendency of their nature was to do righteousness. In consequence of their first transgression, the posterity of Adam comes into the world not willing to obey God but are inclined to do evil. Therefore, no one, by virtue of any natural goodness and mere work of their own, can become the children of God (Genesis 1:26-31; 3: 1-7; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Psalms 51:5; John 6: 44; Romans 5:12-21; I Corinthians 2:14).

**Promise of the Father** All believers are entitled to, and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the Promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience in the early Christian church. With it came the endowment of power for life and service, and the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5; I Corinthians 12:1-31). This wonderful experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 2:38; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-8).

**Repentance** Repentance means to decide to turn from one's sin; it is not a condition of salvation; faith in Christ as Savior is the only condition for salvation (John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8-9).

**Responsibility of the Believer** We believe that it is essential that each believer lay a foundation of Biblical truth and experience upon which he/she builds his/her life. These foundation stones are: repentance from dead works, faith toward God, doctrine of baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment, all of which are prerequisites to going on to perfection (spiritual maturity) (Hebrews 6:1-2).

We believe each Christian is called and chosen in God to be a priest unto God to offer up the sacrifice of praise (the fruit of the lips), to give of their time, strength, and material possessions to the service of the Lord. All believers have been purchased with the blood of Jesus Christ and are no longer their own, but belong to the Father to be used for His glory; and as possessions of the Lord, must give themselves to serving Him, finding their place in the church, His body, and making themselves available by being present when the church comes together, that they might be able to minister their gifts and talents for the building up of the Body of Christ (John 15:16; Ephesians 1:4-5; I Corinthians 6:20; 12:18; Hebrews 13:15; I Peter 2:5,9). We believe that the whole purpose of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Therefore, we believe in the act of praising and worshiping God with one's total being as set forth in the Holy Scriptures. We also believe that praising God is a form of spiritual warfare (Psalms 149; 150; Mark 12:29-31; Ephesians 5:18-21).

**Salvation of Man** Man's only hope of redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the only Son of God. Salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, being justified by grace through faith, man becomes an heir of God according to the hope of eternal life. The inward evidence of salvation is direct witness of the Spirit and the outward evidence to all men of a life of righteousness and true holiness (Luke 24:47; John 3:3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7; Romans 8:16; Ephesians 4:24; Titus 2:12). Salvation is an inclusive word, which gathers into itself all the redemptive acts and processes, i.e., justification, redemption, deliverance, imputation, sanctification, glorification, etc. The Hebrew and Greek words for salvation imply the ideas of deliverance, safety, preservation, healing, and soundness. Salvation is by grace through faith, is a free gift, and wholly without human works (Romans 3:27-28, 4:1-8, 6:23, Ephesians 2:8). Salvation is in these three tenses:

1. Condition of Salvation - The grace of God, which brings salvation, hath appeared to all men, through the preaching of repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ; man is saved by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, and, being justified by grace through faith, he becomes an heir of God according to the hope of eternal life (Romans 10:13-15; Luke 24:47; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7; Ephesians 2:8-9).
2. Evidence of Salvation - The inward evidence to the believer, of his salvation, is the direct witness of the Spirit (Romans 8:16). The outward evidence to all men is a life of unconditional love, righteousness, and true holiness, demonstrated by the fruit of the Spirit (John 13:35; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 4:24).
3. Final Result of Salvation - The spirit of the believer who dies in Christ immediately goes to be with the Lord (Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 23:42-43; II Corinthians 5:8).

**Sanctification** Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we become partakers of His holiness; that it is begun at regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the continual use of the appointed means, especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer (I Thessalonians 4:3; I John 2:29; Romans 8:5; Philippians 2:12-13). Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and a dedication unto God (Romans 12:1-2; I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:12). The Scriptures teach a life of "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). By the power of the Holy Ghost we are able to obey the command: "Be ye Holy, for I am Holy" (I Peter 1:15, 16). Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing his identification with Christ in His death and resurrection and by faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6: 1-11, 13; 8: 1-2, 13; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 12:12-13; I Peter 15).

**Scientific Accuracies in the Bible** Science is merely that branch of discovery that categorizes, discovers, and utilizes the knowledge woven into the fabric of the universe by a Sovereign, All Powerful, and Omniscient Creator. Science is not the end of all things, but merely one of the means by which man may glorify God. This is because God is the creator

of all that is. He has hidden the treasures of his glory in the very universe in which we exist. The power in the atom, momentum, energy, mass, time, etc. are all creations of God and, therefore, under his authority. The more the Christian learns of these things, the more he can glorify God. Science must be subservient to Him, not the other way around. Science is not God's replacement. This is not to say that the Bible is vindicated by science; rather, it is science that is vindicated by the Bible (Genesis 7:11, 15:5, , 8:22, 28; Isaiah 40:22; Job 26:7-8; 2 Samuel 22:16; Psalm 8:1,3,6,8, 102:25--26; Ecclesiastes 1:6--7).

**Service** We believe the Holy Spirit empowers every believer to discover and use the spiritual gifts God has given them (1 Corinthians 12, Colossians 3:17-23). We commit to serve God, the church body, and our world in love (Galatians 5:13b, 1 Peter 4:10).

**Smoking** The Bible commands us not to allow our bodies to become "mastered" by anything. Smoking is undeniably strongly addictive. Scripture teaches us to care for our bodies, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body". Smoking is undoubtedly very bad for your health. Smoking has been proven to damage the lungs and the heart (1 Corinthians 6:12, 6:19-20).

**Spirituality** The ministry of the Holy Spirit emphasizes function in our lives. One needs the Holy Spirit to live correctly. A believer is either spiritual or carnal. Personal sin takes one out of spirituality and into carnality. Confession of sin changes one from living by the flesh and puts one into living by the Holy Spirit. We continue on living by the Holy Spirit by faith. Spirituality is attained through a believer's walk with the Spirit, by not grieving the Spirit, and by quenching not the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19; Ephesians 4:30; Galatians 5:16-6:1, 1 John 1).

**Spiritual Growth** Spiritual growth refers to the progressive advancement in the biblical faith. This depends on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, fellowship, learning God's Word, faith, testing, and application (Ephesians 4:12, 14, 15; 2 Peter 3:14-18, 1 Peter 2.2, Hebrews 5:11-6:6).

**The Church & The Body of Christ** The Church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her great commission. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the general church, which is written in heaven (Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:22, Hebrews 12:23).

**The Church and the Ministry** We believe that all who are united by the new birth to Jesus Christ are covenant partners of the Universal Church, the Body of Christ. We also believe that the local congregation of Christian believers is divinely instituted and is the chosen instrument of God for the furtherance of God's work here on Earth. While appreciating the work of para church groups, we believe that the local church is God's chosen vehicle for world evangelization and the nurture of Christians. We further believe in the spiritual unity of all believers and in working together with others who believe in salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ for the causes of evangelism, missions, and benevolence (Matthew 16:16-18; John 17:21; Ephesians 1:20-23; 4:3-10; Colossians 3:14-15). The

church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her great commission and purpose. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the Church of the Firstborn, whose name is written in heaven in the Lamb's Book of Life. As such, the Bible reveals that we are covenant partners of one another and the basis of our fellowship is in Christ in the power of the Spirit (Ephesians 1:22; 2:19-22; Hebrews 12:23). A divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for the three-fold purpose of leading the church in: (1) Evangelization of the world, (2) Worship of God, and (3) Building a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (I Chronicles 16:29; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 14:23; John 4:23-24; Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 1:28).

**The Holy Spirit** The Scriptures ascribe to the Holy Spirit the acts and attributes of an intelligent being. He guides, knows, moves, gives information, commands, forbids, sends forth, reproveth, as the instrumental segment of the God Head in the liberal dispersion of spiritual gifts, and can be sinned against (John 16:13; I Corinthians 2:11; Genesis 1:2; Acts 10:19; 13:2; 16:6; 13:4; John 16:8; Mark 3:29; Acts 7:51; Ephesians 4:30; I Corinthians 12). The works of God are ascribed to the Holy Spirit; creation; inspiration, giving of life, and sanctification (Job 33:4; II Peter 1:21; I Peter 3:18; I Corinthians 6:11).

**Tithing, Offerings, and Alms** Both the Old and New Testament Scriptures teach tithing as God's financial plan for the support of His work. These are to be practiced continually by all believers and are outward expressions of the unity of the church, the Body of Christ, as it joins together in support of the work of the Lord (Malachi 3:8-10; I Corinthians 16:2; Genesis 28:22; Matthew 23:23; Deuteronomy 26; 14:28-29; 15:7-11; Numbers 18:8-11; Ezekiel 44; Proverbs 14:21; 29:7; Luke 11:41; 12:33).

### **Total Prosperity of God**

We believe that the gospel of the kingdom is God's absolute answer to man's total need and total prosperity NOW:

1. **Spiritually:** John 3:3, 11; II Corinthians 5:17-21; Romans 10:9-10
2. **Mentally:** II Timothy 1:7; Romans 12:2; Isaiah 26:3
3. **Physically:** Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 8:17; I Peter 2:24
4. **Financially:** 3 John 2; Malachi 3:10-11; Luke 6:38; II Corinthians 9:6-10; Deuteronomy 28:1-14
5. **Socially:** Proverbs 3:4; I Samuel 2:26; Romans 14:18; II Corinthians 8:21

**Volition:** God gave mankind volition, the right and ability to make choices, good and bad (Genesis 2:16-17; Isaiah 1:16-20; Luke 6:27; John 17:17; Acts 17:27, 30)

Signed and certified, to be effective immediately.

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Pastor/President of Benedict Community Church

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Secretary of Benedict Community Church

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Treasurer of Benedict Community Church