

# SESSION ONE

## Our Salvation

“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

Most people live their lives without ever knowing “WHY?” They exist year after year with no idea of why they live or God’s purpose for their lives. The most basic question a person can ask is, “What is the meaning of my life?”

Everyone wants to be happy. People try many ways:

- Some look for happiness by acquiring possessions.
- Some look for happiness by experiencing pleasure.
- Some look for happiness by gaining prestige and power.

But real happiness comes from understanding my...purpose.

### I. WHY AM I HERE?

#### A. God made me to love me!

God says, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love...” Jeremiah 31:3

“He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will...” Ephesians 1:4,5

#### B. We were created to have a personal relationship with God and to manage all of the rest of God’s creation! This makes us special!

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” Genesis 1:27,28

**C. WHEN WE KNOW AND LOVE GOD AND LIVE IN HARMONY WITH HIS PURPOSE FOR OUR LIVES, IT PRODUCES TREMENDOUS BENEFITS IN OUR LIFE:**

**Clear Conscience**

Romans 8:1

**Purpose**

Romans 8:28

**Power & Strength**

Philippians 4:13

**Life & Peace**

Romans 8:6

**Confidence**

Romans 8:31

**Fulfillment**

Philippians 4:19

**Help with Weakness**

Romans 8:26

**Security**

Romans 8:39

**Freedom**

John 3:32,36

This is the kind of lifestyle God intends for us to live. Why then aren't people really happy?

**II. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM**

Man has a natural desire to be self centered and to ignore God's principles for living.

\* "Look out for #1. Do your own thing."

\* "If it feels good, do it—regardless of what God says about it."

\* "It's my life and I'll do what I please!"

**THE BIBLE CALLS THIS ATTITUDE: SIN.**

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:6

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 Jn 1:8

**Sin breaks our close relationship with God, causes us to fear God and to try to live our lives outside of His will.**

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God..." Romans 3:23

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God..." Romans 3:23

**When our relationship to God is not right, it causes Problems in every area of our lives—marriage, career, relationships, finances, etc.**

**WHEN PEOPLE HAVE PROBLEMS, THEY OFTEN TRY MANY DIFFERENT WAYS OF COPING BEFORE TURNING TO GOD.**

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Proverbs 16:25

**Even when we know that our deepest need is God; we often try wrong ways of getting to know Him:**

- “My mother was a Christian, so...”
- “It doesn’t matter what you believe, just be sincere.”
- “I’ll give up all my bad habits.”
- “I’ll work real hard and earn it.”
- “I’ll be religious and go to church.”

### **III. WHAT’S THE SOLUTION?**

Jesus Christ said, “...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” John 14:6

God Himself came to earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself. If any other way would have worked, Jesus Christ would not have had to come. The Way is a PERSON!

**JESUS HAS ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF YOUR SIN PROBLEM!**

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23

**God did this for us because He loves us and wants us to know Him.**

“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,” 1 Timothy 2:5

God has already done His part to restore our relationship to Him. He took the initiative. Now He waits for each of us to individually accept what He has done for us.

### **IV. WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?**

**A. ADMIT THAT GOD HAS NOT BEEN FIRST PLACE IN YOUR LIFE AND ASK HIM TO FORGIVE YOUR SINS.**

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” I John 1:9

**B. BELIEVE THAT JESUS DIED TO PAY FOR YOUR SINS AND THAT HE ROSE AGAIN, AND IS ALIVE TODAY.**

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Romans 10:9

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

**C. ACCEPT GOD’S FREE GIFT OF SALVATION. DON’T TRY TO EARN IT.**

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:8,9

**Our relationship to God is not restored by anything we do, but on the basis of what Jesus has already done for us!**

**D. ASK JESUS CHRIST TO COME INTO YOUR LIFE AND BE THE LORD (DIRECTOR) OF YOUR LIFE.**

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1:12,13

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in...” Revelation 3:20

**YOU CAN TAKE THESE STEPS BY PRAYING A SIMPLE PRAYER OF COMMITMENT TO GOD LIKE THIS:**

“Dear Jesus, thank you for making me and loving me, even when I’ve ignored you and gone my own way. I realize I need you in my life and I’m sorry for my sins and I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please help me to understand it more. The very best I know how, I accept you as my Saviour and Lord and want to follow you from now on. Please come into my life and make me a new person. I accept your gift of salvation and thank you for saving me. In Jesus Name. Amen.

*“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* Romans 10:13

**Note 1: Please do not confuse this statement with what some call “Lordship Salvation,” which we believe to be unbiblical.**

**V. WHAT DO I DO NEXT ?**

As evidence of giving Jesus control of your life, you will want to identify with Him. The New Testament way of identification is to confess Jesus publicly and to follow Him in baptism and church membership.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC CONFESSION**

**1. Public confession means to openly declare your faith and be identified as a follower of Jesus Christ.**

Jesus said, “Whosoever therefore shall **confess me before men**, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 10:32,33

**2. Public confession is not always easy, but it is necessary.**

“That if thou shalt **confess with thy mouth** the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Romans 10:9

**3. Public confession means to stop identifying the world and start identifying with Christ.**

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” II Corinthians 5:17

## **FIRST SYMBOL OF SALVATION—BAPTISM**

### **I. WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?**

**A. To follow the example set by Christ.**

“And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.” Mark 1:9

**B. Because Christ commands it.**

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:19,20

**C. It demonstrates that I really am a believer.**

“...many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.” Acts 18:8

“We do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.” I John 2:3

## II. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

### A. It illustrates Christ's burial and resurrection.

“...Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present...” I Corinthians 15:3-6

“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” Colossians 2:12

### B. It illustrates my new life as a Christian.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” II Corinthians 5:17

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:4

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 the commitment you made in your heart.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:8,9

## III. WHY BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?

### A. Because Christ was baptized that way.

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water.” Matthew 3:16

### B. Every baptism in the New Testament was by immersion.

(Example) “...they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.” Acts 8:38.

**C. The word “baptize” means “to dip under water.”**

The Greek word *baptizo* means “to immerse or dip under water.”

**D. It best symbolizes a burial and resurrection! The founders of denominations agree:**

**Martin Luther...**“I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed, as the word imports and the mystery signifies.”

**John Calvin...**“The word ‘baptize’ signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church.”

**John Wesley...**“Buried with Him, alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church.”

**IV. WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?**

**Every person who has believed in Christ.**

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized:” Acts 2:41

“...When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized...” Acts 8:12,13

Some churches practice a “baptism of confirmation” for children. This ceremony is intended to be a covenant between the parents and God on the behalf of the child. The parents promise to raise their child in the faith until the child is old enough to make his own personal confession of Christ. **We do not practice this.**

This “baptism of confirmation” is different from the baptism talked about in the Bible, which was only for those old enough to believe. The purpose is to publicly confess your personal commitment to Christ. **At Mt. Pleasant, it is a membership requirement that every member must have been baptized the way Jesus demonstrated.**

## **V. WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?**

### **AS SOON AS YOU HAVE BELIEVED!**

(Acts 2:41) “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

(Acts 8:35-38) “Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. If you wait until you are “perfect,” you’ll never feel “good enough!” Our baptismal service is scheduled as needed at different times.

#### **Can my family be baptized together?**

Yes! If each family member understands fully the meaning of baptism, and each one has personally placed his/her trust in Christ for salvation, we encourage families to be baptized at the same time. It is a wonderful expression of commitment.

**However**, it is important to remember that baptism is a personal statement of faith, not a family tradition. It is usually not wise to delay your baptism while waiting on other family members to accept Christ, particularly children. This puts an undue pressure on them and delays your obedience.

#### **What should I wear when I am baptized?**

We provide baptismal robes for you to wear and we provide towels. If you choose to wear your own clothes please feel free to do so. Men as well as women should be modestly dressed. We do ask that you not wear white. Bring a change of clothes, hair dyer, and a plastic bag for your wet clothes. We provide changing rooms. Members of our baptismal committee will be present to assist you.

#### **Will I have to say anything?**

No. At the beginning of the service, our pastor will briefly explain the meaning of baptism to candidates. You will wait at the edge of the pool for your turn to be baptized. Our pastor will introduce you, briefly lower you just under the water, and then you can leave the pool, dry off, and watch the others. We encourage you to invite all your relatives and friends to attend your baptism.

## **Will I meet with the pastor before my baptism?**

Yes. Our baptismal committee will meet with you about scheduling your baptism. The pastor will meet with you immediately prior to your baptism for prayer and will brief you on all that will take place during the baptism.

### **SECOND SYMBOL OF SALVATION—COMMUNION** **(The Meaning of the Lord's Supper.)**

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth. But He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the church two visible symbols (called "ordinances") as reminders of His death. These two ordinances are: baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is an object lesson that represents a great spiritual truth for believers.

#### **I. What is the Lord's Supper? (1 Cor. 11:23-26)**

##### **A. It is a simple act.**

(1Cor. 11:23) "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed **took bread:**"

##### **B. It is a reminder.**

"And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do **in remembrance** of me." 1 Cor. 11:24

##### **C. It is a symbol.**

("After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, **This cup** is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." 1 Cor. 11:25

##### **D. It is a statement of faith.**

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, **ye do show (proclaim) the Lord's death** till he come." 1 Cor. 11:26

#### **II. WHO SHOULD TAKE THE LORD'S SUPPER?**

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

"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily (irreverently), eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." 1 Cor. 11:29

### **III. HOW DO I PREPARE MYSELF FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER?**

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”  
1 Corinthians 11:28

#### **You prepare yourself by...**

1. Self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28)
2. Confessing my sins  
“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9
3. Recommitment  
“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Romans 12:1
4. Restoring Relationships  
“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”

### **IV. WHEN AND HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER?**

Jesus never said when or how often believers should observe the Lord's Supper. He instituted it on a Thursday night. We normally observe the Lord's Supper once each quarter. If the Lord's Supper becomes just a ritual or a pious habit, it no longer remembers Christ and loses its significance.

# SESSION TWO

## OUR STATEMENTS

*“Now I beseech you, brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”*

1 Corinthians 1:10

### I. OUR STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (Why We Exist As a Church)

The purpose of our church is summarized in a single sentence based on two key Scriptures:

“WE BELIEVE A GREAT COMMITMENT

TO THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

WILL GROW A GREAT CHURCH!”

**The Great Commandment:** “...Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Matthew 22:37-40.

**The Great Commission:** “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:19,20.

#### 5 purposes of the church...

1. To love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, & mind is Worship.
2. To love your neighbor as yourself is Ministry.
3. To go and make disciples is Evangelism.
4. To baptize them is Fellowship.
5. To teach them to obey everything is Discipleship.

## MT. PLEASANT BAPTIST CHURCH EXISTS TO:

1. **Celebrate God's presence (Worship).**
2. **Communicate God's Word (Evangelism).**
3. **Educate God's People (Discipleship).**
4. **Demonstrate God's Love (Ministry).**
5. **Incorporate God's Family (Fellowship).**

### I. WE EXIST TO CELEBRATE GOD'S PRESENCE THROUGH WORSHIP.

"...Worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Matthew 4:10

"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:23,24

#### Expressions of Worship

- **Singing (Ephesians 5:19)**
- **Commitment (Romans 12:1,2)**
- **Praying (Psalm 95:6)**
- **Hearing the Word (John 17:17)**
- **Giving (I Corinthians 16:1,2)**
- **Baptism (Romans 6:3,4)**
- **Meditating (Habakkuk 2:20)**
- **Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:23-26)**

### II. WE EXIST TO COMMUNICATE GOD'S WORD THROUGH EVANGELISM.

"To the (His) intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Ephesians 3:10

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" Romans 10:13,14

## **Why Our Church Must Never Stop Growing:**

### **1. Because God Loves People**

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9

2 Cor. 5:14, Luke 15:3-10, Matt. 9:12-13

### **2. Because God Commands It**

“And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.” Luke 14:23

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:8

### **3. Because It's God's Will**

“And not holding the Head, from which all the body joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” Col. 2:19

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Matt. 16:18

## **Unbiblical excuses for not growing:**

- **“God isn't interested in numbers.”**
- **“Our church wants quality, not quantity.”**
- **“Large churches are impersonal.”**

### **We believe our church must grow larger and smaller at the same time!**

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Matthew 24:14

### **III. WE EXIST TO EDUCATE GOD'S PEOPLE THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP.**

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,” Hebrews 6:1

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.” 2 Peter 3:18

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelist; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:” Ephesians 4:11-13

### **IV. WE EXIST TO DEMONSTRATE GOD'S LOVE THROUGH MINISTRY.**

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” John 13:35

1 John 3:16-17, Matt. 25:34-40, Heb. 13:16, Rom. 12:13

The heartbeat of Mt. Pleasant is our ministry. Every member needs to be a part of one.

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” 1 Cor. 12:4,5,27

**At Mt. Pleasant...**

**Every member is involved in: Ministry.**

**Every task is: Important.**

**Every member is a “10”: In Some Area.**

### **V. WE EXIST TO INCORPORATE PERSONS INTO GOD'S FAMILY THROUGH FELLOWSHIP.**

As Christians, we're called to belong, not just to believe. We are not meant to live lone ranger lives; instead, we are to belong to Christ's family and be members of His body. When new believers are baptized, we welcome them into the fellowship of the family of God. We are not alone. We have each other for support and accountability.

“...ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” Ephesians 2:19

## **II. OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH** (What we believe)

### **In essential beliefs—we have Unity.**

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Ephesians 4:4-6

### **In non-essential beliefs—we have Liberty.**

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.”  
“Who art thou that judges another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.” “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.” Romans 14:1,4,12,22

### **In all our beliefs—we show Charity.**

“And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.” 1Corinthians 13:2

## **THE ESSENTIALS WE BELIEVE**

### **1. About God**

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three personalities: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.

Genesis 1:1, 26, 27, 3:22; Psalms 90:2; Matthew 28:19, 1Peter 1:2; II Corinthians 13:14

### **2. About Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Born of a virgin! Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven’s glory and will return again someday to earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Matthew 1:22, 23; Isaiah 9-6; John 1:1-5, 14: 10-30; Hebrews 4:14,15; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; Romans 1:3, 4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14,15; Titus 2:13

### **3. About the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives every believer a spiritual gift when they are saved. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily.

2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13, 14:16,17; Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:18

### **4. About the Bible**

The Bible is God's Word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is truth without any mixture of error.

2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Timothy 1:13; Psalms 119:105, 160; 12:6; Proverbs 30:5

### **5. About Human Beings**

People are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. People are the supreme object of God's creation. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "sin." This attitude separates people from God and causes many problems in life.

Genesis 1:27; Psalms 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1,2

### **6. About Salvation**

Salvation is God's free gift to us, but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith we are saved. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith.

Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8,9; John 14:6 1:12; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:1

### **7. About Eternal Security**

Because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, the true believer is secure in that salvation for eternity. If you have been genuinely saved, you cannot "lose" it. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and keeping power of God that gives us this security.

John 10:29; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25; 10:10,14; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 2 Timothy 2:13; John 1:12; John 3:3

## **8. About Eternity**

People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin in Hell, or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation in Heaven. Both Hell and Heaven are real places of eternal existence.

John 3:16; John 2:25; John 5:11-13; Romans 6:23; Revelation 20:15; Matthew 1:8; Matthew 2:44,46

## **III. OUR STATEMENT OF LIFESTYLE (What we practice)**

Beliefs are not worth much unless they are translated into actions. Based on What the Bible teaches, we feel very strongly about the following seven practices”

### **A. Bible as our Sole authority.**

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of god may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Timothy 3:16,17.

Since God’s Word is the only completely reliable and truthful authority, we accept the Bible as our manual for living. Our first question when faced with a decision is, “What does the Bible say?” We practice daily Bible reading, Bible study, and Bible memorization. The Bible is the basis for all we believe.

### **B. Autonomy of each local church.**

“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.” Colossians 1:18

Christ is the recognized head of our church, not any person, group, or religious organization. While recognizing the value of associating and cooperating with other groups from any denominational control. We choose to cooperate with other Southern Baptist causes and churches in the Carrollton Association, Georgia Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention as it relates to our overall purpose as a church.

### **C. Priesthood of every believer.**

“And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father...” Rev. 1:6  
“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:” 1 Peter 2:9

The Bible teaches that every Christian is called to “full-time” Christian service, regardless of his or her vocation. We practice the truth that every believer is a minister by encouraging every member to find a place of service and ministry. Every believer has direct access to God through prayer and Bible reading.

#### **D. Tithing to the church.**

“And all the tithes of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD’S: it is holy unto the LORD.” Lev 27:30

The fundamental principle of tithe (ma`aser, Heb.), the practice of dedicating to God a tenth of the increase of the produce of the ground or cattle, was the recognition on the part of the people that all their possessions actually belonged to the Lord. This acknowledgment of God’s ownership was accomplished through the tithe in that the surrender of the tenth, like the first fruits, symbolized the consecration of the whole.

At Mt. Pleasant we encourage tithing for the support of Christ’s Body, the church, as God commands. We recognize that giving 10% of our income is the biblical standard of giving that we should be attaining or striving, in God’s power to attain.

#### **E. Baptism by Immersion**

“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” Colossians 2:12

We practice baptism by immersion under water—the way Jesus was baptized, and the way the Bible commands.

#### **F. Spirit-led Living**

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” John 15:5

We believe the only way possible to live the Christian life is by God’s Power within us. So we seek to practice a daily dependence on God’s Spirit to enable us to do what is right. Phil. 2:13, Eph. 5:18

#### **G. Telling others about Christ**

“That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.” Philemon 1:6

# SESSION THREE

## OUR STRATEGY

It is the responsibility of every Christian to share the Good News with those God brings us into contact with. We practice personal sharing about Christ and inviting friends to church.

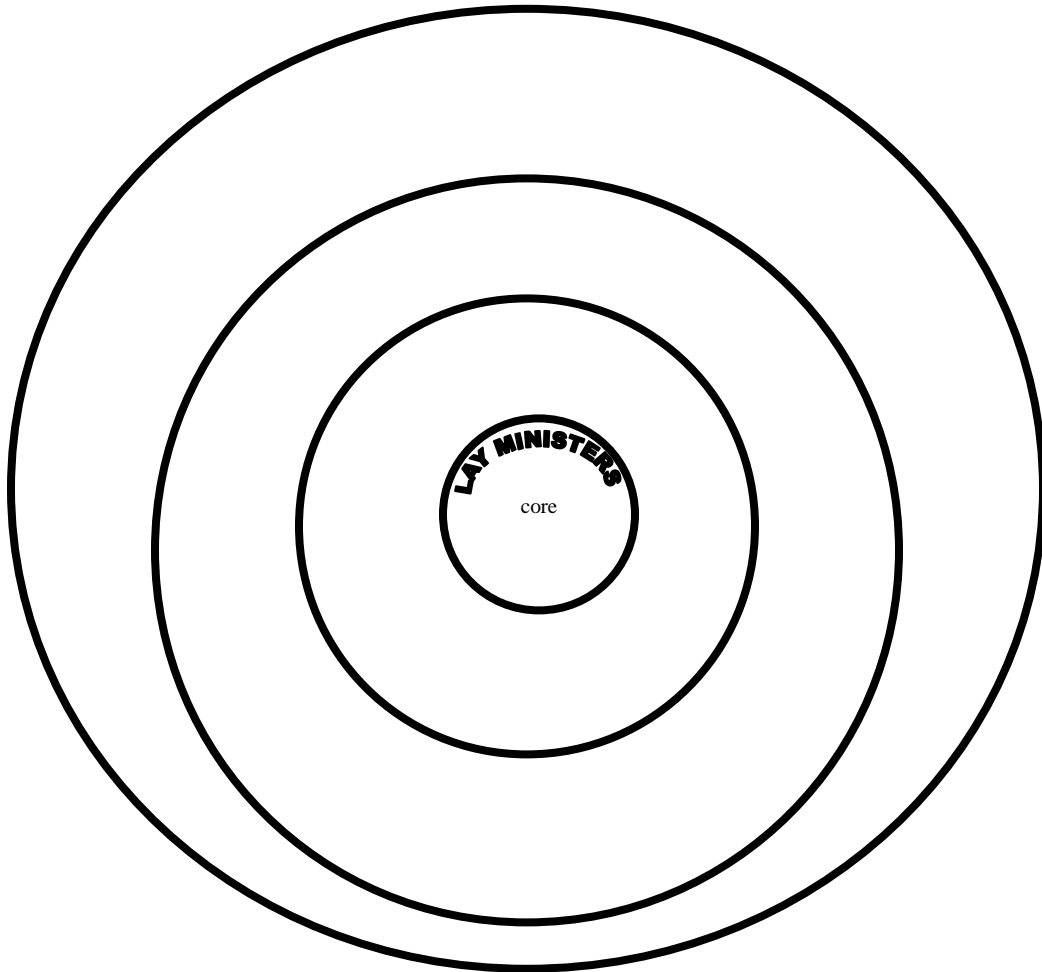
### **THE STORY OF MT. PLEASANT'S BEGINNING**

On October 3, 1874, W.S. Twedell and W.W. Roop met by request with the church at Mt. Pleasant in Carroll County and after religious services proceeded to examine the church's membership regarding the principles of faith and practice as held and maintained by the Missionary Baptist Church and found the same Orthodox and proceeded to constitute and organize the membership into a Missionary Baptist Church known as Mt. Pleasant Church. The Church was called to order for the purpose of electing Deacons: D.W. Brown and J.S. Morris. Also, the Church called J.M.D. Stallings as Pastor by regular vote who accepted the Church and served thru October 12, 1878.

The following is just a few of the major developments of Mt. Pleasant. The first building was completed in 1874 and in 1900 the Church voted to build a new building costing \$100.25. On January 24, 1942, the Church voted that five lights be installed inside and one on the front and back. The light bill was \$1.00 per month. On July 21, 1945, the Church organized a Sunday School with I.V. Phillips as Superintendent and R.A. Godbee as Secretary and Treasurer. On February, 26, 1950, the Church voted to build a new church building and the old building be torn down and "each piece be stacked straight." On June 23, 1951, the Church bought a new piano. In 1962 the Church extended the auditorium ten feet and added a vestibule. On September 1, the Church voted to go full time. In 1975, the Church added a Fellowship Building with also provided additional Sunday School rooms. In 1990 the Church built another Fellowship Building which also provides for three classrooms. Then, in 1999 we built a new Worship Center with educational space and a basement with an office complex, Sunday School Class rooms and large Fellowship Hall.

As we move forward in the New Millennium, we are making plans, as our Lord tarries, to be ready to meet the challenges of this rapidly growing area and reach our Jerusalem, and the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

## FIVE CIRCLES OF COMMITMENT



Mt. Pleasant's objective is to keep moving people toward the center by encouraging Personal spiritual commitments. Specifically, we call people to four basic covenants.

## **THE FOUR COVENANTS**

### **1. The Membership Covenant...**

**is a commitment to Christ and Mt. Pleasant.**

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;” Ephesians 2:19

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of another.” Romans 12:4,5.

### **2. The Maturity Covenant...**

**is a commitment to the habits necessary for spiritual growth.**

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.” 2 Peter 3:18

“But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.” 1 Timothy 4:7

### **3. The Ministry Covenant...**

**is a commitment to discovering and using my God-given gifts and abilities in servicing God and others.**

“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” 1 Pet.4:10

“And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” 1 Corinthians 12:5, 27.

### **4. The Missions Covenant...**

**is a commitment to share the Good News with others.**

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:8

**Why do we have these Covenants?**

**WE BECOME WHAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO!**

# SESSION FOUR

## OUR STRUCTURE

“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. Let all things be done decently and in order.”

1 Corinthians 14:33,40

### HOW OUR CHURCH IS STRUCTURED

The structure of the church should not be determined by culture, business practices or even denominational traditions.

#### **The nature of the church determines its structure!**

#### **1. The Church is a Fellowship.**

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Acts 2:42

#### **A top priority of our Church is a fellowship of Harmony and Unity.**

“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Eph. 4:3

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.” Romans 14:19

**ANY** attitude that cause disunity is sin!

Colossians 3:1,5; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Timothy 2:14; Proverbs 17:14;  
2 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 1:27; 2:1-3; Colossians 2:2; Philippians 4:2;  
1 Peter 3:8; 1 Corinthians 14:33; John 13: 34,35; 2 Timothy 2:23; Romans  
15:5,6; 12:16,18; Colossians 3; 13,14; Psalms 133:1

#### **IMPLICATION: A GOOD STRUCTURE PROMOTES UNITY AND DOWNPLAYS DIFFERENCES.**

“Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.” I Corinthians 11:17,18.

At Mt. Pleasant, we have business meetings on the last Sunday night of each quarter to:

- Provide a financial report
- Provide reports from committees, trustees, deacons, and pastor/staff.
- Vote on matters significant to the life of the church.

## **II. The Church is a Family.**

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.” 1 Peter 3:8

Galatians 6:10; Hebrews 2:10-12; 1 Peter 4:17

## **So we operate on the basis of Relationship not Rules.**

“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above All, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace According to the measure of the gift of Christ.” Ephesians 4:3-7

## **III. The Church is a Body.**

We are a Body not—not a business! We are an organism—not an organization.  
1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 5:23; 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18; 2:10

## **Therefore, we emphasize Spiritual Gifts.**

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;” Romans 12 4: -6

**In an organization “maintenance” becomes the focus,  
But in an organism “ministry” is the focus.**

## **At Mt. Pleasant, we have a simple structure so we can maximize Ministry and minimize Maintenance.**

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-12

## OUR STRUCTURE

- **The People are the “Ministers.”**
- **The Staff are the “Administers.”**

### **IV. The Church is a Flock.**

(This was Jesus’ favorite description of the Church.)

John 10:1-30; Matthew 26:21; Matthew 25:33

Therefore it is cared for and led by Pastors and Deacons.

“He (Jesus) saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knows that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.” John 21:16

Three different terms are used in the New Testament to refer to the same church Leaders:

- **“Poimen”:** Pastor
- **“Presbuteros”:** Shepherd
- **“Episcopos”:** Overseer

The pastor, staff and deacons are to lead by spiritual example, by influence, by permission not dictation.

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;” 1 Peter 5:1-2

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” Acts 20:28

## **DEACONS**

The term used in the New Testament is “Diakonia.” A deacon is “One Who Serves” rather than one who just sits on a board. A deacon is a servant leader who Serves alongside the pastor/staff. There is no such thing as a “Deacon Board.” See 1Tim. 3:8-13.

## OUR AFFILIATION

**Mt. Pleasant has chosen to cooperate with 3 groups of churches.**

- **The Carrollton Baptist Association**  
Approximately 50 churches fellowship and work together to reach our county.
- **The Georgia Baptist Convention**  
Approximately 3,341 churches that fellowship together with the goal of Evangelizing our state.
- **The Southern Baptist Convention**  
Approximately 40,120 churches that cooperate together in a worldwide Mission's effort.

### **What is the Southern Baptist Convention?**

- It is the largest association of Christian churches in America. One out of every 10 churches in America is affiliated with the SBC with approximately 15.5 million members!
- It is the most diverse association of churches.  
SBC churches include every race, nationality, and ethnic group. Each Sunday, services are held in over 80 languages in the U.S.
- It is one of the fastest growing groups.  
The SBC baptizes over 1000 new Christians a day in the U.S. and begins nearly 5 new churches a day!

Bold Mission Thrust is the SBC's stated public goal to give everyone in the world a chance to hear the Good News. It's exciting to be a part of a group with that kind of vision!

### **Why not just be an independent church?**

We are an independent church. Every SBC church is completely independent. There is no denominational control or hierarchy, as there is in most other denominations. Each church is self-governed and determines its own affairs. For example:

- Every SBC church chooses its own Pastor.
- Every SBC church owns its own Buildings and Assets.
- Every SBC church determines its own Programs.

## **What are the advantages of affiliating with the SBC?**

1. It allows us to identify with other Christians around the world who are known for their commitment to the Bible. Unlike other groups, the SBC has no Man Made “creed.” The Bible is our only authority!
2. It allows our church to **participate in the largest Missionary organization in the world.** Through the SBC “Cooperative Program” we help support over 7500 missionaries in 104 countries around the world.

## **WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A...MEMBER**

The difference between “attenders” and “members”  
Can be summed up in one word: Commitment!

At Mt. Pleasant, we recognize the need for a formal membership. We ask you to commit to membership for four reasons:

### **1. A Biblical Reason: Christ is committed to the church.**

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;” Ephesians 5:25

### **2. A Cultural Reason: It is an antidote to our society.**

We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything...a job...a marriage...our country. This attitude has even produced a generation of “church shoppers and hoppers.” Membership swims against the current of America’s “consumer religion.” It is an unselfish decision. Commitment always builds character.

### **3. A Practical Reason: It defines who can be counted on.**

Every team must have a roster. Every school must have an enrollment. Every business has a payroll. Every army has an enlistment. Even our country takes a census and requires voter registration. Membership identifies our family.

### **4. A Personal Reason: It produces spiritual growth.**

The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth. You cannot be accountable when you’re not committed to any specific church family.

## WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME AS A MEMBER?

At Mt. Pleasant, we never ask our members to do more than the Bible clearly teaches. WE only expect our members to do what the Bible expects every Christian to do. These responsibilities are spelled out in the Membership Covenant.

### The Mt. Pleasant Membership Covenant

Having received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and having been baptized and being in agreement with Mt. Pleasant's statements, strategy and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Mt. Pleasant family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

#### 1. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH

- By acting in Love toward other members.
- By refusing to Gossip.
- By following the Leaders.

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.” Romans 14 :19

“Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:” Romans 15:5

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:” 1 Peter 1:22

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” Ephesians 4:29

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” Hebrews 13:17

#### 2. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH.

- By praying for its Growth.
- By inviting the unchurched to Attend.
- By warmly welcoming those who Visit.

“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;”  
1 Thessalonians 1:2

“And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.” Luke 14:23

“Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.”

Romans 15:7

**3. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH.**

- **By discovering my Gifts and Talents.**
- **By being equipped to Serve by my pastor/staff.**
- **By developing a Servant's heart.**

“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” 1 Peter 4:10

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:” Ephesians 4:11,12

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. But make himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:”  
Philippians 2:3-4,7

**4. I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH.**

- **By attending faithfully.**
- **By living a Godly life.**
- **By giving regularly.**

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”  
Hebrews 10:25

“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;”  
Philippians 1:27

“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” I Corinthians 16:2

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”  
Malachai 3:10

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

