

BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH

STEPS AFTER FIRST CLASS



517 Glensford Drive
Fayetteville, NC 28314
910.868.5156 | bbcfnc.org

Name:



This booklet is for those who have completed First Class. This booklet is to help highlight for you some of the foundational understanding of being a Berean Baptist Church member.

Once you have completed this booklet, please call the office (910-868-5156) to sign up for a pastor/elder membership interview. You will turn this booklet in to whoever interviews you. At that interview, you will also turn in your completed "Individual Church Membership" questionnaire. You will get this booklet back so that it can go into your Berean Membership Binder.

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Welcome to Berean!

Thank you for your interest in church membership.

At Berean, we take church membership seriously. We don't have a large membership roll full of inactive members who don't participate in the life of the church. In order to become a member of the church, you will have to complete this in-home study and attend our pre-membership class called First Class.

Believer's Baptism

Have you been baptized by immersion after your conversion to Christianity? _____

Briefly describe what you can remember about your baptism (where, when, who, why, what, how, etc.):

"Steps After First Class" Begins Now!

In this study, you will learn about

- Our Name and History
- The Church Covenant
- Berean's Articles of Faith
- Our Practice of the Lord's Supper

Please visit www.bbcfnc.org and familiarize yourself with the church website.

Find the webpage about our name under the "About Us/Our Beliefs/Beliefs" tab and read about the name Berean.

1. What is the Bible reference from which we derive our name? _____

2. What was significant about the Christians in Berea?

Find the webpage about our history under the "About Us/Our Beliefs/How Berean Became a Church" and read about our rich heritage and God's blessing on Berean.

3. In what year was Berean started? _____

4. The original location was on _____ Boulevard.

Read the Church Covenant

As a bond of unity among us, Berean Baptist Church accepts for its members the following covenant: See shaded areas below.

5. As you read each paragraph of the covenant please notice how each line is supported by _____.

Having been led by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:14-16; Gal 5:18,25) to receive the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:36; 15:11) as our Savior (Luke 2:11); and upon our profession (Heb 4:14) of our faith in Him (Gal 3:26; Col 1:4) , having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Mat 28:19), we do now solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant (Neh 8:10) with one another as one body in Christ (Rom 12:5).

6. We receive Christ Jesus by _____ in Him (Gal 3:26).

7. What is a covenant? (See the “Clarifying Notes” section on page 6)

We fully realize that the strength to uphold this covenant comes from the grace of God (1Co 15:10) our Father, the shed blood of God the Son (1Pe 1:19), and the power of the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; Rom 15:19).

8. Christ shed His blood on the cross for our _____ (Col 1:14).

We promise to actively pursue personal holiness (Rom 6:19; 1Th 4:7); to walk (1Th 2:12; Col 1:10; 3 John 4) together in Christian love (John 13:35); to strive for the advancement of this church's spiritual growth (2Pe 3:18) and unity (Psa 133:1); to faithfully abide by the doctrines (Acts 2:42) and behaviors outlined in this church's Articles of Faith; and to give cheerfully of our time, talents (Rom 12:6-8), and finances (Luke 6:38; 1Co 16:2) for the support of this ministry (Eph 4:12) and its missionaries (Acts 1:8).

9. What is a personal holiness in your own words?

10. Are you willing to give some of your time in the service to the church?

11. What talent(s) do you have that can be used in the service of Berean?

12. Do you understand why Berean needs your help financially?

We further promise to faithfully attend the church's worship services (Acts 2:42; Heb 10:25), to maintain personal spiritual disciplines; to teach our children the Word of God (Deu 6:4-7); to share the gospel with our relatives and acquaintances (Mark 16:15; 1Pe 3:15); to be just in our dealings (Rom 13:8); faithful in our engagements (1Co 4:2); and to avoid all gossip [backbiting, whisperings] (Rom 1:29; 2Co 12:20). We promise that we will love and pray for each other (Jam 5:16) and in times of distress help one another (Gal 6:10).

GOD-GLORIFYING REASONS TO JOIN BEREAN

1) Joining Berean Baptist church is like getting married. Membership brings you into a covenant relationship with this local church. You don't attend here—you are a member! You are officially part of the church. Without a membership role, how do we know who comprises the church? Is it anyone who attends on Sundays mornings? Is it anyone who shows up to a member's meeting? How are local disciples of Christ supposed to follow the protocols outlined by Jesus in Matthew 18 without a church membership? The Apostle Peter exhorted the elders to "shepherd the flock that is among them" (1Pe 5:2). Who is the flock? Uniting with the church says, "I want to be part of the flock at Berean."

13. Are you willing to participate in the Lord's Supper, no matter in which service we celebrate it, 4 or 5 times a year? _____

14. Are you willing to attend and vote in quarterly members' meetings on Sunday nights after the preaching service? _____

15. Read the clarifying note D. on the next page and list 3 examples of a spiritual discipline: _____

We promise to endeavor to obey the commandments of our Lord Jesus (Mark 12:30-31) and to abstain from anything that would cause our fellow brother or sister in Christ to stumble (Rom 14:13) or that will bring reproach to the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 15:26; Col 3:17).

16. What are the two commandments of the Lord?

- a. _____
- b. _____

We further realize that if we should fail to live up to the promises we have made, our brothers and sisters in Christ will always strive for our reconciliation and spiritual restoration (Gal 6:1). However, if we partake in a sustained and unrepentant violation of an Article of Faith, we will be brought under church discipline in accordance with the Church Constitution (Mat 18:15-17; 1Co 5:1-7).

17. What is meant by unrepentant? _____

18. Do you realize that if you partake in a sustained, unrepentant violation of this covenant or an Article of Faith, like adultery, you will be subject to church discipline? _____

We make this covenant with each other for the express purpose of glorifying God (1Co 10:31) as the visible representation of the body of Christ (1Co 12:27).

19. Berean is one of the _____ representations of the body of Christ in Fayetteville.

Clarifying Notes on the Covenant

A. A church covenant is a series of written pledges, based on the Bible, which church members voluntarily make to God and to one another regarding their basic moral and spiritual commitments and the practice of their faith (Charles DeWeese).

B. The word “promise” communicates a good faith effort toward doing or refraining from doing that which is specified in the covenant according to the grace of God. Only those who are new creatures in Christ have access to the grace needed to live by this covenant.

GOD-GLORIFYING REASONS TO JOIN BEREAN

2) Joining Berean brings you under the authority of the local church. Uniting with us is profitable for your sanctification and perseverance in the faith. If you wander from the gospel, the elders, deacons, and members of the church have a formal obligation to speak into your life, and you have made a formal commitment to respond appropriately. The elders of Berean can't watch over the souls of every believer in Fayetteville—membership formally communicates, "I want Berean's spiritual leaders watching over my soul for my sanctification and spiritual growth." Read and study 1Th 5:12-13, 1Ti 5:17 and Heb 13:17.

20. We know that even though we are Christians, we still _____.
That's why we want you to know that a promise is a good-faith effort toward doing or not doing something.

C. Article V, paragraph 2 of our church constitution mandates that every member of the church is expected to live by this covenant and “love, honor, and esteem the Pastors, to pray for them and to recognize their authority in the spiritual affairs of the church; to cherish a brotherly love for all members of the Church; to support the Church in prayer, tithes, offerings and with other financial support as the Lord enables; and, in accordance with Biblical commands, to support through a life-style affirming the beliefs and practices of the Church.”

21. Stop and look up Hebrews 13:17. From the paragraph above, who is it that watches over the souls of those who attend Berean?

Do you want this kind of accountability? _____

D. Prayer, meditation and study of God's Word, fasting, service, submission one to another, and worship are examples of spiritual disciplines.

Read the following Articles of Faith

The following comprise the Scriptural beliefs of this church and its members:

A. The Bible: God's Word. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be verbally inspired by God and inerrant in the original writings (2Ti 3:16-17; 2Pe 1:21), and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life (1Co 2:13; 10:11; 2Ti 3:17). Berean Baptist Church uses only the KJV, NKJV, ESV, and NASB in its preaching, teaching, and discipleship ministries because of the degree to which the translators of these Bibles faithfully sought to provide an essentially literal, word-for-word translation from the original Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic into English. Additionally, these Bibles emphasize the deity and supremacy of Jesus Christ, preserve the importance of unique theological words like "justification" and "propitiation," and maintain God-ordained gender distinctions. We believe these are some of the standards by which the believer must measure all Bibles. Members of BBC should be cautious about using Bibles (i.e., NIV, TNIV, NRSV), which are not committed to preserving the words of the original manuscripts; paraphrases (i.e., NLT, The Message) cannot be understood to be the Word of God. We reject any suggestion that any English Bible is supreme to manuscripts in the original languages. We further deny that the Bible specifies the manner in which God would preserve His Word; however, we absolutely affirm God's promise to do so (Mat 5:18; John 10:35) and His providential control over historical events so that His Word has been fully preserved by careful processes in all available manuscripts and translations of the Scripture (Psa 119:89; Isa 46:8-11). Furthermore, we reject any theory of double or secondary inspiration.

22. The word inspired in 2 Timothy 3:16 means God-breathed and shows that the _____ is the Word of God.

B. God the Creator. We accept the Genesis account of creation (Gen 1:1; Exo 20:2-3) and believe that man came by direct creation of God and not by evolution (Col 1:16, 17; John 1:3; Rev 4:11). We believe in one God, who is Creator of heaven and earth; who is Spirit, light, love, truth, eternal, almighty, infallible, unchangeable, infinitely wise, just, holy; and that God eternally exists in Three Persons: Father, Son (John 10:30; 1Co 8:6) and Holy Spirit (Gen 1:2; 2Co 13:14).

23. Stop and read the narrative of the Baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3:13-17. Now describe how the narrative reveals the tri-unity of God.

a. The Father is seen as _____.

b. The Son is in the _____ getting _____ by John the Baptist.

c. The Holy Spirit _____.

C. Jesus Christ: God’s Son. We believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the Eternal Word manifested in flesh. We believe that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary (Isa 7:14; 9:6; Mat 1:18-25; Luke 1:30-35), and that He is both the Son of God and God the Son (John 1:1-2,14,18; 3:16; Phi 2:5-8). We believe that our Lord arose from the dead, according to the Scriptures, and in the same body, though glorified, in which He had lived and died (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:20; Acts 2:32), and that His resurrection body is the pattern of that body which, at the return of Christ, will be given to all resurrected believers (1Co 15:23, 42-45; Phi 3:20-21). We believe that our Lord ascended to heaven (Heb 1:3), is seated at His Father’s right hand (Heb 1:13) assuring us of the perfection of His work of redemption, and that He now as Head over all things to the Church (Eph 1:22-23) is engaged on behalf of the saved as Intercessor (Heb 7:25) and Advocate (1Jo 2:1).

24. From Matthew 1:21, we learn that the Son of God was given the name _____, because He will save His people from their sins.

25. What word from paragraph C means master or owner?

D. The Holy Spirit. We believe that the Holy Spirit, being the third Person of the Godhead, convicts men of sin (John 16:7-11), regenerates (John 3:6), indwells (John 14:17; Rom. 8:9; 1Co 3:16; 6:19), baptizes (1Co 12:13), comforts (John 14:26), seals (Eph 1:13; 4:30), and fills (Eph 5:18)—setting believers apart to a holy life; and that He keeps and empowers believers day by day (Rom 8:2,4,12,14). We believe that He is the Teacher of the Word of God and our Guide for daily life (1Jo 2:20-27; 1Pe 1:1). We believe that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the giving of spiritual gifts to every believer for the equipping of the saints (Rom 12:3-8, 1Pe 4:10-11). God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:7-12).

26. Stop and read Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. What spiritual gifts do you have?

We believe that speaking in tongues and working sign miracles (1Co 1:22; 14:22,28) in the church were for the purpose of pointing to and authenticating the apostles as revealers of divine truth, and sign miracles were never intended to be characteristic of the lives of all believers. (1Co 12:4-11, 28; Heb 2:1-4). We believe the “tongues” described in Acts 2:4-11, 10:46, and 19:6 was the supernatural ability to speak in a known language that did not need an interpreter. Moreover, we believe that the way

“tongues” is practiced in some churches is akin to the confusion Paul criticizes in 1 Corinthians 14:23, 26, 33 and is not of God.

27. The above paragraph encourages caution before definitely saying someone _____ in tongues.

We believe that God can heal any time He chooses to, but the “apostolic gift of healing” (not to be confused with miracles God performs today) (1Co 12:9-10; 29-30) was for the apostolic age (Mark 16:17-20); it accompanied the apostles (2Co 12:12); it was a sign primarily to unbelieving Jews (1Co 1:22) and is, therefore, no longer widespread, normal, or necessary during the “times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24; Rom 11:25). We furthermore acknowledge that, though Paul was perhaps the greatest healer of the New Testament (Acts 20:9; Acts 28:8), he could neither heal himself (2Co 12:7-10) nor his closest friends and associates (1Ti 5:23; 2Ti 4:20). We do find solace in knowing that God does heal within His will and sometimes answers the prayers of His people for healing (Jam 5:13-18) and that He is, by nature, a God Who takes pleasure in the wellness of His people (Exo 15:26), but this should in no way interfere with Christians seeking medical attention when necessary.

GOD-GLORIFYING REASONS TO JOIN BEREAN

3) Joining Berean gives you a legitimate voice in the church. Our church polity is pluralistic elder-led congregationalism — members of Berean have a voice. If you are not a member, you can't approve or disapprove of recommendations brought before the church. You don't see the reports and know the health of the church. Why wouldn't you want to be able to participate in making important decisions? Read 1 Corinthians 5 and see the church doing its spiritual duty. Ask yourself, is my lack of commitment coming from the Spirit dwelling in me, or is my spirit grieving the Holy Spirit?

28. Berean sees no evidence in the NT that the age of the A _____ continued beyond the original twelve, Paul and Barnabas.

E. Satan: the Fallen One. We believe there is a personal devil, a being of great cunning and power (Job 1:6-7; Eze 28:11-19; Isa 14:12-17; Mat 4:1-11) who is “The prince of the air” (Eph 2:2), “The prince of this world” (John 12:31), and “The god of this age” (2Co 4:4). We believe that he can exert vast power but only so far as God suffers him to do so and that he shall ultimately be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone and shall be tormented day and night forever (Rev 20:10).

29. Satan has the ability to stand before _____ and make accusations against G_____'s c_____.

F. Man and His Sin. We believe that man was originally created in the image and after the likeness of God (Gen 1:26) that he fell through sin (Gen 2:17); that he, as a consequence of his sin, lost his spiritual life (John 6:53), becoming dead in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1-3; 1Ti 5:6), and that he became subject to the power of the devil (1Jo 3:8). We also believe that this spiritual death, or total depravity of human nature (Gen 6:5, John 3:6; 5:40), has been transmitted to the entire human race of man (Psa 14:1-3; 51:5; Jer 17:9) the Man Christ Jesus alone being excepted; and, hence, that every child of Adam is born into the world with a nature which not only possesses no spark of divine life, but is essentially corrupt in body, mind, and soul (Rom 3:10-19; 8:6,7).

30. Based on the above paragraph, there is nothing _____ within mankind apart from God's intervention.

G. God's Salvation of Mankind. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins (1Pe 2:24; 3:18) according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice (John 1:29; 2Co 5:14; Heb 10:5-19), and that all who believe in Him (Acts 16:31; Rom 10:9,10) are justified on the ground of His shed blood (Rom 3:25-26; 1Jo 1:7). We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior are instantaneously born again of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-8) and thereby become the children of God (John 1:12, 13; 3:16; 5:24; 14:16; Rom 8:16). We believe in the eternal security (John 10:28, 29; 8:31; 13:1; 17:11) and everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the eternal conscious punishment of the lost (Mat 25:41; Mark 9:42-48; Rev 20:11-15). The preservation of all believers rests upon the finished work of Christ, the promises of God (Phi 1:6; Heb 7:25; 1Pe 1:5; 1Jo 5:4, 18; Jude 24), the gracious election, and the sovereign predestination of God (Rom 8:28-39).

31. Salvation rests entirely upon _____. To receive the gift of salvation, mankind is required to b_____.

H. The Church:

a. Composition: We believe that the Church of Jesus Christ (Mat 16:16-18; Titus 3:7) is composed solely of those who have been redeemed (Titus 2:14), washed in His blood (Rev 1:5), regenerated (Titus 3:5), and sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13-14). We believe that they are saved to worship and to serve; and that they should seek to live a holy life by separating themselves from and forsaking all that might dishonor God, cast discredit on His cause, or weaken their testimony (Titus 3:12).

32. We believe that the church is made up of those who fit into what four categories?

a. _____ c. _____

b. _____ d. _____

b. Mission: We believe that it is the responsibility and privilege of all who are saved to seek to win others to Christ, to the “Uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8); that God has given the Church a Great Commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations (Mat 28:19-20) so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21). As ambassadors of Christ, we must use all available means to go to the foreign nations and not wait for them to come to us (2Co 5:20).

33. Define the Great Commission in your own words. _____

c. Ordinances: We believe that Christ instituted the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper (Luke 22:19, 20) to be observed until He comes (1Co 11:23-26). We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer (Mat 28:19-20; Acts 10:47; 19:5) in water to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior. It pictures our death to sin and resurrection to a new life, and that it is a prerequisite to church membership (Acts 8:36-39; John 3:23; Mat 3:16; Col 2:12). We believe that the Lord’s Supper is the showing forth of His death until He comes again and should always be preceded always by self-examination (1Co 11:23-38).

34. What part do baptism and the Lord’s Supper have in our salvation?

35. What does baptism picture? _____

d. Civil Law: We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the Church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the Church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members (1Co 6:1-8; Eph 4:31-32). We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander.

GOD-GLORIFYING REASONS TO JOIN BEREAN

4) Joining Berean sets the conditions for you to be able to use your spiritual gifts to the fullest ability in the body of Christ. Non-members are not permitted to teach or lead. Yet this may be the will of God for your life. You may have spiritual gifts that will not be used at Berean because we believe it is quite prudent to limit the office of teacher, deacon, and elder to church members. I trust you understand the necessity of vetting all teachers of the Bible in the church. And the same for deacon and elder.

36. After reading the above verses, why should Christians not take other Christians to court?

e. Gender Roles: We believe that God intends marriage to last until one spouse dies (Mal 2:14-17; Mat 9:3-12; Rom 7:1-3). When circumstances cause a believer to become legally separated, or estranged from their spouse, they must hold fast to the truth of Scripture and seek the healing of their marriage, devoting their time and energy to that pursuit. There is absolutely no reason for a married person who is separated to seek out, allow, or cultivate the romantic affections of a person or people who are not their current spouse. This would include close friendships with the opposite sex that could lead to what would be seen as a dating relationship. Further, the separated believer should wholeheartedly seek the restoration of their marriage until it is no longer possible within biblical standards (i.e., remarriage or death). (1Co 7:10-11) Recognizing the nature of sin and the redemptive power of Jesus Christ, the church does allow remarried or divorced men to hold positions of leadership, to include deacon and elder, provided there is longitudinal evidence that they have established a reputation that meets the "husband of one wife" or more precisely, the original language's "one woman man" requirement found within the Biblical qualifications for those positions (1Ti 3:2,12; Titus 1:6). We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God (Gal 3:28) but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home (Col 3:18; 1Ti 3:4-5, 12) and church (1Ti 2:8-15). The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church.

defects, gender selection, birth, or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother are acceptable. We believe that the direct taking of an innocent human life is a moral evil, regardless of the intention (Exo 20:13, 23:7; Job 3:16; Mat 5:21). Life is a gift of God and must be respected from conception until natural death. Thus, we believe that an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder contrary to the will of God (Exo 20:12). Discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be a legitimate refusal or overzealous treatment.

41. Human life begins at c_____.

i. Parenting Responsibility: Children are a heritage from the Lord (Psa 127:3-5).

Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example (Col 3:18-21; 1Pe 3:1-7) and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction (Pro 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Eph 6:1-4).

42. Read Deuteronomy 6:7. Parents are to be teaching their children when they are s_____, w_____, l_____ down and r_____ up.

j. Alcohol: We believe that Christians may cause a weaker brother or sister to stumble or be offended by the consumption of wine, beer, and other alcoholic beverages, (Rom 14:21, 1Co 8:9) and that being intoxicated is forbidden (Eph 5:18, 1Co 6: 9b.-10, 11:21) and is a work of the flesh (Gal 5:21, 1Pe 4:2-3).

Drunkenness brings reproach to the cause of Christ and has negative effects on the human body, the family, and the body of Christ. We base this position on the words of our Lord Jesus who tells us that being intoxicated may keep us from being ready for His imminent return (Luke 21:34) and numerous Biblical passages that prohibit drunkenness because of the negative effects of alcohol such as the following: physical and emotional suffering, strife, and sorrow (Pro 23:29-30); poverty (Pro 21:17, 23:21); sexual immorality (Gen 9:21, Rom 13:13); a disregard for the work of the Lord (Is. 5:12); error in judgment (Pro 20:1, Is. 28:7); loss of friendships and relationships (1Co 5:11); and punishment from God (Mat 24:49-51). Based on an objective analysis of all that the Word of God presents concerning alcohol, the church encourages its members, by the grace of God, to adopt a personal total abstinence standard. Furthermore, BBC believes the medicinal and purifying aspects of wine are no longer necessary for life in the twenty-first century. Pastors and elders (1Ti 3.3), deacons, teachers, supervisors, directors, and employees of the church are prohibited from consuming any alcoholic beverage based on the spirit and intent of Lev 10:9 and Pro 31:4-5.

43. What is your takeaway from this article on alcohol?

k. Civil Authority: We believe that civil government is of Divine appointment for the interests and good of human society and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored (Mat 10:10; 22:21; Rom 13:17; 1Pe 2:17), and obeyed (Titus 3:1; 1Pe 2:13-14) except in things opposed to the Word of God - the Bible (Exo 18:21, 22; 2Sa 23:3; Psa 72:11; Acts 4:19, 20; 5:20; 23:5; Rev 10:16).

GOD-GLORIFYING REASONS TO JOIN BEREAN

5) Joining Berean is helpful for the corporate witness of the church in the community. Your formal commitment to membership speaks volumes to your level of commitment to Christ and the Christ the unbelieving world sees. We don't go to church—we are the church. In a day and age, when people are struggling with commitment and apathy—we need to be counter-cultural. We are salt and light. Formal membership declares, loud and clear— "I am committed to being a faithful engaged member until God moves me to another city."

44. Read 1 Peter 2:13-14. According to v. 14, government exists to _____ evildoers and praise those who do the right thing.

I. Church Unity: We believe that we should demonstrate love for others (John 13:35), not only toward fellow believers, but also toward those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly (Gal 6:1). God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or the use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions (Psa 133:1).

J. End Times: We believe in the blessed hope that at the end of this present age, Jesus Christ will return to this earth personally, visibly, physically, and triumphantly with great power and glory. He will gather the elect, judge in righteousness both the living and the dead, reward the saints, bring about the ultimate defeat of Satan, lift the curse, create a new heaven and a new earth, and establish His eternal kingdom. (Titus 2:13, Mat 24:30, Acts 1:11, 2Ti 4:1, 2Co 5:10, Rev 11:15, 20:10, 21:10, 22:3, 2Pe 1:11, 3:13). We believe Christ's Second Coming will be preceded by a period of great tribulation unlike anything the world has ever seen and will be accompanied by the raising of the dead, both the just and the unjust, to determine each man's eternal fate. (Mat 24:21-30, Acts 24:15, Dan 12:2, Acts 17:31, 1Co 15:52, 1Th 4:16-17). We believe the destiny of the righteous, God's elect, will be dwelling and reigning with God on the new earth forever, and the destiny of anyone whose name is not written in the book of life is the second death, conscious eternal torment in the lake of fire. (Mat 25:46, John 14.3, Rev 20:14-15, 21:3, 22:5). We believe that the desire of all true Christians is "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen." (Rev 22:20)

These Articles of Faith do not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Articles of Faith accurately represent the teaching of the Bible and, therefore, are binding upon all members, staff and volunteers.

The Lord's Supper

A TIME OF COMMUNION AND REMEMBRANCE

Berean Baptist Church normally celebrates the Lord's Supper quarterly and on other special occasions. We customarily do this right after the preaching service. We believe the Lord's Supper is an ordinance established by the Head of the Church—Jesus Christ. All pastors, teachers, deacons, ministry leaders, and church members are fully expected to participate in the Lord's Supper unless they are providentially hindered.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is an active and outward remembrance of His death; it should be observed periodically until He comes again and should always be preceded by self-examination (Mat 26:17-30; 1Co 11:23-28).

We believe the Bible teaches that believers are spiritually strengthened in at least four ways by their active participation in the Lord's Supper. They—by faith—gain strength in:

1. Their knowledge of the remarkable love Jesus demonstrated toward them through His death
2. The realization that their sins have been pardoned by the grace of God
3. The awareness that they are part of a large spiritual family—the body of Christ
4. The anticipation of the return of their Lord Jesus and the reality of everlasting life with God

A correct understanding of the meaning of the Lord's Supper and an appropriate response in faith are both necessary for the believer to be strengthened.

We believe the act of observing the Lord's Supper is a proclamation of the gospel; therefore, we make no effort to hide the time of the Lord's Supper from the general public, nor do we dismiss those who are not members of our church.

Our communion table is both open and closed:

It is open to born-again Christians, who:

- Are members in good standing of BBC or another Bible-believing, Christ-exalting, New Testament church (or are seeking God's will concerning church membership)
- Have renounced and confessed all known sin in their lives; and
- Are striving to obey the commandments of the Lord

It is closed to adults and children, who:

- Have not repented and placed their faith in the Lord Jesus as their Savior
- Are not pursuing membership in a Bible-believing, Christ-exalting, New Testament church

- Are living in blatant disobedience to the commandments of our Lord
- Have an ought with a brother or sister in Christ, are under church discipline, or are living in violation of any behavior outlined in the BBC Covenant, Articles of Faith, and/or Constitution
- By the conviction of the Holy Spirit, are unworthy to partake (1Co 11:27).

BBC uses grape juice with no alcohol content as a symbolic representation of our Savior's blood and small square pieces of unleavened bread as a symbolic representation of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. The pastors and elders administer the Lord's Supper, and the deacons assist in serving the congregation. While we hold in great reverence the symbolic wonder of the Lord's Supper, we adamantly reject any doctrine of transubstantiation (the doctrine that the elements change into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ). We do not believe that the Lord's Supper provides justifying grace. We affirm with great conviction that repentance of sins and faith in the work that Christ did on the cross are the gifts of God by which He saves us.

Church Membership Prohibitions

A person cannot become a member of Berean Baptist Church if he or she is—

- Not a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God
- Not willing to publicly profess their faith in Jesus as the Christ during everyday living
- Not willing to be baptized by immersion after faith in Jesus Christ
- Unwilling to live by the church covenant and Articles of Faith
- A homosexual or lesbian
- A member of a racial hate group such as the KKK, skin heads, Neo Nazis or any such group
- An unrepentant child molester
- A member of a secret society, such as a Masonic Lodge
- An illegal alien
- Not willing to abandon an allegiance to Roman Catholicism
- Living with another person as husband or wife without being married
- Married and has more than one wife or husband
- Also a Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, or member of another world religion
- Also a Jehovah's Witness, Mormon, or member of a similar cult
- Unwilling to be faithful in their attendance at church services
- A business owner or employed at a place that would clearly and obviously be in conflict with the Church Covenant, Articles of Faith, and values of this church and bring discredit to Christ and His Church, such as a strip parlor, triple X movie theater, or other similar places
- Still involved with unresolved issues with his or her former church
- Engaged in adulterous or Biblically unlawful sexual relationships
- Unwilling to help support the financial needs of the church

Our Covenant

As a bond of unity among us, Berean Baptist Church accepts for its members the following covenant:

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

We fully realize that the strength to uphold this covenant comes from the grace of God our Father, the shed blood of God the Son, and the power of the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit.

We promise to actively pursue personal holiness; to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church's spiritual growth and unity; to faithfully abide by the doctrines and behaviors outlined in this church's Articles of Faith; and to give cheerfully of our time, talents, and finances for the support of this ministry and its missionaries.

We further promise to faithfully attend the church's worship services, to maintain personal spiritual disciplines; to teach our children the Word of God; to share the gospel with our relatives and acquaintances; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements; and to avoid all gossip. We promise that we will love and pray for each other and in times of distress help one another.

We promise to endeavor to obey the commandments of our Lord Jesus and to abstain from anything that would cause our fellow brother or sister in Christ to stumble or that will bring reproach to the name of Jesus Christ.

We further realize that if we should fail to live up to the promises we have made, our brothers and sisters in Christ will always strive for our reconciliation and spiritual restoration. However, if we partake in a sustained and unrepentant violation of an Article of Faith, we will be brought under church discipline in accordance with the Church Constitution.

We make this covenant with each other for the express purpose of glorifying God as the visible representation of the body of Christ.

