

APPENDIX 1

MISSION CHURCH'S GOSPEL AND DISCIPLESHIP STATEMENT

The Mission: To Establish Mature Churches

We believe there is a body of teaching, passed down by Christ to the Apostles, that every disciple of Jesus must embrace and observe. This teaching, recorded in the inerrant Scriptures, includes the core message of the gospel, which one must believe to be saved, as well as the way of life that is to be lived out by every church. For this reason, we believe our divine commission is to proclaim the gospel of Christ to the nations and to establish believers in the teaching of Christ so that the glory and manifold wisdom of God can be seen through the expansion and strengthening of the church (**Luke24:48;Matthew28:19-20;Acts1:8;Ephesians3:7-13**).

The Gospel: Kerygma (“The Proclamation”)

The first century church often referred to the gospel as the Kerygma, which means “proclamation or announcement.” We use this biblical term because it reminds us that we have an urgent message of good news to “proclaim.” We believe that Jesus and His work are the central essence of the Kerygma. The following are specific and inalienable core truths of this saving message:

1. JESUS IS THE PROPHESIED MESSIAH.

Jewish prophets of the Old Testament spoke and wrote of the coming Messiah. Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s promise to bless the nations through the lineage of David, in the form of a New Covenant, in which there would be forgiveness of sins and a placing of God’s Spirit within men.

2. JESUS IS THE DIVINE SON OF GOD WHO CAME TO EARTH AS A SINLESS MAN.

Jesus was born of a virgin, through the power of the Holy Spirit, as fully God and fully man. He lived in intimate fellowship with and complete obedience to the Father. While being sinless in His divinity, Jesus humbly bound Himself to the limitations of humanity, enabling Him to sympathize with our weaknesses.

3. JESUS DIED FOR OUR SINS, WAS BURIED, AND ROSE FROM THE GRAVE ON THE THIRD DAY.

The Bible teaches that every person sins and that the consequence for doing so is separation from God and eternal punishment in Hell. But God, being rich in mercy, sent His Son to pay the penalty for our sin so that we could have a relationship with Him. Because Jesus died on the cross in our place, was buried, and then rose from the grave three days later, sin and death have been defeated; and our faith is secure.

4. JESUS ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN AND NOW SITS AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER AS LORD OF ALL.

Jesus has authority over all things. He is worthy of our worship, and our desire is to live a spirit-empowered life in full obedience to Him.

5. JESUS WILL COME AGAIN TO JUDGE THE EARTH, ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM, AND REIGN FOREVER.

One day, the spiritual battle of this world will come to an end. Satan’s defeat will be final; mankind will be judged; and those who have been redeemed through the work of Christ will reign with Him in a new eternal kingdom on earth.

6. THOSE WHO EMBRACE THIS MESSAGE AND REPENT WILL RECEIVE FORGIVENESS OF SIN, THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A PLEDGE, AND THE ASSURANCE OF ETERNAL LIFE.

The Scriptures teach that those who believe in their hearts and confess with their mouths that Jesus is Lord are saved. A person who confesses Jesus as Lord is declaring from a repentant heart that Jesus is now the King of their life. Consequently, we then enter into a relationship with God. The Holy Spirit indwells and empowers us to live for Him and for His glory, and we gain intimate access to Him through prayer.

(Galatians 1:1-5; Acts 10:34-43; 1 Corinthians 15:1-6; Romans 1:1-7, 16, 17, 3:23, 4:24-25, 6:23, & 10:9-10; Ephesians 1:1-3:21 (esp. 1:7-13, 2:8-10, & 3:7-13); Colossians 1:9-14; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 1:1-5)

The Way of Life: Didache (“The Teaching”)

Establishing churches in the teaching of Christ is essential. When Jesus delivered the Great Commission to His disciples, He was very clear in His instruction to them to make disciples (followers). He commissioned them to proclaim the gospel (Kerygma) to the nations, immediately baptize those who believe into the body of Christ, and teach them to obey and live according to all that He commanded. The Apostles' faithfulness to Christ and their reliance upon the Holy Spirit resulted in the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to build and strengthen His Church (**Matthew 16:13-20**). Today, the church is to carry out the same mission of making disciples and strengthening them in “The Teaching” (Didache) of Jesus just as He and His Apostles did. The following is a summary of the fundamental principles that define the way of life for every Spirit-empowered disciple of Jesus.

1. DISCIPLES OF JESUS ARE TO LIVE FOR CHRIST.

The Scriptures instruct us to lay aside our old way of life and renew our mind through the study of God's Word so that we can live in accordance to His will as an act of spiritual worship to Christ.

(Romans 12:1-2 & 13:11-14; Colossians 3:1-17; Ephesians 4:22-24)

2. DISCIPLES OF JESUS ARE TO BE CHARACTERIZED BY DIVINE VIRTUES.

Those who belong to Christ are to be filled with qualities such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, compassion, hope, meekness, and humility, which are only possible through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

(Galatians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 1:1-11)

3. DISCIPLES OF JESUS ARE TO ORDER THEIR HOUSEHOLDS PROPERLY.

God established the institution of marriage to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman. The roles within this union are distinct yet complementary, whereby the husband lovingly leads the home with the support and help of the wife. Together, they are to train up and nurture their children to carry on a legacy for Christ. In so doing, children have a responsibility to honor their parents and to care for them when they become advanced in age.

(Genesis 2:18-25; Ephesians 5:22-23; 6:1; Colossians 3:13-21; 1 Peter 3:1-7; 1 Timothy 5:1-16)

4. DISCIPLES OF JESUS ARE TO LOVE AND APPRECIATE THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH.

Under the authority of Christ, the church's role is central and preeminent in God's plan for this age. As God's household, it stands as the pillar and support of the truth; and we long to see it established and ordered according to the sound doctrine received from the Apostles. This means that the local church, being a family, is to be lead by biblically-qualified leaders who lovingly shepherd, establish, and equip the flock. In addition, older and more mature believers are to teach and train up the younger, who humbly seek to grow in their faith. We are devoted to meeting together regularly in large public gatherings as well as in homes for instruction, mutual ministry, prayer, the Lord's Supper, and worship of Christ.

(1 Timothy 3:14-16; Titus 1:5; Colossians 1:24-29; Ephesians 3:8-10)

5. DISCIPLES OF JESUS ARE TO UNDERSTAND THEIR GIFTEDNESS AND PARTICIPATE IN THE WORK OF MINISTRY.

Every believer is to be equipped to do the work of ministry. This includes understanding our spiritual giftedness, unique design, and specific skill sets in order to maximize our effectiveness in “one-another” ministry, build up the church, and carry out the mission of Christ.

(1 Peter 4:10; Romans 12:3-16; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Ephesians 4:11-16)

6. DISCIPLES OF JESUS ARE TO PURSUE UNITY AND PEACE WITHIN THE CHURCH.

Our relationships within the church are to be characterized by love, brotherhood, mutual acceptance, and respect. Christ-centered unity must be continually and diligently pursued in a spirit of humility, forgiveness, and peace.

(Romans 12:9-10; Colossians 3:13-16; Philippians 2:1-4; Ephesians 4:1-6)

7. DISCIPLES OF JESUS ARE TO EXHIBIT A FRUITFUL WITNESS IN THE COMMUNITY.

Our relationships in the world are to be marked by a respect for authority and a loving concern toward our neighbors and those in need. We are to live peaceably, work hard at an honest vocation, and be a positive contributor to society. Our desire is to shine the light of Christ among men that they may ultimately embrace the gospel and join us in glorifying our Father in heaven.

(Romans 13:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12; Titus 2:14 & 3:1; 14)

8. DISCIPLES OF JESUS ARE TO LEAD RESPONSIBLE, DISCIPLINED, AND ACCOUNTABLE LIVES.

The Scriptures call us to live wisely, making the most of our time because the days are evil and our time is short. We need to prayerfully keep on the alert and remain in constant fellowship with Christ and His church in order to remain accountable in overcoming the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. When people fall into sin, those who are spiritual are to confront, exhort, and encourage them toward a spirit of repentance that they may be restored for the glory of Christ.

(1 Peter 5:6-11; Ephesians 5:1-21 & 6:10-18; 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15)

APPENDIX 2

DOCTRINAL GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING AT MISSION CHURCH

The following are the doctrinal positions that those who teach at Mission Myerstown need to agree to as the unifying theological statement for all leaders.

A) Systematic Theology

1. THE SCRIPTURES

We teach that the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, are the inspired, infallible Word of God, without error in the original writings. We believe that this inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the Scriptures, and that they are the complete revelation of God's will for the salvation of men, and are the supreme and final authority in every area of faith and life. We further believe that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal, contextual, grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

(2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; James 1:22-25; Psalm 119:105; John 7:17 & 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20 & 27)

2. THE GODHEAD

We teach that there is one God eternally existing in three persons (the Trinity): the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, each having precisely the same nature, divine attributes, and perfections, and worthy of the same worship and obedience.

(Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Matthew 28:19-20; John 1:1-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

3. GOD THE FATHER

We teach that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace. He is the only absolute and omnipotent (all-powerful) ruler of the universe, Who has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass. He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption. He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own.

(Psalm 145:8-9 & 103:19; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Romans 11:36; Ephesians 1:3-12)

4. THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

We teach that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, is fully God and fully man with indivisible oneness with God the Father. He is eternally coexisting with the Father, conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary and became flesh and dwelt among us as God incarnate. In his incarnation he laid aside his right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God and took on an existence appropriate to a servant to humankind never divesting his divine attributes, assuring in his humanity his impeccability and his immutability.

(Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 4:15 & 13:8; Luke 1:35; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-16; Acts 1:9-11)

5. THE WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophesied Messiah, performed miracles while on earth, died on the cross as the only sufficient substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of all mankind, that his crucified body was buried and raised from the dead, and He appeared to many before ascending into heaven where he is seated at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest, Advocate, and Mediator. We also believe in the imminent return of Jesus Christ for His church. The Lord Jesus Christ is the one through whom God will judge all mankind.

(1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 1 Peter 1:18-20; Hebrews 8:1, 9:28, & 10:10-14; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 2:1; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; John 5:22-23; Revelation 20:11-15)

6. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We teach that the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, eternally active, began a unique work in the world on the Day of Pentecost, when He came as promised by the Son to initiate and complete the building of the body of Christ, the Church universal. His activities include convicting the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment; regenerating, indwelling, sanctifying, instructing, giving spiritual gifts, and transforming believers into the image of Christ thus glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that at the moment of salvation every believer is indwelt and baptized by the Holy Spirit. As a result every believer is responsible to yield to the control of the Holy Spirit, so that he may experience the filling of the Spirit for direction and empowerment for service.

(John 14:16-17, 15:26, & 16:7-15; Acts 1:5, 2:4; Romans 8:9-11, 29, & 12:6-8; Ephesians 1:13, 2:22, 4:7-16, & 5:18; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 & 13; 1 John 2:20 & 27; 1 Peter 4:10)

7. MAN

We teach that man (male and female) was created in the image of God for the glory of God and for eternal fellowship with God. However, man sinned, thereby severing fellowship with God and incurring God's enmity, wrath, and curse on all creation, resulting in physical and spiritual death. All human beings are born with a sin nature, are sinners by choice, are totally depraved, and man's only hope is found in the grace of God through the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Genesis 1:27 & 3:1-24; Isaiah 43:7; Romans 3:23, 5:12, 19, 6:23, 7:18, 8:7-8, & 19-22; Colossians 1:16; Ephesians 2:1-3 & 14-16; 1 Corinthians 1:9, 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 3:3-7, 36)

8. SALVATION

We teach salvation is the work of God where sinful man is delivered from condemnation and receives eternal life. It is accomplished by God's grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone and cannot be earned or maintained by human effort; it results in a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ when a person repents of their sin and believes in the sinless life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as sufficient payment for their sin. Those entering into this relationship by faith are eternally born-again, justified, and have become children of God.

(Ephesians 2:8-10, 1:13-14, & 4:30; Romans 3:21-28, 5:1, 6:23, 8:16, 10:8-13, & 14:9; John 1:12-13, 3:5-6, 16, 10:27-28, 17:3, & 20:30-31; Acts 2:36 & 4:10-12; James 1:19-27 & 2:14-26)

9. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE (SANCTIFICATION)

We teach that Christian sanctification is the continuing work of God where the individual believer perseveres in his salvation by conscientiously and constantly pursuing Christlikeness under the power of the Holy Spirit. This occurs through the transformation of the inner man by the renewing of the mind with the Word of God; the replacing of habits of the old man with the disciplines of the new man; and by abiding in the love of God. The result is God being glorified through a holy life and the expansion of the visible local church. This process does not lead to perfection while in mortality but will conclude at the believer's glorification into eternity.

(Romans 12:1,2; John 15:1 John 1:1-9; Galatians 5:16-26; Colossians 3:1-4 & 12-17; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-4; Philippians 3:13-16; Ephesians 5:1-20)

10. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

We teach that marriage was ordained by God at creation as the sacred union of one man and one woman. All sexual relations must therefore be reserved for that union. Christian marriage is a representation of Christ's relationship to His church. We also believe that children are a blessing from the Lord. Thus all human life is sacred and worthy of protection from the moment of conception.

(Genesis 1:26-28 & 2:24; Psalm 127, 128, & 139:13-16; Matthew 19:1-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrew 13:4)

11. THE CHURCH

We teach that the Church is a unique spiritual organism made up of all born again believers which began on the Day of Pentecost. The Church is the body and the bride of Christ, of which Christ is the head. The purpose of the Church is to make disciples, which will bring glory to God. We believe every Christian is called to be vitally connected and committed to the local church, so that they can minister according to his or her spiritual giftedness and to practice the "one anothers" as commanded in the New Testament for the building up of the body in love while maintaining the unity of the Spirit. We believe in the autonomy of the visible local church with the right to self-government by a plurality of biblically qualified Elders, under Christ and over the congregation, as servant leaders.

(Matthew 28:18-20; John 13:34-35; Acts 1:8, 2:1-21, 2:38-47, 14:23, 20:17, & 20:28; 1 Corinthians 10:32, 11:23-25, 12:12-13, & 15:58; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22, 3:1-6, 21, 4:7-16, & 5:23-32; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 3:1-7 & 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 10:25, 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:1-5; 1 John 1:3)

12. THE ORDINANCES

We teach that there are only two ordinances to be observed by the Church: Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that water baptism is an outward testimony of God's work in the believer, and it portrays the believer's union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, which is demonstrated best through immersion. It serves as an initial step of identification and fellowship into the visible local church. We believe that Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper to commemorate and proclaim His death until His return. Neither ordinance is a means of earning or maintaining salvation.

(Matthew 28:18-20 & 26:26-30; Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 11:17-30; Mark 15:16; Ephesians 2:8-9)

13. THE FUTURE

We teach the personal, imminent pre-tribulational coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to rapture His Church, who subsequently will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ. We also teach Christ's premillennial return to earth, following the Tribulation, with His saints to establish His Millennial Kingdom in fulfillment of the Davidic and New Covenants, in which they will reign for a literal 1000-year. We teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. Whereby, the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, as they consciously await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord.

In addition, the souls of the unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and then shall be cast into the Lake of Fire to suffer everlasting, conscious punishment.

(1Thessalonians4:13-18&5:9;Hebrews9:27-28;Revelation19:11-16,20:1-15,&21:1-8;Luke16:19-28;Matthew25:41-46; John 14:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Titus 2:11-1; Jude 6,7)

B) Practical Theology

1. MISSIONS

Realizing that the cause of Christ extends beyond any one local fellowship, we commit ourselves to an ongoing ministry of extending the call of Christ to make disciples around the world **(Matthew28:19-20)**. The mission of the church is missions; the mission of missions is the church.

2. ASSIMILATION AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

We believe in the importance of serving the body of Christ by offering clear paths for people to start and develop healthy and growing relationships with others in the church body. We value an intentional plan to help every interested person enjoy godly relationships in the church. Church membership is a byproduct of people who are growing in Christ, are committed to this mission, and who grasp the importance of serving the Lord by using their gifts to serve others in the local church.

3. BAPTISM AND COMMUNION

Baptism and communion are the two ordinances required in the church. We believe that Christian baptism by immersion in water is a public identification with Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Although baptism is not required for salvation, it is commanded of all believers and is for believers only **(Matthew28:19-20; Acts2:38, 41 & 18:8)**. Scripture shows that a person was baptized after personally receiving forgiveness of sin through accepting Jesus Christ. The waters of baptism are a symbol of our death, burial, and resurrection to newness of life that happens when we become new creations in Christ **(Colossians 2:12; 2 Corinthians5:17; Romans 6:1-4)**.

Communion is the commemoration by believers of Christ's death, and a reminder—through the bread and the juice—of the Savior's broken body and shed blood. Communion is to be a time of confession of our sin and should be preceded by careful self-examination according to **Acts 4:13, Romans 6:3-6, 1 Corinthians11:20-29**.

4. CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Mission Myerstown is a non-charismatic, conservative, evangelical fellowship that welcomes all who know Jesus Christ as their Savior and all who are seeking Him. Those who claim to possess the gift of tongues and other sign gifts are welcome to worship and fellowship with us if they are willing to be a source of unity rather than division within our church body. We believe that the Christian life is supernatural and that the Lord continues to perform miracles. We also believe that current displays of the gift of tongues distract from the main task of the local church, which is to glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission **(Matthew 28:19-20)**.

Current displays of the gift of tongues:

- Give unwarranted prominence to the gift, which is described in the New Testament as being only one of many spiritual gifts **(1 Corinthians12)**.
- Emphasize speaking in tongues as the primary manifestation of the Spirit's work in a person's life, while minimizing the Spirit's work in producing a holy life **(2 Corinthians3:17-18;2Timothy1:9)**,and a life that displays the fruits of the Spirit **(Galatians 5:22)**.
- Often suggest that speaking in tongues is a required proof of being Spirit-filled or of possessing salvation in Christ, even though the Scriptures do not teach this.

Mission Myerstown seeks to prevent the propagation of doctrines that would cause divisions within an individual church. Therefore, members of and adherents of Mission Myerstown are not to propagate the teachings and emphases of the current charismatic movement. Although we do not control personal, individual interactions with the Lord, the expression of tongues and other sign gifts are not to be overtly expressed at meetings that are under the organization and authority of Mission Myerstown.

5. CHURCH PLANTING

The church exists to glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission, and in the spirit of the Great Commandment (**Matthew28:19-20 & 22:37-38**). The Great Commission is fulfilled as disciples of Jesus Christ are made and grow in their relationship with Him and likeness to Him. God is glorified as we manifest His presence as we do His work (**2 Timothy2:2;1 Corinthians10:31**).

In seeking to act upon the church's purpose, we recognize the extraordinary value in multiplying the reach of His ministry by planting local churches and by associating with existing, like-minded local churches. God is glorified when like-minded churches associate with one another in order to foster relationships that edify, protect, encourage, support, and admonish.

6. COUNSELING PHILOSOPHY

The Lord changes lives and accomplishes His purposes directly through reading and applying the Scriptures, meditating on the truths of the Scriptures, and prayer. The Lord also uses those who minister His Word as they encourage, exhort, admonish, edify, implore, reprove, rebuke, and console others toward godliness. God needs no new or unique insight into the human condition in order to change lives, regardless of whether that insight is gained through psychology or some other tool of human origin. Problems that are approached by integrating the Scriptures with psychological theories tend to deceive individuals into diminishing the God of the Scriptures and into believing that He has not provided and cannot provide sufficient truth, insight, and wisdom that will change their lives (**Colossians2:8-10**).

When psychology and other social sciences step beyond observing human behavior and seek to explain the causes of human behavior, they enter spiritual territory. Only the God of the Scriptures can explain causes and offer solutions that lead to godliness and a fruitful, joyful life. God has given us everything we need for life and godliness (**2 Peter1:3**). He changes us as we discipline ourselves through obedience to the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit (**1 Timothy4:7;2Peter1:5-11**).

Each Christian's passion should be to become more like Christ and fulfill the Great Commandment to love the Lord with the entire heart, soul, mind, and strength (**Romans8:29;1 John 3:2, Deuteronomy6:5;Mark 12:30; Matthew22:37-38**).

The Christian who learns and applies the Word becomes mature and, in turn, can help others mature (**2 Timothy2:2**).

7. CREATION, EVOLUTION, AND GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

We believe God created the universe in six twenty-four hour days and that before He created the universe, nothing except God existed (**Genesis1; Exodus31:17; Psalm 33:6-9; Acts17:24; Hebrews11:3; Colossians1:16**).

God chose to create the universe and all that is in it to reveal His glory, divine nature, eternal power, infinite wisdom, and supreme authority (**Isaiah 43:7; Psalm 19:1-2; Jeremiah10:12; Romans1:20; Revelation4:11**).

We deny the theory of evolution, which states that nonliving substances gave rise to the first living material, which then reproduced and diversified to produce all living creatures. We believe that all people are descendants of Adam and Eve, whom God created personally and individually and as complete human beings (**Genesis1:26-27,2:7, & 2:21-22; 1 Corinthians11:8-9**). The fall of Adam and Eve infected all people with sin and death, but the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ gives the opportunity to receive God's gift of eternal life (**Romans5:18-19;1 Corinthians15:21-22**).

God rules over His creation and cares about and is involved in the lives of individual people (**Job 12:10;Acts17:25 & 25:28; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:13; Ephesians 4:6**).

8. ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

The Lord keeps those who are His own. (**John 10:27-30**) The assurance of salvation is not a prayer, but the fruit of the spirit in a person's life (**Galatians5**). It is God's divine decision to save a person and it is God's kindness, forbearance, and patience that lead that person to repentance (**Romans2:4**). All glory for the salvation and security of every believer belongs to God alone (**Romans3:21-31; Ephesians1:7-9 & 2:8-9, Jude 1:24-25**). We believe that everyone who is born again by the Spirit through Jesus Christ is eternally assured of salvation from the moment of conversion. This assurance relies on God's decisive grace rather than on the works of the Christian. Obedience, good works, and fruit-bearing do not earn or retain the believer's salvation but indicate the reality of the person's love of Christ and profession of faith (**Luke 6:46; John 14:21; James 2:17-18**).

Eternal security in salvation relies on the Lord's guarantee of each believer's adoption as His son or daughter (**Galatians4:4-7**). His seal of the believer by the Holy Spirit (**2 Corinthians1:21-22;Ephesians1:13-14**), and the conviction that God gives the Holy Spirit to each believer as a down payment toward future bliss in heaven (**2 Corinthians1:21-22**). A person who professes genuine faith in Christ immediately becomes His possession (**Luke 23:42-43; Acts 2:40-41**).

& 16: 30-34), and nothing can snatch that person out of His hands (**John 10:27-29**). Having been bought with the price of Jesus Christ's crucifixion as complete payment for sin, Christians are not their own. They are Christ's possession (**1 Corinthians 6:19-20**). This assurance is absolutely certain, reserved in heaven, protected by God's unlimited power (**1 Peter 1:4-5**).

9. PROCESS OF SANCTIFICATION AND MATURITY

Mature disciples walk with Christ, worship Christ, and work for Christ. A person committed to a relationship with Christ focuses on a personal walk with Him, worshipping Him, and working for Him. That person will experience significant growth in personal sanctification and, therefore, will experience a closer personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and will become "complete in Christ" (**Colossians 1:28**). We are committed to multiplying the godly characteristics of leaders' lives into others (**2 Timothy 2:2**). This multiplication of ministry is key to the healthy growth of the church. We believe the disciples of Jesus Christ should minister to one another in the local church, rather than one or a small number of professional pastors bearing total responsibility to care for the entire congregation. God has given spiritual gifts to all of His people to provide mutual ministry in the context of the healthy and strong local church (**Ephesians 4:11-12**).

10. SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Satan and his demonic servants viciously oppose the work God performs in and through His people (**1 Peter 5:8; Genesis 3:1-7; Ephesians 6:12**). God, who by His nature is infinitely more powerful than Satan, in due time will have complete and total victory over Satan (**1 John 4:4; Revelation 20:1-10**).

Although it is appropriate to pray in Jesus' name for protection against demonic activity, the Scriptures do not instruct the Christian to "bind Satan in Jesus' name." Rather, the Scriptures instruct the Christian to combat Satan by:

- Humbly drawing near to God, knowing that He will give grace, mercy, and strength (**2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Hebrews 4:15-16; James 4:8; 1 Peter 5:6-10**).
- Resisting Satan's temptations (**James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9**).
- Rightly applying the truth of the Scriptures (**Matthew 4:1-11; John 8:44; Ephesians 4:24-27**).
- Forgiving offenses (**2 Corinthians 2:10-11**).
- Putting on the armor of God's truth, righteousness, readiness to share the Gospel, faith, salvation, and prayer (**Ephesians 6:11-20**).
- Demonstrating faithfulness to the Lord by enduring trials (**Revelation 2:10, 2:13, & 3:9-10**).

11. SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and that they contain all the words of God that we need in order to completely trust and obey Him. The Scriptures are inerrant in their original writings (**Psalm 119:97-104 & 119:160; Matthew 5:18; John 5:46-47 & 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:15-16**), and are infallible in their instruction (**Proverbs 6:32; 2 Peter 1:19**), eternal in duration (**Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:23-25**); the final authority and the standard for faith and practice (**Matthew 4:4; Psalm 119**); and sufficient for counsel in every issue of life (**Psalm 19:7-14; 2 Timothy 3:16**). We believe that the very words of Scripture in the original Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic are inspired by God. Therefore, we believe that the Bible versions which translate God's Word most literally into modern English should be preferred.

12. WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Mission Myerstown affirms the God-ordained and significant role that women should play in establishing and leading the local church. Every leadership opportunity is open to women except those that are excluded by Scripture. The Scriptures clearly state that men are to serve in the office of Elder and that women are not to serve in church positions in which they exercise authority over men or in which they teach doctrine to men (**1 Timothy 2:12 & 3:1-2; Titus 1:6-9**). We do not see this as an issue of equality, for men and women are equal under God. The Bible is clear that men and women do not have the same roles. Qualified women should serve in any leadership position that is not forbidden in the Scriptures.

13. WORSHIP

The chief purpose of mankind is to glorify God by loving Him with the entire heart, soul, mind, and might (**Deuteronomy 6:5; Isaiah 43:7; Matthew 22:37**). All believing men, women, and children are to glorify God and thus fulfill the purpose of their existence. Worship glorifies God through adoration (**Psalm 95:6**), praise (**Psalm 99:5**), prayer (**Daniel 6:10-11**), thanksgiving (**Nehemiah 12:46**), and a complete yielding to Him (**Romans 12:1**). Worship declares His worth, pays Him homage, and celebrates Him in a life of devotion. We seek to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth (**Exodus 15:1-21; 2 Samuel 6:14-16; Psalm 5:7; John 4:23-24; Revelation 4:11; 5:12**).

Several tenets guide our worship. We seek to:

- Lift high the name of Jesus Christ (**John 4:22-26, 12:32, & 14:6**).
- Lead God's people to lift their hearts and voices to Him, giving Him praise and thanks in music and lyrics (**Nehemiah 12:45-46; Psalm 66:1-4 & 95:1-2**).
- Prepare hearts to hear the Lord speak through the proclamation of Scripture (**Psalm 95:6-9; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42**).
- Emphasize fresh and contemporary expressions while retaining traditional elements that recognize the richness of our heritage in the faith (**Deuteronomy 32:7; Psalm 33:3; Isaiah 46:8-9; Matthew 13:32, Ephesians 5:19; Revelation 5:9**).
- Pursue excellence in worship, knowing that God is worthy of our best (**Exodus 12; Deuteronomy 17:1; Psalm 33:3; 1 Timothy 4:14-15; Hebrews 11:4**)

APPENDIX 3

THE PATH OF ACCOUNTABILITY & RESTORATION

Mutual Ministry, Accountability, and Discipline in the Church

We believe that Jesus has given His church the mission to make disciples. In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus charged His followers to make disciples by proclaiming His gospel, baptizing believers into His body, and then teaching them to obey all He commanded. Fittingly, the word disciple speaks of a person who trusts, obeys, and follows after the teaching or "way" of another. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught about His Way. He was clear to say that there are two "ways" in life: His "Way" (which leads to life and spiritual vitality) and the other way (which leads to sin and death) (**Matt 7:13-14**). He warned how a broad gate welcomes many to travel the easy way of sin while only a few find and choose to enter the narrow gate to walk the harder path, leading to the life He offers.

While Jesus' words are initially difficult to receive, He goes on to reveal in the gospel of John the incredible truth that He is "The Gate" and "The Way" (**John 10:9; 14:16**). Thus, it is through Jesus that we enter the Gate of salvation and walk in the Way of eternal life. The Gate is narrow because salvation comes through Jesus alone and the difficult Way is possible as we walk in Him. In this respect, the commission to make disciples is a clear charge for the church to point people to Jesus by preaching the gospel of salvation and teaching the church to obey His commands and walk in His Way. (See Appendix 1)

The purpose of this document is to clarify how the church's call to make disciples comes with the responsibility to encourage one another in the gospel and hold itself accountable to the teachings of Christ. While this responsibility is expounded upon all throughout the New Testament, its arguably most compelling to see the mandate within the commission to make disciples itself. As has already been stated, discipleship requires "teaching [disciples] to obey all that Christ commanded." This type of teaching reaches far beyond the transference of information into the realm of mutual ministry, intentional accountability, and loving discipline. What follows is a statement of the church's role in helping people walk with Jesus and a gospel-centered path of restoration for those who sin and stray from the Way of Christ.

Mutual Ministry

The church is responsible to encourage, establish, and equip people to trust Christ and walk in His Way. The preaching, teaching, small group, soul care, and life on life ministries of our church have this goal in view. The New Testament is filled with more than 30 "one another" commands, specifying how we are to ground one another in the gospel and support each other as we joyfully walk with Christ and in His Way together. As the author of Hebrews clearly states, "**Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.** ²⁴ **And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,** ²⁵ **not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.**" (**Hebrews 10:23-25**).

Intentional Accountability

As we grow in our spiritual walk, it's important to bear in mind that we are in a spiritual battle (**Eph. 6:12-20**). Every believer is susceptible to sinning by succumbing to the desire of their own flesh, the ways of the world, and the schemes of the Devil. **1 Peter 5:8** warns us how Satan prowls like a lion seeking to devour and leads Christians astray from the Way. To this end, we must remember that the "battle is not against flesh and blood" and those who fall into sin are not the enemy. Because our battle is spiritual, we must always contend by faith for the hearts of those we love through the Word, prayer, and fasting. When a fellow Christian falls into sin, the church bears the responsibility to lovingly remind them of the gospel and hold them accountable in grace to the teaching of our Lord. While much is written in the New Testament regarding our personal responsibility to walk in the Way of life (See Appendix 1), there are five instances when believers are called to apply accountability and confront sin. When we seek to offer a biblical pathway of restoration and accountability, it is crucial to consult each passage.

Five Instances for Accountability

1. DRAWN INTO SIN

1 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. **2** Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. **3** For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. – Galatians 6:1–3

When one sins and strays from the moral and ethical standard of Christ's teaching, our first response is to seek to gently confront and restore them. A spirit of patience and willingness to endure the burdens of a wayward brother is a requirement that Christ places upon the mature within the church. The implication is that we are grieved to see a fellow disciple disregard the grace of the gospel and stray from Christ's Way of life. Knowing that we too are susceptible to being caught in a similar trespass, we must treat others in the same manner as we'd desire to be treated, thus fulfilling the law of Christ.

2. DISPUTES AND PERSONAL OFFENSES.

15 “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. **16** But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. **17** If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

– Matthew 18:15–17

When a person sins against us, we have the responsibility to go directly to them to the extent we are able and address the offense one on one. The context of this passage implies the confrontation be conducted with humility and with the goal of the sinner repenting and the offended forgiving. In this case, the sin no longer stands between the parties yet trust will need to be established appropriately over time and through the power of gospel grace. As evident in the text, an unresolved conflict requires additional encounters where additional believers and a broader scope of the church becomes involved in confirming the sin and calling for repentance prior to one's removal from fellowship.

3. DIVISIVENESS

10 As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, **11** knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned. – Titus 3:10–11

Jesus was clear when He said that the world will know we are Christians by our love for one another. Again in Ephesians, we are called to maintain the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. When a person intentionally stirs up division, we must warn them of the toxicity of their actions and the tarnish it brings upon Christ, His Church, and the gospel we are to adorn in this world. Here again, the sin is to be confronted in grace with the goal of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. In this case, if one does not return to the teaching of Christ, an additional warning is prescribed prior to removal from fellowship.

4. DOCTRINAL ERROR

3 As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, **4** nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. **5** The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. – 1 Timothy 1:3–5

The church must guard the gospel and protect the purity of the teaching of Christ. As such, we are responsible to codify the gospel and the teaching of Christ that a standard can be kept among ourselves. (Appendix 1) To this end, each member is responsible to teach in accordance to Christ's doctrine so that no one be confused in the gospel or led away from the teaching of Christ and into sin. For this reason, all false teaching must be corrected quickly in love. If a false teacher intentionally persists in an error that's causing spiritual harm, the Scriptures call for a rebuke prior to the removal of fellowship. (**2 Timothy 2:23–26, Titus 1:10–14, Romans 16:17–18, 2 Tim 2:18**)

5. DEVIANT IMMORALITY

1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. **2** And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. **3** For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. **4** When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of

an authentic repentance (**2 Cor.7**) which draws them to Christ and reunites them with His church. To this end, the church longs to rejoice. For when the lost sheep is found and the prodigal returns, it will be Christ who stands before us with ring and robe in hand, welcoming home the one whom He'd chosen prior to the foundations of the earth.

APPENDIX 7

STATEMENT ON MEDIATION

Members of the church agree to submit any legal dispute with the church for mediation before a mutually agreed-upon mediator; or if none can be agreed upon, one selected by Peacemaker Ministries. Lawsuits between believers, or threats of lawsuits between believers, are a matter of grave concern for the church and are contrary to biblical and church teaching. Mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a biblical fashion (**1 Corinthians6:1-7**).

Mediation will be governed by the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ICC Rules), unless modified as stipulated by the parties. In particular, subject to the more detailed provisions of the ICC Rules, mediator(s) will attempt to assist us in reaching a voluntary settlement of any disputes through mediation.

The confidentiality of the mediation process will be protected, and these matters will not be discussed with people who do not have a necessary interest in them. If settlement can be agreed upon, the conciliators may, at their discretion, issue an advisory opinion. Neither the opinion, nor any communications exchanged in the mediation process, will be admissible for any purpose in any subsequent legal proceeding.

APPENDIX 8

STATEMENT ON THE FINAL AUTHORITY ON MATTERS OF BELIEF AND CONDUCT

Any doctrinal statement produced by a church does not exhaust the extent of its beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Mission Myerstown's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Elder Board is Mission Myerstown's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

APPENDIX 9

STATEMENT ON THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (**Psalm139**).

APPENDIX 10

STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as fully male or fully female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (**Genesis1:26-27**). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one male and one female in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (**Genesis2:18-25**).

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a male and a female who are married to each other (**1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4**).

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a male and a female.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (**Matthew15:18-20;1 Corinthians6:9-10**).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Mission Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to our members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Mission Church in any capacity or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (**Matthew5:16;Philippians2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22**).

We believe God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (**Acts3:19-21; Romans10:9-10;1 Corinthians6:9-11**).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (**Mark12:28-31;Luke6:31**).Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed to any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with the Scriptures nor the doctrines of Mission Myerstown.

MEDIA RELEASE

By attending any event, service, or meeting at or sponsored by Mission Myerstown, permission to video record and photograph you, your family, and any minors under your care, and to use those images for church and related promotional purposes is implicitly granted. If you prefer that your likeness not be used, please contact the church office so that your request can be made known and be honored to the best of their ability.