

## ARTICLE III ARTICLES OF FAITH

Members of Sumter Bible Church subscribe to the following Articles of Faith:

**1. THE SCRIPTURES:** We believe that the Old and New Testaments are verbally inspired by God, that they are inerrant in the original manuscripts, and that they are the final authority for faith and practice. We believe that a natural interpretation of their contents reveals several dispensations which, if disregarded, lead to much confusion and error. We reject the claim that any other than the sixty-six canonical books are inspired or that some translations of the original texts are inspired. I Thessalonians 2:13; I Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:20,21; Matthew 5:18; Galatians 3:13-25; Ephesians 3:2-10; Revelation 22:18,19.

**2. THE GODHEAD:** We believe that the Godhead exists eternally in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), and that these three are one God having precisely the same nature and attributes. Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 3:16,17; II Corinthians 13:14.

**Father:** We believe that God the Father is a spirit, possessing unchanging attributes and a definite nature. He is eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. His nature is holy, just, merciful, and loving. While His holiness and justice demand a penalty for sin. His mercy and love sent the Savior to pay the price of that sin. John 4:24; Deuteronomy 4:35; Psalm 90:2; Genesis 17:1; Psalm. 139:7-10; 147:5; Isaiah 6:3; Deuteronomy 32:4; 1 John 4:8.

**Son:** We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ exists eternally. We believe in His incarnation by means of the Virgin Birth: His sinless life, His death on the Cross as a substitutionary atonement for sin: His literal bodily resurrection from the dead: His present ministry of intercession in Heaven; and His personal return to earth. John 1:1,2,14; Hebrews 1:8; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18,23; Hebrews 4:15; Romans 5:8; Hebrews 9:26; I Corinthians 15:4-8; Matthew 28:6; Hebrews 7:24,25; Romans 8:34; Matthew 24:30,31; Acts 15:13-18.

**Holy Spirit:** We believe that the Holy Spirit convicts men of sin, regenerates, baptizes at salvation, indwells, seals, and sets believers apart unto a holy life, empowers them for service, and leads them into all truth. We believe that speaking in tongues and the other sign miracles ceased with the canonization of the Scriptures and the deaths of the Apostles. John 16:8; Titus 3:5; I Corinthians 12:12-14, 3:16; Ephesians 1: 13,14; Romans 8:14; John 14:26; I Corinthians 13:8.

**3. MAN:** We believe that man was created innocent and pure by a direct act of God: that Adam fell through the sin of disobedience: that all men are thereby corrupted in body, mind and spirit: that all are in need of redemption: and that all are utterly incapable of remedying their lost condition. Genesis 1:26,27; Romans 5:19, 3:2; John 3:3; Ephesians 2:1,12.

**4. SALVATION:** We believe that salvation is by grace, a free gift of God apart from works, based on Christ's shed blood and appropriated by personal faith in Him; that all who receive Him are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become children of God; that all who are truly saved will be kept forever; and that nonetheless God cannot condone sin in His children and will therefore chasten them in love in order to correct and purify them. We reject the doctrines of limited atonement and predestination to salvation or to damnation. We also reject the notion that it is possible to live sinlessly in the earthly body. Ephesians 2:8,9; Hebrews 11:6; John 1:12; Romans 8:35-39; Hebrews 12:5,6; I John 1:7-9.

**5. THE CHURCH:** We believe that the Church, in its invisible form, is the true Body and Bride of Christ, and that all who are born again are members, regardless of organizational affiliation. We believe that, in its visible form, the Church is composed of those who organize or associate themselves according to God's Word for the purpose of worship, edification, and service. We believe that the members individually and the visible Church corporately have been commissioned by Christ to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world. I Corinthians 12:13; I Thessalonians 1:6-9; Acts 1:8.

We believe that the local Church is to observe two ordinances:

**The Lord's Supper:** The Lord's Supper shall be observed by the Church regularly as the official Board shall decide. The Lord's Supper shall be open to all true believers and shall be preceded always by solemn self-examination. I Corinthians 11:20-34.

**Believer's Baptism:** The Church observes the ordinance of baptism by immersion for believers in obedience to the command and example of our Lord and the Apostles. Though Baptism has no saving merit, it does identify the believer in death, burial, and resurrection with the Lord Jesus, and it does picture to the Church and to the world that the believer takes a stand of total identification with Christ. Matthew 3:13; 28:19; Romans 6:1-10.

**6. THE ANGELS:** We believe that God created a great host of holy, angelic beings who minister to believers continuously; that a host of these, led by Lucifer, fell into sin; that Satan (Lucifer) is a personal being, that he is the wicked one who represents and perpetrates all that is opposed to God; that he is the archenemy of the believer; that he blinds the minds of unbelievers; and that his power is limited. Psalm 148:2-5; Matthew 25:41; II Corinthians 4:4; I John 4:4; Hebrews 1:14.

**7. THE FUTURE:** We believe that Jesus Christ will come in the air, for the saints, to gather them unto Himself at the Rapture, before the Tribulation, and that He will come to the earth, with His saints, to establish His Messianic kingdom at the Second Advent, after the Tribulation, to reign over the earth for one thousand years. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just to eternal felicity in the glory of His presence, and the bodily resurrection of the unjust to everlasting, conscious punishment in Hell. We reject the false teaching of "soul-sleep." We believe in the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ with all the saints of all the ages in the New Jerusalem for all eternity. John 14:3; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 6:2; John 5:24, 29; Revelation 20:15; II Corinthians 5:8; Revelation 21:1-22:5.

\* **8. MARRIAGE:** We believe that God instituted the bond of marriage between a man and a woman and that "Marriage is honourable" (Hebrews 13:4). We believe that any sexual activity outside the Biblical definition of heterosexual marriage is contrary to the teaching of Scripture. We believe that God's Word supersedes any laws made by man regarding the definition of marriage. Therefore, we reserve the right to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in accepting, retaining, or dismissing members, staff, volunteers, etc. Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1:26-28; I Corinthians 7:2; Ephesian 5:31.