

# MT. BETHEL

**101**



**Loving God. Loving People.**

***MEMBERSHIP WORKSHOP***



*Welcome and thank you for your interest in Mt. Bethel Baptist Church.*

## **Table of Contents:**

- I. The Purpose of this Membership Workshop
- II. The History of Mt. Bethel
- III. The Mission of Mt. Bethel
- IV. **W**orship God
- V. Live by God's **W**ord
- VI. Contribute to God's **W**ork
- VII. **W**alk with God's People
- VIII. Impact God's **W**orld
- IX. Mt. Bethel Beliefs and Church Covenant

## The Purpose of the Membership Workshop

Church Membership is a **Sacred Calling** from God and an important part of Christian maturity.

Church Membership is like being part of a **TEAM**.

<b>FANS</b>	
<b>REFS</b>	
<b>COACHES</b>	
<b>TEAM MEMBERS</b>	

The **Purpose** of this Workshop:

- To educate; to teach what God has done here in the *past* and learn about our rich history.
- To inform; to learn more about what happens *behind the scenes* at Mt. Bethel.
- To motivate; to understand our *mission* and where we envision ourselves going in the *future*.
- To involve you so that you know what your place is on the team and how you can be involved in God's work here.

## The History of Mt. Bethel

Part of what makes Mt. Bethel unique is its long and active history. We are standing on the shoulders of yesterday's men and women of faith, who founded Mt. Bethel Baptist Church over two hundred years ago. The gospel of Jesus Christ has been proclaimed from our church since 1767 – nine years prior to the American Revolution!



### • 1767-1800 •

Mt. Bethel Baptist Church began with eighteen people who lived in Warren but attended church in Scotch Plains. Due to the difficulty of traveling to Scotch Plains for services, they began meeting in their hometown under the leadership of Mt. Bethel's founding pastor, Rev. Henry Crosley. The church was named after its first site, which was a hill in Warren called Mount Bethel, located on what is now called, "Old Church Road." Bethel literally means "House of God" in

Hebrew. The Mt. Bethel Meeting House was a small structure which housed a gallery. It had separate entrances for men and women and a large sycamore tree in front of the building, a sacred biblical symbol of seeking God with humility.

The church's second pastor, ordained in 1775, was Rev. Abner Sutton. He was also one of its founding members; in fact, the Sutton family helped establish the community of Warren. The church grew rapidly under Rev. Sutton, and eighty members were added by baptism in 1785 and 1786, a time of great spiritual revival in the area. Also during this time the Meeting House was disassembled and moved by ox-drawn wagons from "Mt. Bethel" in Washington Valley to Stony Mountain (see picture on google map). Rev. Sutton served until he died at age fifty in 1791, and he is said to be the first person buried in the church's adjacent cemetery.

Rev. Sutton was succeeded by Rev. Jacob Fitz-Randolph, who served from 1791-1794, and then Rev. Lebbeus Lathrop, who served from 1794-1805. Records show that these pastors' salaries were still being paid in pounds and shillings.

### • 1800-1900 •

The church continued to experience growth under its next pastor, Rev. John Ellis, who served from 1805-1813. A church covenant was adopted in April of 1813 which bound its members, among other things, *"to watch over each other... and not to suffer sin upon anyone... to bear one another's burdens, to cleave to one another and to bear one another's weaknesses and infirmities with much tenderness..."*

After Rev. Ellis, the church experienced three years without a pastor until Englishman Rev. Mr. Elliot began serving in 1816. He served until 1818 and was succeeded by Rev. John Watson, another Englishman who served from 1818-1826. During this time there was a building renovation, and a revival which occurred in 1822 bringing twenty more members by baptism.

In 1827, Rev. Morgan R. Cox became the eighth pastor and served until 1848. Church meeting minutes from this time have survived, recording detailed accounts of church discipline and revealing the church body's insistence on holding each member accountable; the church was clearly committed to holiness and spiritual maturity. During this time the church experienced two more revivals, adding thirty members in 1832 and another forty in 1837.

The ninth pastor was Rev. Edward C. Ambler, who served from 1848-1851. The Fall of 1850 brought the greatest revival experienced yet in the area, and 107 people were added to Mt. Bethel's congregation by baptism. One of these converts was David Bird, a local hotel owner. He had served whiskey at his hotel for decades, but after he became a Christian he and some others decided to roll the hotel's barrels of whiskey outside, smash them, and let the contents run down the street! Mt. Bethel was now up to 220 members, and Rev. Ambler decided it was time to plant a sister church with eighty of Mt. Bethel's wealthiest and most influential members.



The church was planted across town on the North side of the Dead and Passaic rivers; this was the birth of Millington Baptist Church, which is still thriving today.

The tenth pastor was Rev. Jacob Timberman, who began ministering in 1852. It was during this time that a weekly prayer meeting was established as well as a Sabbath School. However, the following years proved to be difficult for Mt. Bethel. Some of these difficulties included theological disputes, strict church discipline issues, and unnecessary divisions within the church body. By 1854, there seems to have been two groups meeting in the same church, with Rev. Thomas W. Haynes preaching to one faction in the morning and John Crampton preaching to another in the afternoon. The exact nature and reasons for the division is unclear, but was described by the church clerk in 1854: "The church is now destitute of a pastor, and in a very unsettled state. Its peace has been disturbed for several months, and there are serious divisions amongst us; we who were weak at the strongest have become more weak, and now have to mourn over the desolation of our beloved Mt. Zion."

Despite these troubling circumstances, Mt. Bethel pushed forward. Several pastors served the church over the next two decades, although the exact dates of their service are not clearly recorded. They included Rev. Thomas H. Cole, Brother Taylor, Andrew Hopper of Millington Baptist, Mr. William Pike (who served from 1862-1866), and Englishman Rev. T. Simpkins. The pulpit was sometimes filled by Rev. Zelotes Grenell, who also served at Millington Baptist. Rev. Grenell held several meetings in 1871 and 1872 where many were converted and baptized in the mill pond on Mountainview Road, in the middle of winter. Of this time we know that the ice was being broken for baptisms, and one woman exclaimed, "Christians, if your heart be warm, ice and snow can do no harm!" In later years, the use of the mill pond for baptisms was replaced by a baptismal at Millington Baptist Church.

• 1900-2000 •

After these transitional years, Rev. Peter Gibb from Scotland and also of Millington Baptist Church became the pastor of Mt. Bethel in 1871, serving until 1911. In his nearly forty years of ministry at Mt. Bethel, he was called a "model country pastor." He had a deep appreciation of hymnology and provided singing lessons. He was described as a popular, sweet-spirited man who was faithful to the church. He preached a total of 6,260 sermons before he passed away at age seventy-eight.

Following Brother Gibb was Rev. William H. Mount. He was called as pastor in 1913 and revitalized the Sunday School program, serving faithfully with his wife until he died in 1931, bringing out nearly all of Mt. Bethel for his funeral. Next was Carl H. Voss, who served from 1931-1933 and organized Warren's first Boy Scout troop. James A. Howell served next from 1934-1940, during which time the Meeting House was painted and repaired, and youth services began meeting in the evening. In 1940, F. Dudley Bahrenburg was called and served until 1946, instituting the church's first Good Friday services and purchasing a new organ. He was succeeded by Earl B. Mowen, who served until 1948. After this, Rev. Stanley Formanek was called, and he served as pastor until he retired in 1965. During this time, Mt. Bethel severed its connection with the American Baptist Convention to become an independent Baptist church and united with the Independent Fundamental Churches of America in 1956. Rev. Formanek encouraged renovation by fixing up the balcony and installing new lighting. Plans for a new church building were also being considered. Then Rev. Formanek announced a gift of one and a half acres of land, including a house, from Hazel, Janice and Leon Zeglio. Ground-breaking ceremonies for the new building were held in 1957, and services began in the basement of the building in 1959. The new building was dedicated and Mt.



Bethel's first indoor baptismal service was held on Easter Sunday, April 17th, 1960. As for the Mt. Bethel Meeting House on Old Church Road, it is still standing today and is quite possibly the oldest Baptist church building in New Jersey. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Rev. Formanek was succeeded by interim pastor Rev. John Givens of Scotch Plains. In 1966, Rev. Floyd C. Alley became the first full-time pastor and served for ten years. In 1976, Rev. Charles Renken, who was a missionary in Venezuela, pastored for ten years before returning to the mission field. In 1987, Rev. Robert Damrau became the pastor and served for about a decade, during which the church celebrated its 225th anniversary. In 1995, Dr. David R. Babbitt began to serve as pastor.

• 2000 – Present •

Dr. Babbitt served faithfully from 1995 until he retired in 2008 to teach at Liberty University. He was a diligent expositor of the Word, and concurrently served as dean and professor at Philadelphia Biblical University. He built into the hearts of his students a genuine love for the Word of God. One of his students, Mike Perna, served as Youth Director and Outreach Director at Mt. Bethel. Another one of his students, Rev. David Hentschel, was called to serve in the Summer of 2009, and is our current pastor.

Since its original eighteen members in 1767, Mt. Bethel Baptist Church has remained faithful to the call to preach the gospel and to make disciples. It has served as a training ground for new ministers and is a strong supporter of world missions. It has remained faithful to conservative evangelical theology and has been a constant presence in the community; but the focus of history is not about the successes of any particular church or individual. Rather, it is about the triumph of the one true God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is building His church. On the great, wide stage of the drama of human redemption, Mt. Bethel has been privileged to play a small role. It is a story of grace and love, and we pray that the Lord of all history will continue to find us faithful to His call and use us for His purposes in the future. To Him be the glory forever and ever!

## The **Mission** of Mt. Bethel

*“Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s **purpose** that prevails.”*

*(Prov 19:21)*

**Our Mission is to glorify God by being faithful to His Word to carry out the Great C\_\_\_\_\_ and the Great C\_\_\_\_\_.**

The Great **Commandment**: (Matt 22:36-40 NIV)

*“‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”*

The Great **Commission**: (Matt 28:19-20 NIV)

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Christ calls us to “Make Disciples.” What is a Disciple? A **Disciple** is what we call a:

**“F\_\_\_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_\_ Follower of Christ”**

**“Developing”**

A continuous never-ending journey

Martin Luther wrote:

**“This life, therefore is not righteousness but growth in righteousness, not health but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it; the process is not yet finished but it is going on; this is not the end but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory but all is being purified.”**

**“Fully”  
Growing in all 5 W’s**

*A Fully Developing Follower of Christ follows God in these five distinct areas:*

<b>The Five W’s:</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Key Verse</b>
W_____. God.	<b>Worship</b>	<i>“Love the Lord your God.” (Matt 22:36-40)</i>
Live by God’s W_____.	<b>Discipleship</b>	<i>“teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” (Matt 28:19-20)</i>
Contribute to God’s W_____.	<b>Ministry</b>	<i>“Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matt 22:36-40)</i>
W_____ with God’s People	<b>Fellowship</b>	<i>“baptizing them...” (Matt 28:19-20)</i>
Impact God’s W_____.	<b>Evangelism</b>	<i>“Go and make disciples...” (Matt 28:19-20)</i>

## Worship God

*"It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"*  
(Lk 4.8 NIV)

**“Worship is our r\_\_\_\_\_ to  
God because of W\_\_\_\_\_ He is  
and W\_\_\_\_\_ He has done.”**

### I.) Corporate Worship:

- A) Be on t\_\_\_\_\_.
- B) Participate.
- C) I\_\_\_\_\_ others.

### II.) Personal Worship:

- A) Choose a t\_\_\_\_\_.
  - B) Choose a p\_\_\_\_\_.
  - C) Choose a p\_\_\_\_\_.
- READ
  - PRAY
  - WRITE

## Live by God's Word

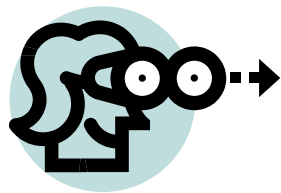
*“All **Scripture** is God-breathed and is **useful** for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

(2 Tim 3:16-17 NIV)



### **LISTEN TO THE WORD:**

*“Faith comes from hearing the message.” (Rom 10:17)*



### **LOOK AT THE WORD:**

*“Open my eyes that I might see wonderful things in your Law.” (Ps 119:18)*



### **LEARN THE WORD:**

*“His delight is in the law of the Lord and on His law he meditates day and night.” (Ps 1:2)*



### **LIVE BY THE WORD:**

*“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.” (Js 1:22-24 NIV)*

## Contribute to God's Work

*"You are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."  
(1 Cor 12:27 NIV)*

### 1) Service:

*"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to **serve** others."  
(1 Pet 4:10)*

How do you find your place to serve? What S.H.A.P.E. are you?

S \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_  
H \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
P \_\_\_\_\_  
E \_\_\_\_\_

Key Question: Where are you most needed?

*"Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant."  
(Mark 10:43)*

### 2) Finances

*"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."  
(2 Cor 9:7)*

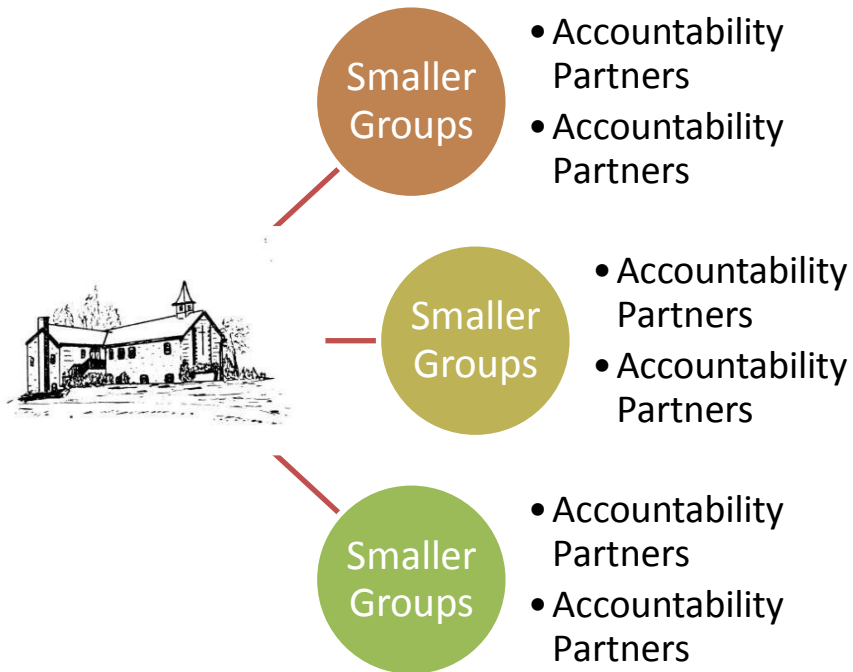
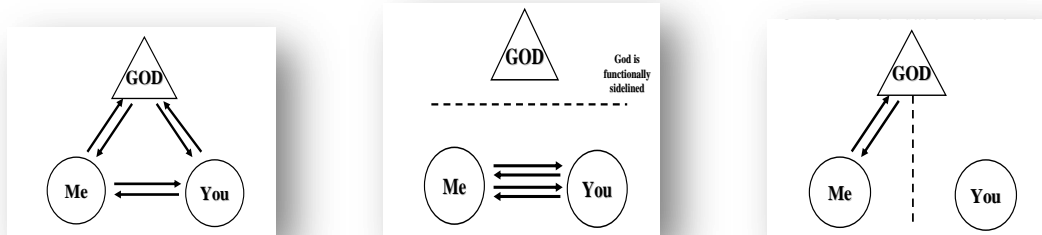
*Three key principles in giving:*

- 1) How often should I give?      **S** \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) How much should I give?      **P** \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) How does God call me to give?      **S** \_\_\_\_\_

# Walk with God's People

““A person can successfully do many things alone, but growing as a Christian is not one of them.”  
- Frank Wichern

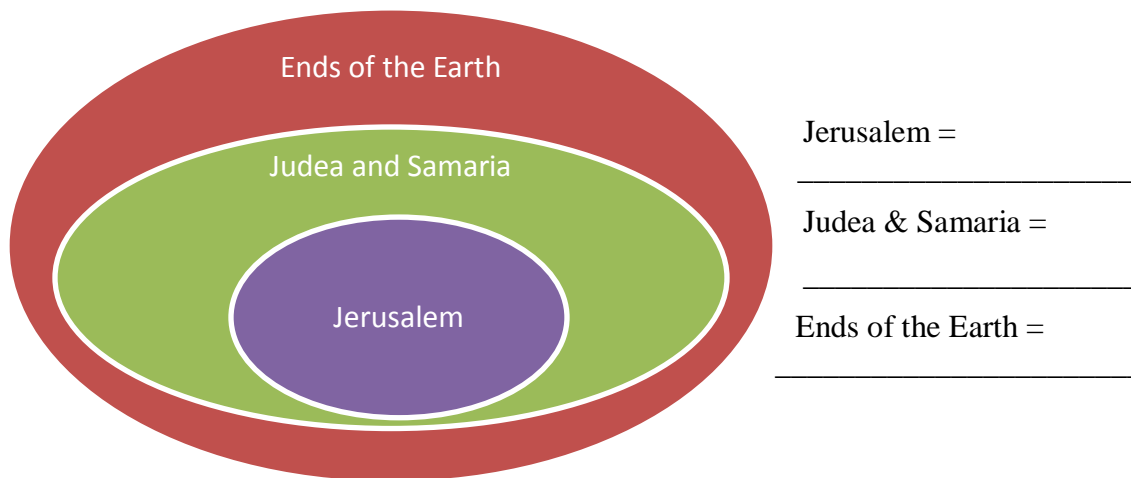
There are three ways to live life and relationships:



## Impact God's World

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

(Acts 1:8 NIV)



## Personal Evangelism:

- 1) **P**\_\_\_\_\_ for three lost or unchurched people.
- 2) **S**\_\_\_\_\_ your own verbal witness.
- 3) **I**\_\_\_\_\_ people to Mt. Bethel.

## Participation in World Missions:

1. Pray
2. Give
3. Go
- ✓ 4. **A**\_\_\_\_\_ of the above!

# **BAPTISM:**

*“Repent and let every one of you be **baptized**.”*

*(Acts 2:38)*

*“Let the redeemed of the Lord **say so**.”*

*(Ps 107:3-4)*



**Three dangers** when it comes to baptism:

**1) Baptism is U\_\_\_\_\_ - emphasized.**

- A) Jesus commanded it (Matt 28:19-20).
- B) Jesus modeled it (Matt 3:13-17).
- C) The early church emphasized it (Acts 2:41)

**2) Baptism is O\_\_\_\_\_ -emphasized.**

Two Ordinances

- A) Communion
- B) Baptism

**3) Baptism is mis-p\_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) Infant baptism miscommunicates salvation to the world.
- B) Infant baptism also miscommunicates salvation to that child.
- C) Infant baptism robs an individual of the experience of expressing their own faith and their allegiance to Christ.

## **Biblical Baptism:**

- 1) The right t\_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) The right r\_\_\_\_\_.
- 3) The right m\_\_\_\_\_.

# MT. BETHEL DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

## THE SCRIPTURES

**We believe the Bible to be the Word of God.** The Bible does not merely contain the Word of God, but is the Word of God. The very words are inspired. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments were all given by Divine inspiration (2 Tim 3:16). “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet 1:21). The writers were supernaturally selected and endued and wrote the original manuscripts without error or defect. The Bible is the infallible rule of faith and practice of the individual believer. The Bible is God’s message to man and presents Him as its supreme Subject. The Bible unfolds His purposes and gives the only record concerning God’s manifestation in Christ. The Bible is the Divine Revelation regarding God the Father, the Son, the Spirit, angels, demons, man, sin, salvation, grace, and glory.

## GOD

We believe there is but one true and living God. God is Spirit (John 4:24) infinite and perfect in all His attributes. In Him all things have their source, support, and end. God is holy (Ex 15:11; Isa 6:3, 1 Pet 1:15, 16; 1 John 1:5). God is self-existent (Exod 3:14). God is eternal (Ps 90:2); Deut 32:40; Isa 41:4; 1 Tim 1:17). God is immutable (Ps 102:27; Mal 3:6; Jas 1:17). God is omniscient (Ps 139, 147:4, 5; Isa 40:13, 14, 27, 28). God is omnipotent (Gen 17:1, 18:14; Isa 26:4; Matt 28:20). God is love (1 John 4:8).

**We believe in the unity, trinity, and triunity of Deity.** There is only one God, but in that Godhead are three persons - - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - - yet those Three are one. They are equal, and each is worthy of honor, worship, devotion, and love. God is the Great Three-In-One and One-In-Three. The unity of God is taught in the Word of God (Deut 4:35, 6:4; Isa 43:10, 11, 44:6, 46:5; 1 Tim 2:5). The Trinity in the Godhead is taught in the Word of God (Matt 28:19, 2 Cor 13:14, 1 John 5:7).

## CHRIST

**We believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and God the Son - - truly God and truly man.**

### THE PRE-HISTORIC CHRIST

We believe Christ is the eternal Son of God who has inhabited eternity. Christ existed before His incarnation (Mic 5:2; John 1:1, 2, 8:58). He antedates all creation because He is the Creator (John 1:3, Col 1:16; Heb 1:10). In the records of the Old Testament He appears as an angel or even as a man. To Hagar (Gen 16:7), to Abraham (Gen 18:1, 22:11, 12), to Jacob (Gen 48:15, 16), to Moses (Exod 3:2, 14), to Joshua (Josh 5:13, 14), to Manoah (Judg 13:19-22). Titles and Divine Names are given to Him which indicate His eternal Being. He is “The Son of God”, “The Only Begotten Son”, “The Alpha and Omega”, “The First and the Last”, “The Lord”, “Lord of All”, “Lord of Glory”, “The Christ”, “Wonderful”, “Counselor”, “The Mighty God”, “The Father of Eternity”, “God”, “God with us”, “Our Great God”, “God Blessed Forever”. All these titles relate Him to the Old Testament revelation of Jehovah-God. All the attributes of God are ascribed to Christ - - Life (John 1:4), Self-existence (John 5:26), Immutability (Heb 13:8), Eternity (Col 1:17), Omnipresence (Matt 28:20), Omniscience (1 Cor 4:5; Col 2:3), Omnipotence (Matt 28:18; Rev 1:8). The pre-existence of Christ is implied in the fact that He has these attributes of God. Christ is worshiped as God which also implies His pre-existence (John 20:28; Acts 7:59; Heb 1:6). He is from everlasting to everlasting.

### **THE PROPHETIC CHRIST**

We believe Christ is the “Coming One” repeatedly promised by the Old Testament prophets. He is the “Seed of the woman” (Gen 3:15), “the sin-offering” (Ps 22), “The substitutional Savior” (Isa 53), “The cut-off Messiah” (Dan 9:26), “The smitten Shepherd” (Zech 13:6, 7). He is the One typified by the various Old Testament sacrifices, offerings, ceremonies, feasts, etc. - - The coat of skins (Gen 3:21), Abel’s lamb (Gen 4:4), The offering of Isaac (Gen 22), The Passover lamb (Exod 12), The Levitical sacrificial system (Lev chaps 1-7), The brazen serpent (Num 21; John 3:14), The slain Lamb (Isa 53:7; John 1:29; Rev 13:8).

### **THE INCARNATE CHRIST**

We believe in the virgin birth and the absolute deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Mary conceived by the Holy Ghost and brought forth her first-born Son (Matt 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38, 2:7). Jesus was born of a virgin and had no earthly father. He was “Immanuel”, being interpreted “God with us” - - that is - - God manifested in human flesh (Matt 1:23; 1 Tim 3:16). He was in the likeness of sinful flesh but was without sin (Rom 8:3). He did not partake of the fallen nature of man for He was perfect in all His ways “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb 7:26).

### **THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST**

We believe Christ saves not by the life He lived by by the death He died. He did not die as a martyr or model or victim but freely offered Himself as a vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice for our sins (John 10:17, 18; Gal 2:20; Eph 5:20; Heb 9:14, 10:7-9). He bore the judgment of God against sin (Isa 53:4-6; Matt 27:46; 2 Cor 5:19). His death was expiatory and not exemplary (Rom 5:6; 2 Cor 5:14, 14, Gal 3:13, 14). He endured the wrath of God justly due the sinner. Christ came to “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb 9:26). The efficacy of His blood is the foundation of the Gospel of Grace. Apart from faith in His death there is salvation for no man.

### **THE RESURRECTED CHRIST**

We believe in the literal, physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the tomb (Luke 24:6, 37-40; Matt 28:6; 1 Cor 15:20). After three days He arose from the dead a mighty conqueror over sin and the grave. His resurrection was a victorious resurrection. His resurrection is a surety and guarantee of the resurrection of all believers (1 Cor 15:20-23; 1 Thess 4:16, 17).

### **THE ASCENDED CHRIST**

We believe that after His post-resurrection ministry Jesus Christ ascended into heaven (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11). He has returned to the glory from which He came at the time of His incarnation. This ascension to the Father was in a real, tangible, resurrection body (Heb 1:1-2; 1 Tim 3:16). He is at the present time in this glorified, human body at the right hand of God the Father (Acts 2:23, 5:31; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 8:1, 10:12, 12:2, 1 Pet 3:22).

### **THE INTERCEDING CHRIST**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ having entered into Heaven itself is there to minister during the present age as Priest and Advocate in behalf of His own in the work (Heb 7:25). As Priest He is making intercession for His own (Heb 7:25). As Advocate He pleads the merits of His own blood in behalf of His own when they sin (1 John 2:1, 2). The ministries of Christ as Intercessor and Advocate are unto the eternal security of the believer (Rom 8:34-39).

## THE COMING AND REIGNING CHRIST

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ will return to the earth again. The second coming of Christ will be literal, visible and personal (Acts 1:11). He will come “for His saints” when He descends in the air and there receives to Himself the saints who are caught up from the earth to meet Him - - some of those to be raised from the dead and some to be translated from the living state (1 Cor 15:22, 23, 51, 52; 1 Thess 4:13-18). He will receive His own into the place which He has gone to prepare for them (John 14:1-3). He will come “with His saints”, His redeemed ones (Rev 19:7-16; 1 Thess 3:13; Jude 14) to execute judgment upon the earth. He will judge the nations (Matt 25:31-46), restore the nation Israel, God’s chosen earthly people, and will sit on David’s throne (Luke 1:31-33). All creation will be restored to its Edenic glory (Rom 8:19-23). Satan will be bound and confined to the abyss a thousand years (Rev 20:1-3).

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the personality and **deity of the Holy Spirit**. He is a member of the Trinity equal in power with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is truly God (Acts 5:3, 4; 1 Cor 3:16). Attributes possessed by God are ascribed to the Holy Spirit - - Eternity (Heb 9:14), Omniscience (John 14:26, 16:12, 13; 1 Cor 2:10, 11), Omnipresence (Ps 139:7-10), Omnipotence (Luke 1:35; Rom 15:19). He was active in creation (Gen 1:2; Job 33:4; Ps 104:30). He is the Source of life (John 6:63; Rom 8:11). He is the Author of the Holy Scriptures (2 Sam 23:2; Acts 28:25; Heb 3:7; 2 Pet 1:21).

Having come on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), the Holy Spirit came in fulfillment of the promises of the Father and the Son (John 7:39, 16:7, 8, 13). He came to bring into being “The Church”, and to abide in all believers, and to work through them. The Holy Spirit baptizes all believers into the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). He indwells all believers (Acts 2:38, 39; Rom 5:5, 8:9; 1 Cor 3:16, 6:19; Gal 3:2). He seals all believers by His presence within them (Eph 1:3, 14:4:30; 2 Cor 1:22, 5:5). He is Leader and Guide to all believers (Rom 8:14; Gal 5:18).

The Holy Spirit exercises a ministry to the world in convicting men of sin (John 16:8; 1 Cor 2:4; 1 Thess 1:5), inviting men to Christ (Rev 22:17), and in enabling sinners to believe the Gospel (1 Cor 21:3). He is the Agent in regeneration (John 3:5, 6; Titus 3:5). He instructs believers concerning Christ and the Scriptures (John 14:26, 16:12-15); 1 Cor 2:10-13). He witnesses to believers of their sonship (Rom 8:16; Gal 4:6). He enables believers to pray (Rom 8:15, 26, 27). He is the source of the attributes of character that are distinctive to the believer (Gal 5:22, 23). He is the author of a “unity” that is the only trustworthy basis for Christian fellowship and cooperation (Eph 4:3, 4).

## SATAN

We believe in the **reality** and personality of Satan. He is a created being, originally perfect and holy but fell through pride and self will (Ezek 28:11-19; Isa 14:12-17). Through his fall he became the arch-enemy of God and men. He was the instigator of the fall of man (Gen 3:1-5; 1 Tim 2:14). He is the “prince of the power of the air”, the spirit that energizes the children of disobedience (Eph 2:2). He blinds the eyes of the unsaved lest the light of the Gospel shall reach them (2 Cor 4:3, 4). He holds the ungodly world in his arms (1 John 5:19). He counterfeits the things of God, promoting extensive religious systems (1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Cor 11:13-15). He is the god of this age (2 Cor 4:4), the accuser of the saints (Job 1:6-12, 2:1-13), and the father of lies (John 8:44). He attacks the children of God because they are indwelt by the divine nature and through them he is enabled to secure a thrust at God (Eph 6:12-17). Satan has been defeated at Calvary by the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb 2:14), and will eventually be cast into the lake of fire, his final doom (Rev 20:10).

## MAN

We believe that man in his present human form, was created by God as the conclusion and consummation of all creation. Man was **made in the image and likeness of God** (Gen 1:26) and God breathed into him the breath of life (Gen 2:7). Man was created innocent but fell through Satanic solicitation. He rebelled against the authority of heaven, disobeyed his Creator, and thus became a sinner (Gen 3:1-7). By sinning, the first man, Adam, lost his blessed estate as he was created and became subject to both spiritual and physical death (Gen 2:17). Adam, and Eve also, passed immediately into spiritual death, which means separation from God. In due time they suffered the penalty of physical death which means separation of the soul from the body. Through the fall of Adam his sin is imputed to his posterity and are lost apart from the proffered grace of God in Christ. The holy judgments of God rest upon them because of imputed sin, because of an inherited sin nature, because they are under sin and because of their own personal sins. Men can be saved from these judgments only through Christ. This is the good news of the Gospel.

## SIN

We believe in the reality, universality, and heinousness of sin, "Sin is any want of conformity to the character of God, whether it be in act, disposition, or state". (Chafer). Sin is always against God (Ps 51:4; Luke 15:18). "- - sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). "All unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17). "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom 14:23). "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin" (Jas 4:17). As a result of Adam's fall sin has been imputed to his posterity, therefore Adam's posterity sinned when he sinned and "death passed upon all men" (Rom 5:12-18). When Adam fell he became an entirely different being, depraved and degenerate, and the only capable of begetting posterity like his fallen self. Therefore, every child of Adam is born with an Adamic nature, ever and always prone to sin (Rom 5:19). The whole world is now under sin (Rom 3:9; Gal 3:22; Rom 11:32) - - that is to say - - without any merit at all which might contribute toward salvation. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23). **The total depravity of man** through sin is so real that only a new creation will meet his need and enable him to enter the presence of God (John 3:5).

## REGENERATION

We believe in the necessity and possibility of regeneration. Regeneration, or **the new birth**, is the impartation of the Divine nature in response to faith in the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. By nature man is dead in sin (Eph 2:1) and is in need of a spiritual quickening or new birth. Upon believing the Gospel, man is born again "of incorruptible seed, by the word of God" (1 Pet 1:23). The old nature though still present is not altered, reformed, or revitalized, but a new life is imparted - - the life of God - - and he passes out of death into life (John 5:24). He is made partaker of a new nature (2 Pet 1:4). He has put on the new man, which after God is created in holiness and righteousness (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10). Christ now lives in him (Gal 2:20) and God's seed now abides in him (1 John 3:9). Without the new birth, man "cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3), he "cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Man's sinful condition demands a change in nature and no system of education or culture can bring about such a change. God alone can do it for to live the life of God man must have the nature of God (John 1:13; Jas 1:18). The Holy Spirit is the Divine Agent in regeneration. The new birth is "of the Spirit" (John 3:5, 6; Titus 3:5) because He is the Author of the "incorruptible seed", convicts of sin, presents Christ, and bestows faith. Having been united to God, through Christ, by the Holy Spirit, the regenerated man is a son of God, the Holy Spirit witnessing to his spirit of that sonship (Rom 8:16; Gal 4:6).

## SALVATION BY GRACE

We believe that men are but mendicants upon the mercies of God. **Salvation is by grace and grace alone** (Rom 5:17; Eph 2:8, 9; Titus 2:11). Works of the law or human merit play no part in justification before God. The believing sinner is “justified freely (without cause) by His grace through redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom 3:2) whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God (Rom 3:25). When saving a sinner by grace it is necessary that God shall have dealt with every sin, which would otherwise demand judgment and thereby hinder His grace. This He has wrought in the death of His Son who redeemed the sinner with His own blood (1 Pet 1:18, 19; Eph 1:7; Heb 9:12). Only through faith in the finished work of Christ can men come into possession of salvation. “Man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Rom 3:28). Through faith in Christ they are born again (1 Pet 1:21-23), their sins are forgiven (Eph 1:7), they become children of God (Gal 3:26), have eternal life (John 3:16, 1 John 5:12) and are citizens of heaven (Phil 3:20). They are no longer under condemnation (Rom 8:1; John 5:24) having been saved from the guilt and penalty of sin.

Salvation by grace also includes God’s gracious provision of deliverance from the power of sin. Having received the Divine nature (2 Pet 1:4) while still retaining the old nature, every child of God possesses two natures. The old nature is the flesh - - one of three foes of the Christian - - the world, the flesh, and the devil. These foes are not eradicated but God provides victory over them by His Spirit (1 John 4:4, 5:4; Gal 5:16). Likewise He provides victory over sin by the Spirit (Rom 6:14, 8:2). Under these provisions the Christian may walk in the power of a new life principle which is by dependence upon the Holy Spirit alone (Gal 5:16). The justified one shall live by faith - - the faith which depends on the power of another - - the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:25). “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

## SANCTIFICATION

We believe every believer is sanctified the moment he is saved. Having been redeemed and cleansed in Christ’s precious blood, justified, forgiven all trespasses, purified, and having become sons of God, every believer is said to be positionally sanctified, and is therefore a saint before God (1 Cor 6:11). He has been separated from sin and separated or set apart unto God. This position bears no relationship to the believer’s daily life though it should inspire him to holy living.

We believe every believer should be experimentally sanctified - - that is - - experimentally separated from the world and unto God by (1) yieldedness to God (Rom 12:1, 2). By so doing the Christian is set apart unto God by his own choice. The infilling of the Holy Spirit will be made possible, resulting in a new blessedness and a more complete separation unto God; (2) separation from sin (Rom 6:18, 22). By claiming the promised moment by moment victory through the power of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:16-23); (3) Christian growth (2 Pet 3:18; 1 Thess 3:12, 4:1, 10). Because **experimental sanctification is progressive** the believer is exhorted to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” - - “to increase and abound” - - and to “abound yet more and more”. There is always the danger of defilement by contact with a sinful world, therefore an ever increasing sense of duty and an ever-deepening consciousness of sin, necessitating a continued growth and development in the graces and virtues of the believer’s life.

We believe every believer will experience ultimate sanctification at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess 5:23) At that day the believer will be changed - - spirit, soul and body - - that he will be “like Him (1 John 3:2) and “conformed to His image” (2 Cor 3:18). He shall be faultless” before the presence of His glory and free from every “spot” and “wrinkle” (Jude 24; Eph 5:27).

## THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCHES

We believe that the Church - - the true Body of Christ - - is composed of all true believers, that company of people who have been called out from the old creation into the new, being gathered by the Holy Spirit into one organism or body of which Christ is the Head. This company includes only those who have been saved in the period between the day of Pentecost and the return of Christ to receive His own. Every believer has been baptized into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13) and being so united is a member of that Body (1 Cor 12:12, 27), of which Christ is the Head (Eph 1:22). The Church is Christ's fullness, or completeness, even as Christ is its fullness, or completeness (Eph 1:23; Col 1:19, 2:9, 10).

We believe in local churches. They are of Divine origin and authority (1 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:2; Phil 1:2). A local church should be a company of Christians voluntarily gathered together for self edification, mutual helpfulness, and the proclamation of the Word of God (Heb 10:23-25). Membership in the local church should only be extended to those who have experienced regeneration. We also believe Baptism to be a prerequisite to membership in a local church.

## THE ORDINANCES

We believe there are two memorial ordinances: - Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

We believe the subjects for baptism are believers (Acts 8:36-38) and believers only. The order of Scripture is "believe and be Baptized". Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in testimony of his union with Christ, in His death, burial, and resurrection (Col 2:12). The submersion pictures burial and the emersion pictures resurrection. The ordinance has no saving efficacy.

We believe the Lord's Supper is for believers only. This observance whereby believers partake of bread and the cup is emblematic of feeding upon the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ by faith. The ordinance should be accompanied by self-examination as to worthiness to partake (1 Cor 11:27-29). The ordinance has no saving efficacy.

## HEAVEN

We believe in a real literal Heaven; a place of blessedness to which all the redeemed of the Lord go and in which place they will forever enjoy God and His Presence (Rev 21 and 22).

## HELL

We believe in a real literal Hell; a place of torment to which the unsaved go and in which place they will forever experience punishment and banishment from the presence of God (Rev 20:11-15, 21:8).

## FINAL REWARDS OF THE RIGHTEOUS

We believe that all believers must give an account of their daily life and service for God at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Cor 3:1-15). At that time the reward or loss of reward for service due each individual believer will be determined. The rewards are a prize (1 Cor 9:24), a crown (1 Cor 9:25; Phil 4:1; 1 Thess 2:19; 2 Tim 4:8; Jas 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4; Rev 2:10, 3:11).

## FINAL JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED

We believe that all the wicked, the lost of all the ages will appear before the great white Throne to be judged according to their works and those judged will be cast into the lake of fire in a continued and conscious separation from God (Rev 20:11-15).

## MT. BETHEL CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines, to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel throughout all nations.

We also engage to maintain as far as possible family and secret devotion; to teach our children the Christian truths; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, exemplary in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love and; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of the covenant and principles of God's Word.



Loving God. Loving People.

## Mt. Bethel Membership Commitment Form

The people of Mt. Bethel commit to help you become a *Fully-developing Follower of Christ*. We are excited to work together with you to accomplish God's mission for your life through membership at Mt. Bethel.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

1) Briefly tell us about your experience of **salvation** through Jesus Christ: (1-2 sentences, include year if known)

2) When and where were you **baptized**? (1-2 sentences, include year if known)

3) Yes! I would like to commit to membership at Mt. Bethel:

- |                                                                          |                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> By a new Profession of Faith in<br>Jesus Christ | <input type="checkbox"/> By Statement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> By Baptism                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> By Transfer  |

3) Yes! With God's help, I will commit to these 5 key areas of discipleship:

- I will commit to **Worshipping God** both corporately and personally.
- I will commit to **Living by God's Word** both in public and in private.
- I will commit to **Contribute to God's Work** through both service and financial support.
- I will commit to **Walk with God's people** by pursuing other members in Christian love.
- I will commit to **Impacting God's World** by both praying for and inviting others to come hear about God's love.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_