

A DECLARATION OF THE FAITH, COVENANT AND PRACTICE OF THE LIVING SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH

Our Covenant

Forasmuch as Almighty God by His grace has been pleased to call us out of darkness into His marvelous light, and all of us have been regularly baptized upon a profession of our faith in Christ Jesus and have given up ourselves to the Lord and to one another in a gospel church way to be governed and guided by a proper discipline agreeable to the word of God; We do therefore in the name of our Lord Jesus and by His assistance covenant and agree to keep up the discipline of the church we are members of in the most brotherly affection towards each other while we endeavor particularly to observe the following rules.

In brotherly love to pray for each other, to watch over one another and if need be in the most tender and affectionate manner to reprove one another; that is, if we discover anything amiss in a brother, to go and tell him his fault according to the direction given by our Lord in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, and not to be whispering and backbiting. We also agree with God's assistance to pray in our families, attend our church meetings, observe the Lord's day and keep it holy, and not absent ourselves from the communion of the Lord's Supper without a lawful excuse; to be ready to communicate to the defraying of the church's expenses and for the support of the ministry.

These things we do covenant and agree to observe and keep sacred in the name of and by the assistance of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

***A Summary of Our Declaration of Faith**

1. We believe in the Divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures – both Old and New Testament and receive them as a gracious revelation of the mind and will of God (Deut. 4:2; Ps. 19:7; Prov. 30:5,6; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; Rev. 22:18; John 5:39). We believe that therein are revealed all the doctrines and truths which we here state and believe (2 Tim. 3:15-17). [We hold that the Holy Scriptures (King James Version) to be the sole authority for our Faith and Practice.]

2. We believe that there is but one living and true God (Exo. 3:14; Deut. 4:35; Deut. 6:4; Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 2:2,3; Ps. 90:2, 115:3, 139:7-10; Ecc. 3:14; Isa. 46:9; Jer. 10:10, 23:24; Mal. 3:6; Mark 12:29; John 4:24; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16); that there are Three Persons in the Godhead – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:19; John 1:1; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 John 5:7; Jude 20,21); and that these Three Persons are equal in nature, power and glory, and we believe that the Son and the Holy Ghost are as truly and as properly God as the Father (John 10:15,30; Eph. 2:22; Heb. 1:3, Heb. 9:14).

3. We believe in the everlasting and unchangeable love of God (Jer. 31:3) and that before the foundation of the world the Father did elect a certain number of the human race unto everlasting salvation whom He did predestinate unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will (Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:2-11; 1 Thess. 5:9; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 John 3:1; 1 Peter 1:2, 2:9) and we believe that in fulfilling this gracious design He did make a covenant of Grace and peace with the Son and with the

Holy Ghost on behalf of those persons thus chosen (John 1:17) and that in this covenant the Son was appointed a Savior and all spiritual blessings provided for the elect, and also that their persons with all the grace and glory designed for them were put into the hands of the Son as their Covenant Head and made His care and charge (Ps. 111:8,9; Isa. 54:10, 55:3; John 6:37, 17:2; Acts 4:12; Rom. 8:29,30; Eph. 2:13; Heb. 2:13; 6:17,18; 8:8-13).

4. We believe in the Fall of Adam and that by it the whole of the human race became involved in and guilty of Original Sin; and that as they are born into the world the whole of their posterity are in consequence actual transgressors against God (Rom. 5:12-21; Ps. 58:3) and we believe that by the fall all men were rendered both unable and unwilling spiritually to believe in, seek after, or love God until born again and called by the Holy Ghost (Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Job 19:4; 24:4; Ps. 51:5; Jer. 13:23; Rom. 3:10-24; 1 Cor. 15:22; Eph. 2:3, 1 John 5:19).

5. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, being set up from everlasting as the Mediator of the new Covenant and having engaged to be the Surety of His people, did in the fullness of time really and truly assume human nature, and not before in whole or in part (Prov. 8:23). We believe that though He existed from all eternity as the eternal Son of God (John 1:18; Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 1:5,8; 2 John 3; Rev. 1:8), the human soul of the Lord Jesus did not exist before it was created and formed in His body by Him who forms the soul of man within him, when that body was conceived under the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:14; Gal. 4:4) and that in it He really suffered, bled, and died as the Substitute and Surety for His people in their room and stead and for no others (John 10:15, 20; 17:9, 13) whereby together with His holy spotless life, He fulfilled the law and satisfied all the claims of justice as well as made a way for all those blessings which are needful for His people both for now and eternity (Heb. 9:22-28).

6. We believe that the eternal redemption which Christ has obtained by the shedding of His blood is special and particular (Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:12-15) – that is to say, that it was intentionally designed only for the Elect of God, the sheep of Christ, who therefore alone share in the special and peculiar blessings thereof (Isa. 35:10; John 10:15; Acts 13:48; 20:28; Rom 5:8-10; 8:33, 34; 9:13, 15, 16).

7. We believe that the justification of God's elect is only by the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ being imputed to them (Isa. 45:24; 64:6; Jer. 23:6; Matt. 7:18; Rom. 4:4, 5; 5:19; 10:4; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9; Titus 3:5) without consideration of any works of righteousness before or after calling done by them and that the full and free pardon of their sins past, present, and to come is only through the blood of Christ according to the riches of His grace (Rom. 3:20-27; 4:2; 9:11; 2 Tim. 1:9; Heb. 1:3; 9:22; 1 Pet. 3:18).

8. We believe the new birth or being born again is not an act of man's free will and natural power but that it springs from the operation of the mighty, efficacious and irresistible grace of God (Psa. 110:3; John 1:13; 3:7,8; 6:44,63,65).

9. We believe in the resurrection of the body both of the just and the unjust (Acts 24:15), that the just, the elect shall be raised up in glory and honor (Matt. 24:31) and be openly acknowledged and fully acquitted in the Judgment Day before angels, devils, and sinners and made fully and eternally blessed both in body and soul; and that the wicked shall be raised up to be condemned body and soul, to the unspeakable torments of Hell forever and ever (Dan. 12:2; John 5:28, 29; Acts 23:6; Rom. 6:23; 8:11, 23; 1 Cor. 15:52; Job 19:25-27).

10. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Christ to be continued in His assembly until His second coming and that believers are the only proper subjects for baptism and that

immersion is the only mode, and that none except those who have been regularly baptized are admitted in the communion service. (Rom. 6:4; 1 Cor. 11:24-29; Acts 8:36-38; John 13:1-17; 1 Tim. 5:10).

11. We believe that God has ordained good works; that His children should walk in them, and that good works are only such as God hath commanded in His word (Eph. 2:10). We do not believe that the Doctrine of Election, Special Atonement, and Final Perseverance of the Saints will induce a Child of God to live ungodly but being born again by the Holy Ghost, he will desire to do good works having lost his love of sin (John 15:16; Titus 2:14).

12. We believe that the Church is a congregation of baptized believers (Matt. 16:18; 18:17), and it is the only ecclesiastical authority on earth subject alone unto Christ her head for all her acts (Acts 6:3) and that her form of government is congregational, each member having an equal voice in all her acts (Col. 1:18).

*(This is a summary of the London Confession of Faith of 1646, which was adopted by the Assembly, September 17, 2017.)

Why the organization of the Living Springs Baptist Church

In seeking for a church in Coeur d Alene that taught Baptist principles and believed the old doctrine of Particular Redemption was found to be fruitless. We determined, having scriptural baptism and proper N.T. authority, to organize the Living Springs Baptist Church and to continue teaching and preaching the old faith, and the old Doctrines that seem not to be not available in the Coeur d Alene area.

The Purpose for organizing the Living Springs Baptist Church

The purpose of the Living Springs Baptist Church is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus, God the Father through obedience to Word of God and the worship of the triune Godhead. To this end the church will execute the Great Commission in the preaching of the gospel to all men, for those who believe that gospel, we are to baptize them in the name of the Father, and [of] the Son, and [of] the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things the Lord Jesus Christ has commanded by proclaiming the whole counsel of God. By these means the church will endeavor to be used instrumentally to perpetuate the faith once delivered to the saints.

DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH AS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

We believe the New Testament definition of the word church in the Greek, is a local congregation of baptized believers that have covenanted together in gospel order. That the usage of the Greek word 'ecclesia' cannot be interpreted in any other way but as a local congregation. In the use of proper interpretation and grammar the word is used to express either a local congregation (the church at Corinth) or the plural, (the churches of Galatia) or as an institution (I will build my church). We reject, and not without warrant, the Catholic and Protestant views and definition of the word "church".

A church is an assembly of believers who have been baptized on the profession of their faith by a duly authorized administrator and have agreed together by covenant to carry out the Great Commission under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and in obedience to the Word of God. *Living Springs Baptist Church* (hereafter, *LSBC*) is such a church, and when the word church is henceforth used in this Declaration, it is understood that only a church as herein defined qualifies as a New Testament Church.

See Articles 33-35

ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH

The church as an institution is of Divine origin. The First church was founded by the Lord Jesus Himself during His earthly ministry, this first assembly of believers who had been baptized by John the Baptist, came into existence when the Son of God walked on the seashore of Galilee and called-out His first disciples to follow him. This assembly was the first church and the model for all other churches to follow. From this first church and its ministry have descended all local New Testament Churches in every age. *Living Springs Baptist Church* has descended from the Church of Jerusalem through the ancient Novatian, Donatist, Paulician, Albigensian, and Waldensian Churches to the Anabaptist and Baptist Churches of Europe, England, and Wales to the early American Baptist Churches. *LSBC* is thus a New Testament Church in organization, doctrine, and practice.

THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH

For a local assembly to be a New Testament Church, it must be constituted with and composed of professedly born-again believers who have been baptized by immersion by a preaching disciple (being properly called and recognized by the church, See Article 46) on the profession of their faith and covenanted together in gospel order. This is the criteria for a N.T. Gospel (Baptist) church. In the absence of Scripturally baptized believers no church can exist. *LSBC* is constituted with and shall ever be composed of Scripturally baptized professed believers, who have covenanted together under the Headship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Word of God to do the Lord's work.

We believe the church to be a garden enclosed, thus membership in this body has Biblical requirements that must be met before a person is included in this Body.

- (1) To those who have professed faith in Christ and give credible evidence of their conversion, being scripturally baptized may be received into the assembly.
- (2) To those who seek to unite with *LSBC* from a church of like faith and order and whose testimony gives evidence of a genuine conversion and gospel obedience, these may be admitted into the fellowship of the church.

Membership in Living Springs Baptist Church may be granted to those seeking it after the Pastor or an appointed member examines their spiritual qualifications, their good works, doctrine, and fitness for membership and recommends them to the church. The church in turn may examine their qualifications if they desire for membership before being received. Upon being received by a majority vote of the church they shall have the full rights and privileges of church membership and fellowship in the ordinances.

Church membership is not a light thing to be treated by casual attendance. To be a member of this assembly is a privilege and each member is expected to fulfill their Covenant duties in a most godly way and in accordance with the Holy Scripture.

THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

See Articles 36-38

There are only two official officers in the church, the Elder/Bishop/Overseer and Deacon(s).

The duties of the Bishops/Elders shall be those assigned by our Lord and the inspired writers of the New Testament in the following passages: John 21:15-17; Acts 20:17-35; 1 Timothy 4:6,7, 13-16, 17-22;6:11-20; 2 Timothy 1:13, 14; 2:1-7; 14- 16, 22-26; 3:14-17; 4:1-5; Titus 2:1-1-, 15;3:1,2,8-11; and 1 Peter 5:1-4 (For the sake of this Document, "Pastor" may be used interchangeably with Elder/ Bishop).

No man shall ever be elected to the office of Pastor/Elder or Deacon who does not agree to and uphold the principles and practices set forth in this Declaration of Faith, Covenant and Practice and the Declaration of Trust.

The Pastor

The Pastor shall never be considered an employee of *LSBC*. The pastor of *LSBC* shall not receive a salary and so mistreat him as an employee, but he shall be given contributions or gifts for his living expenses according to the abilities of the Church from the offerings of its membership. The means or methods by which these gifts and contributions are to be distributed is to be determined by the men of the church and approved by the assembly.

While the Pastor is answerable to the church for his moral conduct and subject to its discipline as any other member, he is answerable to the Lord Jesus Christ for his leadership and ministry in the church. He does not answer to the deacons or any group of leaders in the church but only to the Lord. However, the assembly must hold him accountable if that ministry and leadership is contrary to the holy Scripture.

If a man, serving as the Elder/Pastor of the Church, be found undersupplied in his abilities or gifts, not related to his character, and because of these deficiencies he is unable to perform his duties well, he shall be asked to vacate the office without any disgrace or prejudice, and shall be retained as a useful member of the church. This is not the fault of the one who was placed in the office but the failure of the church to properly identify the qualities necessary for the office of Elder/Pastor.

Deacons

The qualifications necessary to the Office of Deacon is found in I Timothy 3:8-13. The duties of the Deacon(s) shall be to assist the pastor by overseeing the temporal affairs of the church according to the example of Acts 6:1-7. Deacons are appointed by the assembly upon the request of the Elder, to serve by overseeing the temporal affairs assigned to them by the Elder. The Deacon(s) hold no authority over the church nor are they to assume such authority in the absence of the Elder. The Deaconship is not a life-time appointment but necessary as long as the Pastor has need of them. Those who serve as deacon(s) do so by the appointment of the Church.

What of Elders?

Many churches practice a plurality of Elders for leadership in their churches. This is the Presbyterian form of Government in their churches and not so practiced in Baptist churches. With that being said, there were elders appointed in the early churches and we believe, and in accordance with the Scripture, the church *may* recognize as leaders in the church those as elders within its membership who are spiritually mature men of the church, whether ordained or not, *having earned* the respect of the church by virtue of their years of faithful service in the Lord's work. These may serve, by virtue of their years of faithful service, to give assistance to the Pastor in the ministry of teaching, be his counselors and mentors in the gospel ministry and aid him in his official capacity. Other helper positions may be appointed by the Elder and approved by the church to assist him in his duties and functions in the administration of the church. This is not an official or Biblical office but simply a recognition that the

Lord has set in the church faithful men to assist in the ministry.

THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

The Church recognizes only two Gospel ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

See Article 39-41 for Baptism

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the N.T. church instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ himself. It is to be observed by our Assembly and every member should participate in it after a solemn self-examination. As often as we eat this supper, we are to remember the Lord's death until He returns. The elements to be used in this supper are only and always unleavened bread and fruit of the vine, which typify the broken, sinless body and blood of Christ. Since the term "fruit of the vine" is the only expression for the drink used in the Lord's Supper by the LORD himself in the New Covenant, we are compelled to define and comply with that terminology. The "fruit of the vine" can be defined as pure grape juice, vinegar, wine or the juice rendered from steeping or boiling of raisins; each meets the requisites of the Scripture. Our assembly chooses to use pure grape juice when it is convenient and available.

Mt. 26:26-30; Mk. 24:22-25; Lk. 22:17-20; I Co. 11:23-25. (Numb. 6:3, defines what is "fruit of the vine.")

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

See Articles 44-46

Living Springs Baptist Church shall be governed by the Lord Jesus Christ, its Head, through the teachings of the New Testament as our only rule of faith and practice. Our *Declaration of Faith, Covenant and Practice* reflects and defines what we believe the New Testament teaches regarding proper gospel order for the Lord's church. We strive to adhere strictly to New Testament precepts and practice. Therefore, we regard any whose design is to overthrow the leadership or the Declarations of this church shall be immediately dismissed from the membership as the abomination spoken of in Proverbs 6:19 as "he that soweth discord among brethren."

Living Springs Baptist Church will follow its Elder/Pastor with the elders and men of the church who will make recommendations to the church in all matters of policy as they are led by the Holy Spirit and the teachings of the New Testament. In all issues, the decision of the congregation shall be final, and there is no appeal to a higher authority, the authority of the church being the court of final appeal and the New Testament being the only rule of church law. The Elder/Bishop cannot overrule the Church except where such practices/policies are plainly contrary to the Holy Scripture. Any policies found to be contrary to the New Testament or not taught by word, precept or example shall be void.

Good and holy traditions shall be maintained but not at the expense of the Holy Scripture or the leading of the Holy Spirit (order of service, singing of hymns, dinners, etc.) Thus, *LSBC* recognizes Congregational Church Government as the standard Biblical form of government for the church while acknowledging the oversight of the Elder/Pastor and the role of elders (the spiritually mature men of the church).

In regard to recommendations before the church, all routine and simple matters may be passed by a simple majority. In more complex matters and matters regarding our Faith and Practice, these cannot be passed by a simple majority, the church, as a whole, must be in full agreement before passing any

recommendation. Any changes in our Declaration of Faith and Practice must be announced publicly in three consecutive meetings of the church.

It seems in modern times the wicked practice of secret meetings of members to discuss or to bring into question the fitness of the Elder/Pastor has some popularity. Such meetings cause divisions in the church and is expressly forbidden in the Scripture. Such persons involved in this act of causing division in the Church shall come immediately under the censorship (discipline) of the church body. Any such discussions are to take place with the Elder in private to resolve those things in question. (The usage of Matthew 18:15-17 would be a useful guide in this situation.)

All matters of the church shall be considered at the time appointed by the Pastor and announced in advance unless issues arise that demand an immediate consideration to maintain the worship, continuity and work of the church. When such needs arise, they shall be decided by a unanimous vote in one of the regular worship services of the church or deferred until an appointed meeting to address such issues.

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCH

See Articles 42 & 43

Membership in the *LSBC* is a privilege, not a right, since it is granted by the church to those who meet the criteria in the New Testament as set forth in this Declaration. When any member ceases to meet this criterion, that member will be subject to the discipline of the church which may result in being cast from her fellowship.

At all times, the Church is to remain impartial and judge solely on the teachings of the Holy Scripture. All discipline is to be done in love for Christ, the brethren and the Lord's church. The whole purpose of discipline is for the unity of the brethren, the glory of Christ's church and the restoration of our wayward brethren.

THE DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH

Being a regular Baptist Church, *Living Springs Baptist Church* shall forever hold to the historic "faith once delivered to the saints," (Jude 3). This faith is expressed in the 1646 London Confession of Faith (Baptist) which was adopted by the *Living Springs Baptist Church* when it was organized on September 17th, 2017. *Living Springs Baptist Church* shall forever recognize and proclaim the Doctrines of Free and Sovereign Grace (sometimes called the Doctrines of Grace), the doctrine of the local, visible church, and the whole counsel of God.

Concerning Extraordinary Gifts: The extraordinary gifts given to the church in the first century such as healing, speaking in tongues, interpreting of tongues, working of miracles, prophesying in part, and knowing in part are not operational today. They were given while the New Testament Scriptures were being written and then ceased. I Cor. 13:8-12

Baptism of the Holy Spirit: The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the same as the "promise of the Father" of which Jesus Christ spoke before his ascension back to the Father. The baptism of the Holy Ghost came upon the assembled church on the day of Pentecost fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was a bestowment of power on the church to preach the gospel to every creature. A second manifestation of the baptism of the Holy Ghost came on the believers in Samaria at the preaching of Philip. A third came upon the gentiles who were converted at Caesarea at the preaching of the apostle Peter. Finally, a fourth came upon the twelve Ephesian brethren noted in the 19th chapter of Acts. There are no other Scriptural references to the baptism of the Holy Ghost. However, when a church is

constituted, they are made to drink of this same Spirit without the need of a special manifestation of that Spirit. There is no commandment for any individual to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit as taught in the Pentecostal assemblies. Eph. 2:21,22

Pagan Holidays: Pagan holidays ought to be shunned and not observed by the LORD's churches. There is no commandment in the Holy Scripture for holidays such as Christmas, Easter, Halloween, and Valentine's Day, etc., which are clearly of pagan origin. We reject the celebration of these pagan holidays in the meeting place of the church. (This article only addresses what the church's practice is. We do not regulate or impose upon the conscience of an individual what a person does in their home. We would encourage our members to comply with the spirit of this article and practice godliness in their homes.)

Pro. 4:14; 15:9; Jer. 10:2-4; Rom. 14:23

ASSOCIATING WITH OTHER CHURCHES

See Article 47

Living Springs Baptist Church is and shall always remain an independent and autonomous church, subject to no higher authority other than the Lord Jesus Christ and the sacred scriptures known as the King James Bible. While the *Living Springs Baptist Church* will not join any association or convention in which it surrenders any of its independence or autonomy, it may fellowship freely with other churches of like-faith and order who desire her fellowship. Said fellowship must impose no conditions upon the *Living Springs Baptist Church* other than those required by the Word of God. *Living Springs Baptist Church* will not force or attempt to coerce another church to conform to any of its particular practices as a condition of fellowship, neither shall the *Living Springs Baptist Church* permit another church or churches seeking its fellowship to dictate its faith and practice to us.

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

See Articles 48 & 50

LSBC is a spiritual body under the Great Shepherd of the Sheep and therefore cannot be involved with the affairs of this world. While we recognize the authority of the state over its members in their individual capacity as citizens of that state in which they reside, we do not and cannot recognize such authority over the spiritual body known as the *LSBC*. Therefore, we maintain that the *LSBC* is not subject to the state or any of its officers, representatives or authorities in its doctrine, officers, government, finances, discipline and practice. We maintain that the state has no business in the affairs of this church. We shall not incorporate under the laws of the State of Idaho since such an incorporation subjects the Church of Jesus Christ to the laws of the state and becomes a creation of the State of Idaho and a legal entity governed by the laws of the State of Idaho and become subjects of the US Constitution under the fourteenth Amendment. We maintain our First Amendment rights guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States of America.

In keeping with this separation of church and state *LSBC* shall not and cannot own, rent, lease, secure, obtain any property, deeds, insurance, bank accounts or manage any such articles, nor can any member of the church sign waivers, invoices, contracts, agreements or any such documents that might endanger our First Amendment rights under the Constitution of the United States of America. All property (real or personal) shall be owned by the Lord Jesus Christ and held in Common Law trust. Therefore, the trustee shall control, manage, sign and execute all matters regarding the trust with the expressed permission of

the church. (All matters regarding the trust are found in our *Resolution to Adopt a Declaration of Trust* and our *Declaration of Trust* documents.)

Because of the turmoil of our present day we (LSBC) felt it is necessary to add this to our Declaration of Faith and Practice concerning the taking of arms against established Government. The taking of arms against an established government is a very serious matter because they are the God-appointed ministers over men. Scripture commands every soul to be subject to those in authority. The saints are commanded of the LORD to be obedient to every ordinance of man, not only for wrath, but also for conscience's sake. To resist "the power" (authority) is to be condemned by that same authority. The present "authority" in our country is the U.S. Constitution, but its authority is being challenged every day and new laws and interpretations of that law have changed the tenor of our Constitution. While our Constitution allows for an overthrow of our government if it becomes tyrannical, let us be very careful how we act in such a case. Let us pray for our leaders that we might live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty if the Lord will.

Rom. 1:1-7; 2 Tim. 1:1-3; Tit. 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13-17; 2 Pet. 2:10, 11; Jude 8

MISSIONS OR CHURCH PLANTING

As a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, we desire to do all things according to gospel order and follow the precepts and examples given us in the word of God. Therefore, *LSBC* has adopted the following as expressly revealed in His word regarding church planting in foreign and domestic lands.

1. That it is to be done by preaching disciple, called and sent in Gospel Church Order.
2. That they must be sent out by two's or teams of men so appointed by God and sent by their church(es). From our search of the Scripture, we do not find men singly sent to the field without the support of other men on the field.
3. They must be Baptist having a clear and vital understanding of Baptist church perpetuity.
4. They must hold to the doctrine of free and sovereign grace.

We believe, that where possible, men should be sent to foreign or domestic fields for the preaching of the Gospel (apart from their wives) for an appointed season after which they return to their homes and families. We are not opposed to men taking their families to the foreign/domestic field to do extended gospel work however, we believe that such engagements be solely for the work of preaching the gospel, establishing churches (not *mission works), and the training of local Pastors.

*We do not find anywhere in the Scripture where "mission works" were established. We believe that a minimum of three people is necessary to form a church, being scripturally baptized and organized by a covenant based on the last commission of our Lord gave to his assembly (Matt. 28:19-20). We find no scriptural authority for the forming of a "mission work." We believe that a church ought to be formed as soon as one has gathered and baptized disciples. That they should seek from among those gathered men who are qualified and train them to be Pastor's over the new church.

MARRIAGE

Since marriage is God's institution, only He can define it. He instituted marriage between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:22-24). The Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, concurred with this definition of marriage and further confirmed it in His teachings (Matt. 19:3-8). Because the church is subject to its Head in everything (Eph. 5:24), it must and does concur with and affirm the definition of marriage as given by both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 2:22-24, Matt. 19:3-8; 1 Cor. 7:2-4; Eph. 5:28-31). Living Springs Baptist Church, therefore, rejects as invalid any definition of marriage that gives

acceptance to a civil or religious union between one man and a plurality of women, or between one woman and a plurality of men, or between two men, or between two women, or between a man and an animal, or between a woman and an animal, or between a man and a female child, or between a woman and a male child, or between a man and another man who has undergone transgender surgery, or between a woman who has undergone transgender surgery and another woman, or any incestuous relationship, or between an adult and an underage child. No legislature, court, or government of men has the right to call any such so-called unions marriage, since any kind of union that is not between one man and one woman does not meet the Biblical criteria for marriage and seeks to alter the design of marriage as instituted by God (*We apologize that we must use such course language and express such perverted ideas in this document. But for the safety and love of the brethren we need to state our Biblical position on this issue.*)

Therefore, let it be known to all men that no wedding ceremony will be performed in the facilities of the Living Springs Baptist Church other than that between one unmarried man and one unmarried woman. WE furthermore declare that marriages performed in its facilities shall be between a man and a woman who are both believers in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 6:14), for only they can adequately picture the relationship between Christ and His Church (Eph. 5:31, 32). Living Springs Baptist Church finally requires that at least one of those qualified to be married as described above must be a member of the Living Springs Baptist Church to be married in its facility.

Abortion of a Child

The Scripture teaches that when a woman conceives of a man's seed, she is said to be with child. The child inside the woman is a separate life nourished through the means God gave in order that the child grows. The child is a human, albeit unborn, therefore the intentional killing of the child in the womb is murder.

Gen. 16:11; 19:36; 38:24; Ex. 21:22-25; I Sam 4:19; 2 Sam. 11:5; Is. 26:17, 18; Ps. 139:13-16; Lk. 1:44

The Woman's Role in the Church

There is much confusion in the churches concerning the role of women in the church, so much so that much of the ministry is led by women. Therefore, we feel obligated to give a concise statement concerning their role in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Women are not permitted to speak when the church is assembled in gospel order but are commanded to be in silence. They are to offer praise to God through congregational singing and are to communicate (giving of their means) as part of the corporate worship of the church. They are to learn in silence, not teaching over men or usurping their authority. Moreover, they are commanded to be in subjection to their own husbands. If they need to ask a question, they are commanded to ask their husband at home.

I Cor. 14:34-35; I Tim. 2:11-15; I Pet. 2:5, 9; Heb. 13:15, 16.

AMENDING THE DECLARATION OF FAITH, COVENANT AND PRACTICE:

The Declaration of Faith, Covenant and Practices of the *Living Springs Baptist Church* may be amended when the majority of its members, in an appointed and announced meeting of the church, votes to amend it. Such amendments shall be only to strengthen, clarify or add new amendments necessary for Gospel order in defining the Church's position on Doctrinal points. The church should always seek to have unanimity among the members in making any such amendment and no case shall the Declaration

of Faith be changed from its original intent or position.