



THE ABYSSINIAN BAPTIST CHURCH
MEMBER'S MANUAL

REV. CALVIN O. BUTTS, III - PASTOR
132 ODELL CLARK PLACE, NEW YORK, NY 10030



Greetings Beloved!

For over 200 years, The Abyssinian Baptist Church in the City of New York has been committed to proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. Our transformative ministry continues to be a beacon of hope in our community and around the world. As we move into the next 200 years, the mission of The Abyssinian Baptist Church remains the same -- we are compelled to *win more souls for Christ* through evangelism, pastoral care, Christian education, social service delivery, and community development.

I am pleased that you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, or having Christian experience, made the decision to become a member of this great fellowship. I believe that our church will be greatly blessed by the unique gifts you have to contribute in service to the Lord. I further pray that you recognize how essential your role is as a member of the body of Christ in the important work of building God's kingdom here on earth.

The enclosed Member's Manual is designed to apprise you of the various aspects of the Abyssinian community. In addition to providing information about the life of our fellowship (i.e., worship opportunities, Staff Directory, Ministry listing, and operational hours), this Member's Manual also includes Abyssinian's New Member Curriculum for your reference. Should you require a refresher course on the fundamentals of who we are as followers of Christ and members of The Abyssinian Baptist Church, you are always welcome to study with new members every 4th Saturday of the month at 9:00 AM in the Blue Room. I hope you will find this manual comprehensive and useful.

Finally, if you ever need prayer, counseling, or have general questions about Christian discipleship, feel free to contact my office and/or the ministerial staff. Know that the doors of this church are always open to you.

Keep the Faith!

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Calvin O. Butts, III

Pastor

CHURCH COVENANT

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

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

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to educate our children religiously; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings; faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drink as a beverage; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

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

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

HOURS OF OPERATION

Sundays

Church Open	7:00 am – 4:00 pm
Breakfast Served	8:00 am – 11:30 am
Dinner Served	12:30 pm – 2:30 pm

Monday – Friday

Office Hours	10:00 am – 6:00 pm
Receptionist on Duty	9:00 am – 9:00 pm

Saturdays

Church Open	9:00 am – 3:00 pm
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The Church opens and closes promptly as indicated above unless there is a pre-approved event. Hours may vary during the summer months and holiday seasons.

Holiday Closings

New Years Day	Independence Day
MLK Birthday	Labor Day
President's Day	Discovery (Columbus) Day
Good Friday	Veterans Day
Easter Monday	Day after Thanksgiving Day
Memorial Day	Christmas Day
	Day after Christmas

WORSHIP

“God is spirit and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

John 4:24

Sunday Morning Service

9:00 am and 11:00 am in the Sanctuary

Baby Blessings - 2nd Sunday of each month, 11 am

Holy Communion and Right Hand of Fellowship – 3rd Sunday of each month, 11am

Baptism - 4th Sunday of each month, 11am

Youth Day - 5th Sunday, 11am

Advance notice is required for visiting groups of 10 or more.

Contact the Communications Manager at 212-862-7474 ext. 237 or media@abyssinian.org

ADDITIONAL WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday Morning Praying Band

This is a service of prayer, testimony and song

Sundays, 7:00 am – 8:00 am, Vestry

Wednesday Devotion

This is a service of prayer, testimony and song

Wednesdays, 6:30-7:00 pm, Sanctuary

Mid-Week Manna Praise & Worship

A powerful 1-hour service of praise, prayer, and preaching

Wednesdays, 7:00 – 8:00pm, Sanctuary

STAFF DIRECTORY

Ministers

Rev. Dr. Calvin O. Butts, III	Pastor	215
Rev. Violet L. Dease	Assistant Pastor	203
Rev. Eboni K. Marshall	Assistant Minister for Christian Education	204
Rev. Nicholas S. Richards	Intern Minister for Youth	218

Church Officers

Gerald Barbour	Chair, Board of Deacons	235
Eleanor E. Olive	Chair, Board of Deaconess	
Alexis Thomas	Chair, Board of Trustees	240
Willie R. Moore, Jr.	Treasurer	
Sheila S. Boston	Church Clerk	

Music Staff

James Davis, Jr.	Director of Music Ministries & Fine Arts	261
Roy Jennings	Assistant Minister for Music	
Dina Foster Osbourne	Church Organist	
Jeff Bolding	Dir. The Inspirational Voices of Abyssinian	
Douglas R. Banks	Sr. Staff Musician, The Inspirational Voices of Aby.	
C. Anthony Bryant	Minister of Music for Youth	

Administration

Earnestine Wallace-Adams	Chief Financial Officer	245
Dinean Davis	Communications/PR Manager	237
Minnie Davis	Assistant to CFO	252
Cynthia D. Dorsey	Assistant to the Assistant Ministers	221
Naomi Graham	Admin. Officer & Executive Ass't. to Pastor	215
Jean Ray	Receptionist	0/225
Ann Sheriff	Evening Receptionist	0/225
Evelyn Simpson	Assistant to the Assistant Pastor	216
Dr. Anita Underwood	Dir. Human Resources & Organization Mgmt.	241
Walteen Whitfield	Stewardship Administrator	213

Maintenance

Randolph Graves	Chief Sexton	244
Richard Clark	Custodian	
Dexter Fletcher	Custodian	
Leary Fredricks	Custodian	
James Frink	Custodian	
Akuba Pyles	Custodian	
Eugene Zambouri	Custodian	

General Services

AbyTech		280
Kitchen		275

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

*“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Romans 12:2*

The Abyssinian Sunday School

Youth and adults are invited to explore the Word of God in a classroom setting. Study is required in order to learn how to read, interpret and understand the Holy Bible. Abyssinian youth also explore prayer, hymnody, and other critical aspects of Christian worship.

Youth – Sundays, 9:00 am – 11:00 am, Vestry

Adults – Sundays, 9:00 am – 11:00 am, Blue Room

Monday Bible Class

This midday class offers an exciting study of biblical characters, themes, and liturgical seasons. A light meal is served following the classes. All are welcome to join!

Mondays, 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm, Fellowship Hall.

The Abyssinian Institute for Christian Education

The Abyssinian Institute for Christian Education seeks to empower our congregation by providing on-going Christian Education that speaks to the complexities of life. People of all ages learn best when questions and doubts are explored rather than silenced. The Institute provides its students with an opportunity to engage in spiritual and intellectual inquiry as part of a life-long process of strengthening our Christian faith. Everyone is welcome! Classes meet on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings throughout the year.

Fall Term, October – November

Winter Term, January – February

Spring Term, April – May

Summer, July

YOUTH MINISTRY

*“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”
Prov. 22:6*

Junior Church

Sundays, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm, Vestry

Youth Liturgical Dance (ages 11-17)

Mondays, 6:00-7:00 pm, Rehearsal Room

Saving our Sons (SOS)

Tuesdays, 6:00-8:00 pm, Fellowship Hall

Youth Choir Rehearsal

Fridays, 5:00-6:30 pm, Rehearsal Room

Teen Bible Study

Fridays, 6:30-7:30 pm, Fellowship Hall

HYPE –Helping Young People Excel

Adolescent Development Program

Fridays, 7:30-8:30 pm, Fellowship Hall

Blue Nile Rites of Passage

Saturdays, 8:30 am – 3:00 pm, Thurgood Marshall Academy for Learning and Social Change

MEMBER SERVICES

Baby Blessing

The Abyssinian Baptist Church celebrates the wonder and beauty of new life. Baby Blessing Classes are held every third Thursday of the month at 7 pm in the Blue Room. All parents who wish to have their child blessed must attend this class. To register or for info, contact the church at ext. 221.

New Members

New Members Classes are required for those who have recently joined the church.

These classes are taken immediately after joining the Church and prior to receiving the Right Hand of Fellowship. Classes are held on Sundays, 8:30 am – 9:30 am A New Member Intensive (all 4 classes) is offered every 4th Saturday of the month from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

NEW MEMBER CLASSES

Class #1 – *At the Cross: Jesus & Salvation*

Class #2 – *Faith Foundations: Baptist Polity and Practices*

Class #3 - *The Abyssinian Baptist Church: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*

Class #4 – *Giving God Our Best: Worship & Stewardship*

WEDDINGS

The Church believes strongly in the institution of Holy matrimony as outlined in the Holy Scripture. To schedule wedding arrangements, contact the Office of the Assistant Pastor at 212-862-7474 ext. 216. You may also visit www.abyssinian.org. Click Contact/Request Form and complete the Wedding Request Form.

FUNERALS

No one should grieve alone. At Abyssinian, our ministerial staff provides counsel to the bereaved and assists with making funeral arrangements. To inquire about funeral arrangements contact the Office of the Assistant Pastor at 212-862-7474 ext. 216. Funeral requests may also be made online at www.abyssinian.org under Contact/Request Form.

EMERGENCIES

If emergencies occur when the church is closed, a telephone voicemail extension is set up to receive emergency messages. The emergency line is checked after hours and weekends by an Abyssinian staff minister. The emergency voicemail box can be accessed by dialing 212-862-7474 and pressing '9' at the start of the prompt. Please use this number only for emergency situations that require immediate attention.

THE ABYSSINIAN CREDIT UNION

All members are encouraged to join the Credit Union

Open Sundays after 9 & 11 am Worship Services and Wednesdays at 6:30 pm

For more information, call 212-862-5959

ONLINE SERVICES

You can now give your tithes and offerings, and purchase sermons online by visiting our website, www.abyssinian.org. Click the “Give” tab to give tithes and offerings, or click “Shop” to buy sermons electronically. For inquiries about the website, email media@abyssinian.org.

BOOK STORE

The Deacon Melvin Weaver Bookstore offers a variety of products for purchase including CDs of our services, *Food for the Soul* the Abyssinian Cookbook, “We’ve Come This Far” a photographic journal, the Bicentennial Calendar and the Holy Bible.

For more info, call 212-491-4986.

Hours of Operation

Tuesdays - Thursdays, 5:00-7:00 pm

Saturdays, 12:00-3:00 pm

Sundays 8-9:30 am; 10:30-11:30 am; 12:30-2:30 pm

Closed Mondays and Fridays

SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Requests for pulpit announcements should be submitted to the pastor’s office by 1:00 pm on Fridays. **Reading of announcements is at the discretion/approval of the Pastor or the minister officiating Sunday Worship.**

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Submissions to the Sunday bulletin should be sent to esimpson@abyssinian.org by end of day on Tuesdays to get into the following Sunday bulletin. Text should be no more than four lines of edited text that includes a brief description, dates, times, cost and contact info. Submissions are usually posted for 2-3 weeks and are at the discretion of the editor.

ANNUAL CHURCH SERVICES & EVENTS

Annual Church & Corporate Meeting *1st Sunday in February, 9:00 am Worship*

Women's Day *2nd Sunday in March*

Maundy Thursday *Worship Thursday before Easter, 7:00 pm*

Good Friday Joint Worship Service with Mother AME Zion Church

Friday before Easter, 11:00 am

Pastor's Memorial *Sunday 4th Sunday in May*

Children's Day/ Joint Board Annual Sermon *2nd Sunday in June*

Leon E. Thompson Father's Day Brunch *Saturday before Father's Day*

Church-Wide Picnic *2nd Saturday in July*

Homecoming Sunday *2nd Sunday in September*

Ushers Annual Sermon *4th Sunday in September*

Men's Day *2nd Sunday in October*

Harvest Fair *3rd Sunday in October*

Joint Thanksgiving Worship w/ St. Marks United Methodist Church,

St. James Presbyterian Church, and Mt. Olivet Baptist Church,

Thanksgiving Day, 11:00am

Watchnight Service *December 31st 10:00pm*

NEW MEMBER'S CLASS

Session #1: At the Cross - Jesus Christ & Salvation

Welcome to Session #1 of your New Members Class. By the end of this session you will:

- ✠ Know more about Jesus Christ
- ✠ Understand the concept of salvation
- ✠ Explore what it means to give your life to Christ

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. *John 3:16*

Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus is the Son of God. Christians believe that God became flesh and dwelt among humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is God-in-the-flesh. He helps us to see and understand God more clearly. In other words, the mystery of God is “fleshed out” in the person of Jesus Christ. Around the age of 30, Jesus began his public ministry which lasted for approximately 3 years. His life and ministry demonstrated the power of love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness for humankind. His death and resurrection frees believers from the bondage of sin and blesses them with the gift of eternal life.

Jesus as Healer

The biblical record indicates that wherever Jesus went, people were transformed by His presence. Whether he healed people who were suffering from physical, social, or emotional illness, one of Jesus’ most distinguishing characteristics was his ability to make everyone who accepted him into their life whole.

The Bible teaches us that when people encountered Jesus, they realized that life was not meant to be lived in pain, brokenness, and sorrow. Jesus offers believers “living water” that heals our wounded souls.

For further study, see Matthew 11:28, Mark 1:40-45, John 4:1-42

Jesus as Teacher

Often speaking in riddles and parables, Jesus always attracted crowds of people. The words Jesus spoke into the lives of those who gathered near him always seemed to touch the core of their live in profound and challenging ways. In contrast to the perplexing Law of the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible), the message

of Jesus was quite simple: *God loves us unconditionally and we are to reflect God's love for us in every aspect of our lives.*

Jesus teaches us that God's love for creation is so strong, that God will do the unexpected and seemingly impossible to reach those who are far from Him. When we accept this love and begin living our lives in a manner that replicates God's love for us, our life will be transformed.

For further study, see Matthew 5:21-22, Luke 15:1-7, John 8:1-11

Jesus as our Lord and Savior

As Christians we believe that Jesus Christ died on the Cross for human sin, and rose from the grave with all power in His hand. Because Jesus is God-in-the-flesh, in the Cross we encounter the sacrificial love of God that makes amends for all that has gone wrong in our relationship with God.

Through Jesus, God is compelled by love to meet humanity in the midst of sin, death, and destruction in order to save us from ourselves. The Cross of Jesus Christ is God's bridge that restores what human sin has torn apart. It is the bridge that saves us by making a way out of no way.

For further study, see Mark 15:25-39, Luke 23:34-46, John 19:30

What is Salvation?

Salvation means that God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is working in our lives to make us whole and strong in our relationship with God. It is the gift of God's grace to sinful humanity that restores us to right relationship with God.

Sin, the various ways that we turn away from God, dishonors God and prevents us from living the joyous lives that God desires for us. God makes it possible for men and women to be in relationship with God through the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, human beings must recognize that we are in need of God's salvation. As our Lord and Savior reaches out to us from the Cross, human beings are called to respond by simultaneously reaching to take hold of Jesus Christ.

God Loves All of Creation

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that God loved us..." I John 4:10

Humankind Rebels Against God

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

and

“The wages [result] of sin is death.” Romans 6:23

Jesus Christ Reaches Toward Humanity and Saves Us From Sin

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

“Jesus said, ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears MY voice and opens the door, I will come in to him.’” Revelation 3:20

Humanity Reaches Toward Jesus and Accepts Salvation

One Lord - RECEIVE

“But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” John 1:12

One Faith - BELIEVE

“For by grace you have been saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God...” Ephesians 2:8

One Baptism – BE BAPTIZED

“No one can enter the Kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.” John 3:5

Read Luke 15: 11-24 – The Prodigal Son

Recall a time when you returned to your hometown or some other place after a long absence. How did it feel? Was it comforting? Was it awkward?

Who are you most like in this parable: the younger son or the older son? Why?

Salvation happened once-and-for-all, but not all at once.

Salvation is a lifelong journey with Jesus Christ.

I HAVE BEEN SAVED! (Past)

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

Jesus Christ died on Calvary's Cross for the salvation of all who believe in Him. Salvation begins with the reality of this past action of God through Jesus Christ. Through the Cross of Christ and the cross-like situations of our lives, God invites us to open our eyes, ears, and hearts to Jesus' saving grace.

I AM BEING SAVED! (Present)

By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you.

I Corinthians 15:12

No matter how hard we try to do what is right, we all confront obstacles on our Christian journey. However, God does not just tell us we are guilty and convict us of our failures. Through Jesus Christ, God offers to continuously pour out the Holy Spirit upon us that we might recognize our shortcomings, repent, and be renewed. When we hold firmly to the word of God, we are assured that Jesus Christ is able to save us EVERYDAY OF OUR LIVES, even from our most persistent enemy.

I WILL BE SAVED (Future)

[The one] who stands firm to the end will be saved. Mark 13:13

Jesus Christ is not just looking for people to make one decision at the crossroads of their lives. Jesus is seeking those who are intent on becoming His lifelong followers. While on our Christian journey, we should never reach a plateau. Because only God is perfect, human beings must continually strive to imitate Jesus' love, kindness, forgiveness, mercy, and justice throughout our lives. If we stand firmly on the atoning work of the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we will experience eternal victory and salvation from death.

NEW MEMBERS CLASS

Session #2: Faith Foundations – Baptist Polity & Practice

Welcome to Session #2 of your New Members Class. By the end of this session, we will:

- ✚ Identify the Baptist Ordinances
- ✚ Explore the difference between Baptist Ordinances and Baptist Distinctives
- ✚ Discuss Frequently Asked Questions about the Baptist Tradition

Baptist Ordinances

An ordinance is a symbol of one's faith expressed as a memorial or an act of obedience. There are two ordinances in the Baptist Church: **Baptism by immersion in water** and **The Lord's Supper**. As Baptists, we do not believe that the act of baptism washes away sin. Neither do we believe that partaking in the Lord's Supper confers grace. Rather, both ordinances are outward symbols of an inner change wrought by the Spirit of Christ.

1) Believer's Baptism by Immersion in Water

“At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, He saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: *‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.’*” (Mark 1:9-11)

Administered only after a person professes Jesus Christ as Lord, Believer's Baptism is a symbolic initiation into the Christian faith. The believer is immersed in water while the Trinitarian formula (Matt. 28:19) is spoken. Baptism by immersion in water represents our identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ

Believer's Baptism by immersion in water is not a requirement of salvation. It is, however, a requirement of church membership that brings believers into community with other followers of Christ.

Scriptural References: Acts 2:41-42, Acts 2:38, Romans 6:3-4

Further Thought:

a. Do I have to be baptized by immersion in water in order to receive salvation?

b. What will baptism mean for you?

c. What is the difference between Believer's Baptism and infant baptism?

2) The Lord's Supper

“The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, *‘This is my body which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’* In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, *‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, do this in remembrance of me.’*” 1 Corinthians 11:23-25

The Lord's Supper is the second Baptist ordinance. The bread and wine are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. By receiving the Lord's Supper, the Christian community participates in the suffering and death of Christ, and looks to the future for Christ's return in glory.

The Lord's Supper, also known as Holy Communion, is celebrated as a fellowship meal with Christ as its center. It is a symbolic ritual in which Christians remember the final meal that Jesus shared with His disciples before His betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion. It also celebrates the common faith of the church, the Body of Christ.

Scriptural References: Matthew 26:17-30, Mark 14:12-26, Luke 22:7-23, John 13:21-30

Further Thought:

a. Is baptism required before an individual can partake of The Lord's Supper?

b. Why is The Lord's Supper both a solemn and celebratory ordinance?

c. Why do Baptists believe that the Lord's Supper is a symbolic ritual?

Baptist Distinctives

In addition to the Baptist ordinances, there are eight (8) Baptist Distinctives that function as the core beliefs of our denomination. Distinctives are different from ordinances in that they are not expressed a memorial rituals and/or acts of obedience. Instead, they are historical doctrinal principles that are commonly adhered to in most Baptist traditions.

Below you will find a popular acrostic used to identify the 8 Baptist Distinctives:

- B**iblical Authority
- A**utonomy of the Local Church
- P**riesthood of All Believers
- T**wo Ordinances
- I**ndividual Soul Liberty
- S**eparation of Church & State
- T**wo Church Offices
- S**aved Church Membership

1. Biblical Authority

The Supreme Authority and Infallibility of the Holy Scriptures

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the [wo]man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” *II Timothy 3:16-17*

As Baptists we believe that the Word of God is the foundation and supreme authority for all matters of theological doctrine and church polity. In other words, the Holy Bible is the ultimate authority for faith and practice.

Scriptural Reference(s): Psalm 119:105, Matthew 24:35, I Peter 1:23

2. Autonomy of the Local Church

“Then they [the early church] prayed, ‘Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show *us* which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry’ ... Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.” *Acts 1:24-26*

As Baptists we believe that the church is a self-governing institution. This means that Baptist Churches are not controlled by outside persons or forces. It is by the authority of Christ that is further revealed to the church by the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, that Baptist Churches direct all church-related affairs.

Scriptural Reference(s): I Corinthians 6:1-3

3. Priesthood of all Believers

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” *I Peter 2:9*

As Baptists, we believe, in contrast to the Priestly Tradition of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), that Jesus Christ is our High Priest. Through Christ, all believers are priests with direct access to God. Every believer may approach God for themselves with prayers of all kinds without a human mediator. As our High Priest, Jesus Christ now stands in the gap for us, mediating between God and humankind.

Scriptural Reference(s): Matthew 27:51, Philippians 4:6

4. Two Ordinances

There are two ordinances in the Baptist Church: Baptism by immersion in water and The Lord's Supper. For full treatment, see above.

Scriptural Reference: Romans 6:1-5, I Corinthians 11:23-24

5. Individual Soul Liberty

"You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it, you will surely die."
Genesis 2:16-17

As Baptists, we believe that God has given human beings the freedom to know and respond to God's will. This gift from God enables believers to freely choose to obey or deny the commands of God through Christ.

Scriptural Reference(s): Romans 14:5

6. Separation of Church & State

"Then he [Jesus] said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." *Matthew 22:21*

As Baptists, we believe that government is ordained by God to ensure the maintenance of law and order and to protect the interests of all citizens. The nature of the Church is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Government should make no attempt to exert control over the Church.

Scriptural Reference(s): Acts 4:19, Acts 5:29

7. Two Church Offices

"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers-not because you must, but because you are willing as God wants you to be." *I Peter 5:2*

As Baptists, we believe that two offices are scripturally affirmed: the first is the Office of the Pastor, the second, the Office of the Deacon. Although we believe that all are called to serve the Kingdom of God on the earth, some are "set apart" for specific ministry functions.

Scriptural Reference(s): Acts 20:28, I Timothy 3

8. Saved Church Membership - The Perseverance of the Saints

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” *Matthew 16:18*

As Baptists, we believe that salvation cannot be lost, no matter what the circumstances. In other words, “once saved, always saved.” Because the Church consists of members who have attained salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, the “saved church” perseveres by the power of God “who is able to keep us from falling.

Scriptural Reference(s): Acts 2:47, Jude 1:24

Discussion Questions

1. How did we come to be known as Baptists?

2. Describe the difference between a Baby Blessing and a Christening/Infant Baptism?

3. Is Baptism by immersion in water essential for salvation or church membership? Explain.

4. Identify differences between the Office of the Deacon, and the roles of the Deaconess and Trustee?

5. What is a Baptist Convention? Which convention does the Abyssinian Baptist Church belong to?

Answers:

1. Baptists in America generally trace their origins to the 17th century English Puritan Movement. John Smyth, a young scholar, denounced as unscriptural several principles of the Orthodox Church, including its hierarchical episcopacy and the practice of infant baptism. For a full explanation, see *A New Baptist Church Manual, Revised*, Judson Press, 1976.
2. A Baby Blessing is a sacred ceremony in which the fellowship of believers invokes the blessings of God upon an infant child and its parents. Although a sacred ceremony, a Baby Blessing does not confer church membership to the infant. A Christening/Infant Baptism usually involves sprinkling an infant with water. It does confer church membership to the infant.
3. Baptism by immersion in water is required for church membership as attested to during the ministry of Christ and throughout the apostolic ministry. Baptism by the Holy Spirit, which must be preceded by faith and repentance, is the only requirement for salvation.
4. The Deacon holds one of only two offices in the Baptist Church. The Deacon is ordained to fulfill the role of serving the Lord's Table, the Pastor's Table, and the Table of the Sick & Poor. The role of Deaconess can only be filled by a woman who is married to a Deacon. At The Abyssinian Baptist Church all Deaconesses are ordained officers of the church and are called to the same ministry as Deacons; that is, serving the Lord's Table, Pastor's Table, and the Table of the Sick & Poor. In contrast to the ministry of Deacons and Deaconesses, Trustees are not ordained but appointed to their position. The Trustee is primarily concerned with the physical condition of the church, including but not limited to its financial viability.
5. There are various Baptist Conventions, all of which primarily emerged because of the issue of American legal chattel slavery and racial disenfranchisement. Issues of foreign mission, home mission, and Christian education were also significant factors in their development. The Abyssinian Baptist Church is aligned with three conventions: The National Baptist Convention USA, Inc., the American Baptist Churches, USA, and the Progressive National Baptist Convention. For further treatment, visit www.nationalbaptist.com, www.abc-usa.org, or www.pnbc.org.

NEW MEMBERS CLASS

Session #3: The Abyssinian Baptist Church – Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

Welcome to Session #3 of your New Members Class. By the end of this session you will:

- ✠ Know the history and mission of the Abyssinian Baptist Church
- ✠ Understand what it means to be a member of the Abyssinian Baptist Church
- ✠ Discover the breadth and depth of the ministry of the Abyssinian Baptist Church
- ✠ Explore Abyssinian's future vision for relevant and effective ministry

Introduction

The Abyssinian Baptist Church in the City of New York, Inc. celebrated its bicentennial in 2008. It is the oldest Christian fellowship of African American Baptists in the State of New York and in the nation. Founded only 32 years after the establishment of America, the Abyssinian Baptist Church has grown from 15 charter members with a single minister to a congregation of over 3,000 with three full-time ministers. The Abyssinian Neighborhood also includes:

- The *Abyssinian Annex*, a satellite office committed to maintaining Member Records and Stewardship
- The *Abyssinian Development Corporation*, a multi-million dollar community development engine
- The *Abyssinian House*, a full-service transitional housing facility
- The *Abyssinian Towers*, a 100-unit apartment building for seniors
- The *Abyssinian Resource Center*, satellite classroom and meeting space
- The *Abyssinian Bookstore*
- The *Thurgood Marshall Educational Complex* that consists of: The Thurgood Marshall Lower School (grades K-6) and Thurgood Marshall Academy for Learning & Social Change (grades 7-12)
- Three *Headstart Centers*
- *Youth On the Move in Harlem, Inc.* Community Athletic Program

Taken together, Abyssinian is staffed by over 100 employees of the church, its affiliates, subsidiaries, and corporation. Although Abyssinian members live throughout the tri-state area, our fellowship is blessed with a significant host of Greater Harlem's learned and accomplished community. We are a loving and welcoming congregation that desires to worship "God with us" in spirit and in truth.

The History of the Abyssinian Baptist Church

Named for our Holy Land, the ancient Abyssinia (present-day Ethiopia), The Abyssinian Baptist Church was established in 1808 by free black Americans and Ethiopian merchants. Its founding emerged from their staunch refusal to accept bigotry and race hatred while worshipping at the First Baptist Church of New York City. The Reverend Thomas Paul, an African American minister from Boston, helped the newly formed congregation to organize as the first African American church in New York State. After purchasing property on Worth Street in Lower Manhattan, the Abyssinian Baptist Church called Reverend John Van Velzer as its first Pastor.

In 1856, Reverend William Spellman was called as Abyssinian's Pastor. He served for nearly thirty years. During his pastorate the church purchased property on Waverly Place in the West Village. During Reverend Spellman's tenure, Abyssinian prospered and its membership reached 1,600. The Abyssinian Baptist Church incorporated on April 16, 1859. Reverend Spellman retired in 1885 and was succeeded by The Reverend Robert D. Wynn of Norwich, Connecticut.

In 1902, The Reverend Charles Satchell Morris was called as Pastor and in less than nine months moved Abyssinian to its third home on West 40th Street in Midtown Manhattan. Reverend Morris served until his health failed in May 1908. That year, Abyssinian called a young gospel giant from Immanuel Baptist Church in New Haven, Connecticut to its pastorate, The Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Sr.

Reverend Powell, Sr. spent his first 12 years as pastor reorganizing the church so that it would function more efficiently. Having observed the large numbers of Black people migrating to New York City, especially Harlem, Powell, Sr. was convinced that these newcomers needed a church to help support their transition. He envisioned building a model institutional church in Harlem that would serve as both a place of worship and community center.

On April 9, 1922, The Abyssinian Baptist Church bought land at its present site, West 138th Street. Shortly thereafter, the sanctuary was erected along with the first community recreation center in Harlem and the combined cost of \$334,889 was nearly paid off! Within seven years, Abyssinian was paid for in full.

Reverend Powell, Sr. was committed to shaping the Church's ministry to meet the needs of the thousands of new arrivals in Harlem during the 1920's. The Community House was used for youth club activity, basketball games, classes, and meetings. The Church often held teen dances and fashion shows on its roof. While Reverend Powell, Sr. and his family lived on the top floor of the Community House, the other floors held classrooms where members of the church

and community learned various skills like dressmaking, typing, and civil service test preparation. Our current Fellowship Hall was once the community gymnasium.

In 1937, Reverend Powell, Sr. was succeeded by his son, The Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., affectionately known as “Adam.” His passion for justice and concern for social change led him to blend his ministry with a political career. His fight for racial and economic justice carried him from the City Council of New York to the United States Congress. Reverend Congressman Powell served 14 terms in Congress and ultimately became the Chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor.

During Reverend Powell Jr.’s pastorate, the Abyssinian congregation grew to 18,000 members, making it the largest Protestant church in America. Abyssinians were proud that their Pastor was a leader in the struggle for fair and equitable government.

In April 1972, after the death of Reverend Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., The Reverend Dr. Samuel DeWitt Proctor was called as Pastor of The Abyssinian Baptist Church. Dr. Proctor was a superbly trained clergyman with a distinguished career as President of Virginia Union University, North Carolina A&T University, and as the Martin Luther King Memorial Professor at Rutgers University.

As one of our nation’s most celebrated preachers, Dr. Proctor assured that Abyssinian would continue to promote the importance of Christian values while remaining an uncompromised voice of justice in the nation and world. During his tenure, The Abyssinian ministry expanded to include several major housing projects, including senior citizen housing, housing for the homeless, as well as for middle-income families. Additionally, through Dr. Proctor’s efforts, the fine arts became a significant part of Abyssinian’s evangelistic outreach. Not only was our 5-Manual 67 Rank Schantz Organ installed, but The New York Philharmonic, Leontyne Price, Andre Watts, Billy Taylor, and many other renowned artists were regular guests.

Rev. Proctor brought several young ministers to work with him in the task of building Abyssinian. One of those ministers, Reverend Calvin O. Butts, III, arrived in the mid-1970’s with a profound commitment to building God’s Kingdom on earth. Reverend Butts ably assisted Dr. Proctor, giving particular attention to Abyssinian’s daily activities, weekly services, and the concerns of the African American community-at-large.

Following Dr. Proctor's retirement, The Reverend Dr. Calvin O. Butts, III was installed as the 20th Pastor of The Abyssinian Baptist Church in the City of New York, Inc. on November 12, 1989. Under the leadership of Dr. Butts, Abyssinian has been at the forefront of the revitalization of Harlem. As President of the Organization of African American Clergy, Dr. Butts led the fight against police brutality in New York City. He was the leader of a nationally acclaimed and most effective campaign to eliminate negative billboard advertising in Central Harlem. Dr. Butts also called attention to the adverse effects of popular culture on our youth through his ardent fight and public campaign against negative lyrics and images in the recording industry.

Rev. Butts was one of the founders, and is the current Chairman of the Abyssinian Development Corporation, a comprehensive, community-based not for profit organization, responsible for over \$500 million in housing and commercial development in Harlem. He was also instrumental in establishing the Thurgood Marshall Academy for Learning and Social Change – a public, state-of-the-art, intermediate and high school in Harlem, and he is the visionary behind the Thurgood Marshall Academy Lower School, which opened in September 2005.

During Dr. Butts' tenure, many projects have been completed including, but not limited to: 1) The Abyssinian House, a \$2.5 million housing facility for homeless families, located across the street from the church; 2) The Abyssinian Towers, a \$19 million senior citizens apartment building located on 131st Street; 3) Middle-income condominiums for purchase on West 131st Street; 4) complete renovation of The Abyssinian Baptist Church. Plans are being made for the renovation of the former Small's Paradise and Renaissance Ballroom buildings. In October 2000, The Reverend Dr. Calvin O. Butts, III was inaugurated as President of the State University of New York, Old Westbury.

In addition to his professional and religious avocations, Dr. Butts is Chairman of the Board of North General Hospital in Harlem; Chairman of National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS (NBLCA), and a founding member of the organization's Board of Commissioners; Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of United Way of New York City; and he is a member of the Board of the New York Blood Center, the American Red Cross of Greater New York, New Visions for Public Schools, and the American Baptist College in Nashville, Tennessee.

In 2008, The Abyssinian Baptist Church in the City of New York, Inc. celebrated 200 years of commitment to service and the preaching and teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

What does it mean to be a member of the Abyssinian Baptist Church?

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”
James 1:22

At Abyssinian, we take this scriptural instruction seriously by demonstrating our commitment to Christ and the Church in the following ways:

I. Commitment to Christ through *Personal Spiritual Growth & Development*

“...Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” *Philippians 2:12*

The Abyssinian Baptist Church is committed to worship and Christian Education, both of which are necessary for Abyssinian members to grow in Christ Jesus. Our Pastor is serious about equipping members with the appropriate spiritual tools to enhance their respective Christian journeys. The Abyssinian Institute for Christian Education offers classes seasonally to supplement our weekly Sunday School curriculum. In addition to our weekly Worship Services, Abyssinian also provides regular opportunities for communal prayer, small-group study, and pastoral care & counseling.

II. Commitment to Christ through *Ministry & Community Service*

“The greatest among you will be your servant.” *Matthew 23:11*

Ministry is an essential component of our Christian faith. The Abyssinian Baptist Church has over 50 ministries that address a full range of needs and concerns pertinent to the African American community of faith. Through our far-reaching ministries, every member has the opportunity to be nurtured spiritually and practically, while serving both our church community and the community-at-large.

III. Commitment to Christ through *Stewardship & Tithing*

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.”
Malachi 3:10

The Abyssinian Baptist Church is a committed House of Prayer for God’s people. In addition to being a place where all are invited to experience the love, power, peace, and salvation of Jesus Christ, our faith also compels us to continue feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, educating our children and community. The expansive ministry of The Abyssinian Baptist Church is entirely supported by the tithes and stewardship of our members. At Abyssinian, we love to tithe! Not only do we give God of our time and talent, we also cheerfully give 10% of the financial blessings God has so graciously given to us. Through the power of the

Holy Spirit and the tithes of the people of God, the ministry of The Abyssinian Baptist Church continues to reach and transform lives.

IV. Commitment to Christ through *Youth Discipleship and Personal Development*

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” *Matthew 19:14*

The Abyssinian Baptist Church is committed to addressing the spiritual, intellectual, and social needs of our children and youth. We utilize socially relevant and culturally sensitive Sunday School curriculum to introduce young people to the foundations of Christian faith and Baptist polity. Children and youth are encouraged to worship in the Abyssinian Junior Church, which blends traditional and contemporary worship styles that speak to the unique reality of 21st century youth culture. We offer on-going academic counseling and test preparation courses to ensure the intellectual preparedness of our college-bound youth. Through a variety of worship and ministry opportunities, workshops, and outings, The Abyssinian Baptist Church offers a safe, fun and enriching environment for our children and youth to grow into exemplary Christian women and men.

Abyssinian Board Leadership

Board of Deacons	Deacon Jerry Barbour
Board of Deaconesses	Deaconess Eleanor Olive
Board of Trustees	Trustee Alexis Thomas

ABYSSINIAN MINISTRIES

For all ministry contacts and additional information, email ministry@abyssinian.org or contact the church office at 212-862-7474 ext. 216

ABY/TECH MINISTRY

AbyTech is the audio/visual arm of the church. We provide video, audio and technical support for church services and events. The mission of the Abyssinian Technical Ministry (Aby Tech) is to document the activities of The Abyssinian Baptist Church, its Ministries, and the Harlem community.

ACP MEMORIAL MINISTRY

At certain times in history, God will send leaders of extraordinary influence, commitment, and service to pastor a church. Abyssinian has been blessed with

two such pastoral leaders, Pastors Adam Clayton Powell, Sr. and Jr. This memorial ministry was organized to celebrate and commemorate the life and work of this pastoral pair. The memorial is held annually on the fourth Sunday in May and is now known as Pastor's Memorial Sunday.



AMERICAN BAPTIST WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Abyssinian Baptist Church women join with the larger body of American Baptist women who want to grow spiritually and develop their spiritual gifts. We work to become more effective Christian disciples and stewards through Bible study, fellowship meetings, and an annual retreat.

ARCHIVES & HISTORY MINISTRY

The Archives and History Ministry collects and preserves historical artifacts about the church to educate the congregation, community, and constituencies at large about the legacy of faith, Christian witness, and significance of The Abyssinian Baptist Church.



BLACK TEACHERS WHO CARE MINISTRY

The mission of Black Teachers Who Care is to support educators, parents and children by assisting in the professional and spiritual growth of educators, providing strategies for parents towards their children's educational growth and development, supporting programs for children, and providing a vehicle for educational information, networking and sharing in faithful service to Thurgood Marshall Academies.

BLESSED 90's MINISTRY

Our Blessed 90's Ministry honors those whom God has blessed with longevity, and gives recognition to them for their presence and wisdom. The Blessed 90's Ministry hosts a special Fellowship Brunch each year for our beloved seniors.



BLUE NILE RITES OF PASSAGE, INC.

Blue Nile Passage Inc. is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to the spiritual, cultural, and moral character development of America's youth. Organized within The Abyssinian Baptist Church in 1994 and incorporated in 1996, we are a manhood and womanhood training program for youth ages 12-16.



THE BROTHERHOOD MINISTRY

The Brotherhood is an all-male ministry with a purpose to lead men to salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ and help men grow in their relationship with Him. Bible study and fellowship gatherings are just a few ways in which the men share and serve. Brothers, come join this group of believing brothers. Bring a brother with you. Let us strengthen one another. We further aim to win more men for Christ through evangelism, Christian education and social service delivery.

BUSINESS OWNERS MINISTRY

Business ownership is stewardship. God requires us to employ ethics and integrity in managing our businesses. BOM invites Abyssinian business owners to fellowship with us as we support our respective spiritual and economic success. By working together we create a platform of networking, peer-to-peer interaction, fellowship and sharing of business ideas.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY

The mission of the Christian Education ministry is to support our fellowship's faith journey by encouraging a constant quest for understanding. The ministry works hand-in-hand with the Assistant Minister for Christian Education in order to support the various teaching mechanisms of the church: Sunday School, Abyssinian Institute for Christian Education

CHRISTIAN SOCIAL CONCERN MINISTRY

Bringing about social justice is part of Christian duty. God expects the church to speak out against injustice and inequity in the world and work to bring justice to the oppressed. The purpose of the Board of Christian Social Concern Ministry is to heighten the awareness of the church and the community regarding social justice issues. Advocates, policy makers, experts, and other social justice leaders are convened for discussions and forums. The mission of the Board of Christian Social Concern Ministry is to heighten awareness around socio-political issues in faithful service to Abyssinian's rich history in activism.

CREATIVE ARTS MINISTRY

The mission of the Creative Arts Ministry is to produce theatrical events each year. It is a diverse group of writers, performers, stage crew, directors, set designers and others. The ministry comes together for fellowship and to share their love of theater. We encourage members to transform the drama within their personal lives into creative works of art for Christ. The Creative Arts Ministry is responsible for Abyssinian's annual Christmas, Black History, and Easter plays.

EXODUS MINISTRY

The Exodus Ministry is committed to assisting formerly incarcerated persons transition into society. This ministry offers an array of workshops and programming that is designed to help individuals and families positively cope with the challenges of everyday life.

FLORAL CIRCLE MINISTRY

The Floral Circle Ministry adorns the sanctuary with additional floral arrangements for worship services, events, and special occasions throughout the year. With God's own creation, this ministry keeps God's dwelling place lovely!

FOOD SERVICE MINISTRY

The Abyssinian Food Service Ministry caters Church events and provides meals on Sundays.

GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY

This ministry facilitates dialogue and explores issues of experienced loss and anticipatory loss. A bio-psychosocial approach is used to address issues of anticipating the death of a loved one or with those who have already experienced the death of a loved one. The role of spirituality and one's relationship with God in the bereavement and grief process is discussed. Participants meet regularly and engage in on-going discussion regarding how loss is dealt with emotionally, socially, mentally, and spiritually.

HEALTH & WELLNESS MINISTRY

The Health Ministry's mission is to provide information and support to help us take care of our physical and psychological health. This ministry provides workshops on nutrition, fitness, medical conditions, and the health care system. Jesus offers us abundant life. We are not just to survive; we are to thrive! The Health Ministry helps us do that.



HIV/AIDS MINISTRY

The HIV/AIDS Ministry strives to increase awareness, participation and support for HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment within our community.



JOSHUA MINISTRY

God is preparing a new generation of spiritual leaders who desire to go to the next level in their lives personally, professionally, and spiritually. It is our aim at Abyssinian to make sure that we prepare the new generation and ground them in the faith that has brought us thus far. Joshua is more than an organization; it is a spiritual fellowship of leaders seeking to do God's will in today's secular world.

LBT FAMILY LIFE MINISTRY

The Laura B. Thomas Family Life Ministry supports and celebrates Abyssinian families in all aspects of life. Each month this ministry presents Bibles to families that bring their infants to the Abyssinian altar to be blessed. The ministry provides programming to enrich the lives of young children, and offers support for families in crisis.

LEGAL MINISTRY

The Abyssinian Legal Ministry is open to Law students, attorneys, paralegals, legal secretaries and other legal professionals. The mission of the Ministry is to bring these professionals together in a networking fellowship so that they may know and support one another. Together these members of Abyssinian Baptist Church will support the congregation by presenting periodic panel discussions and other events that will serve to educate and inform the community.

LOVE & MARRIAGE MINISTRY

The Love & Marriage Ministry is especially for members of our church who are married or engaged. This ministry hosts classes, workshops, and regular fellowships that are designed to strengthen the Christian bond between husband and wife. The Love & Ministry Marriage also helps to facilitate recently engaged couples' Pre Marital Counseling and Wedding Planning.

MATTIE FLETCHER POWELL VOLUNTEER MINISTRY

The mission of the Mattie Fletcher Powell ministry is to conduct fellowship activities promoting spiritual growth and development for the members and visitors of The Abyssinian Baptist Church.



MEN'S MINISTRY

The mission of the Abyssinian Men's Ministry is to actively develop and implement a variety of structured outcome-centered programs for the men of



Abyssinian in order to support and facilitate the process of spiritual, personal, and vocational development. We are committed to assisting men envision, embrace, and actualize their leadership roles in the church, family, and community.

MISSIONARY MINISTRY

The mission of the Missionary Ministry is to evangelize and spread the Gospel through intercessory prayer, visitation, scripture reading, food distribution, educational workshops and donations. We extend faithful service to the sick and shut-in, incarcerated individuals, seniors, and those in need, locally and internationally.

MUSIC MINISTRY

The Mission of the Abyssinian Baptist Church Music Ministry is to help bring souls to Christ by presenting a breadth of sacred music that communicates God's Word and His love, and to exhort the congregation to worship and meditate on Him; that prepares hearts and minds to receive God's message and to answer His call to stewardship and service.

The Cathedral Choir

The Cathedral Choir has been an integral part of the Church's life since its founding in 1808. The Cathedral Choir is comprised of mixed voices and the repertoire encompasses a wide range of sacred music including oratorios, cantatas, anthems, Negro spirituals, hymns, gospel music, and other sacred selections. This Choir ministers in song at the 9 & 11 AM on Sundays as scheduled by the director, on Christmas, Easter and for special occasions and events in the life of Abyssinian. Rehearsal is on Tuesdays at 7:00 PM in the Rehearsal Room.

The Inspirational Voices of Abyssinian

The Inspirational Voices of Abyssinian is comprised of mixed voices and specializes in gospel music, both traditional and contemporary including a vast repertoire of anthems, hymn arrangements, and Negro spirituals. This Choir ministers in song at the 9 & 11 AM divine worship services on Sundays as scheduled by the director, on Christmas, Easter and for special occasions and events in the life of Abyssinian. Rehearsal is on Thursdays at 6:30 PM in the Rehearsal Room.

The Leon E. Thompson Men's Chorus

The Leon E. Thompson Men's Chorus is named for former Minister of Music Dr. Leon E. Thompson and is comprised of men in Abyssinian who not only sing in the

primary choirs of the church but also serve in various other ministries. Rehearsal is on Saturdays at 11:00 AM in the Sanctuary. They sing on 5th Sundays at the 9 AM service and on special occasions such as Men's Day and Father's Day.

The Total Praise Ensemble

The Total Praise Ensemble is comprised of mixed voices and ministers each Wednesday evening during Midweek Manna at 7:00 PM. This group specializes in praise & worship and contemporary gospel music. Rehearsal is on Mondays at 6:00 PM in the Sanctuary.

The Youth Concert Chorale

The Youth Concert Chorale is comprised of youth ages 13 to 21. Rehearsal is on Fridays at 5:30 PM in the Rehearsal Room. They minister in song at Youth Church in the Vestry and on 5th Sundays during the 11 AM divine worship service. If you are interested in joining, please speak with Mr. Bryant.

The Children's Choir

The Children's Choir is under the direction of C. Anthony Bryant, Minister of Music for Youth, and is comprised of children ages 6 to 12. This choir rehearses on Saturday mornings at 11 AM in the rehearsal room and sings during Youth Church in the Vestry as scheduled by Mr. Bryant. Parents who are interested in their children becoming a part of the Children's Choir may speak with Mr. Bryant on any Sunday after worship services.

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME MINISTRY

You've joined Abyssinian. Now what? The New Members Ministry invites Abyssinian's new members to breakfast so that we can welcome you to our fellowship, introduce ourselves, get to know you better, and share with you news and information about the ministries of Abyssinian church. We are family now. We need to know each other and work together. Come and begin to discern what God has for you to do at Abyssinian, your new church home.

PARENT MINISTRY

The Parent Ministry seeks to support children and families that actively participate in the Junior Church Worship experience. The Parent Ministry is present in Junior Church to assist with gathering children for worship, encouraging their spiritual growth, and mentoring Abyssinian children and youth. The Parent Ministry also hosts workshops that are specifically geared toward 21st century parents.

SATELLITE MINISTRY

The mission of the Satellite Ministry is to provide resources and social services to young and senior members in our community where family, opportunity and other means of assistance are not readily available. We believe that through following Christ's example, we will be able to offer service that is nurturing, empowering, and pleasing to God.

SCHOLARSHIP MINISTRY



The Scholarship Ministry's purpose is to provide financial assistance to Abyssinian members who seek to attend a college or university to obtain an undergraduate degree. You can review scholarship opportunities and qualifications at our website and also fill out an application online.

SECURITY MINISTRY

The mission of the Security Ministry is to maintain an atmosphere where worshipers who enter God's house feel welcome, comfortable, and secure at all times. The aim of this ministry is to protect God's spokesperson and the parishioners of our loving congregation.

SINGLES MINISTRY



The mission of the Abyssinian Singles Ministry (ASM) is to promote the spiritual development of Christian singles through the study of the Word, Christian Fellowship and community service. The Abyssinian Singles Ministry (ASM) is a ministry of the church addressing the spiritual needs of its single population. We organized because of the need for singles at Abyssinian to belong and be of service and in fellowship with other brothers and sisters in Christ.

SISTER-TO-SISTER BOOK MINISTRY

The mission of the Abyssinian Sister-to-Sister Book Ministry is to bring together members of the body of Christ who enjoy reading in an atmosphere of bonding both intellectually and spiritually. We give of ourselves, share our experiences, and open our minds through fellowship and faithful service to our Lord and Savior.

SUNDAY MORNING PRAYER BAND

Founded in 1901, the Sunday Morning Praying Band continues faithfully in a tradition over 100 years old. In 2009, the Sunday Morning Praying Band celebrated 108 years of prayer and praise to the Lord. The group meets every

Sunday morning 7:00 AM to 8:30 AM in the Vestry. Come pray, praise, give testimony, sing the songs of Zion, receive inspiration and fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ.

SUNDAY SCHOOL MINISTRY

The Sunday School Ministry's primary mission is to teach the Word of God so that people are led to salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. This ministry expounds on the Bible in ways that are relevant and meaningful to everyday living. Sunday School meets every Sunday at 9 am from September to June. Ages 2 and up are welcome.

UNITED USHERS MINISTRY



When you enter a church, ushers are the first people you meet. Abyssinian's ushers are committed to making your first contact with the church a pleasant one. In welcoming you into God's house and assisting and directing you during worship, the ushers are ministering angels to those who come to worship with us. The mission of the United Ushers Ministry is to win more souls for Christ by graciously welcoming and assisting all who enter.

New Life Usher Board

Progressive Men's Usher Board

Prayer Night Usher Board

Senior Ladies Usher Board

Progressive Ladies Usher Board

Senior Men's Usher Board

UTILITY/PANTRY MINISTRY

There are some people in the Abyssinian community who rely on us for food. We, the Abyssinian Baptist Church, are committed to helping meet this most basic human need. The Utility Ministry's mission is to supply Abyssinian's pantry with food donations from community businesses (supermarkets). We seek to increase the number of businesses with which we partner so that our cupboards are never bare and our neighbors are fed.

WELCOME & HOSPITALITY MINISTRY

The Welcome & Hospitality Ministry is devoted to making all members and especially visitors of Abyssinian feel welcome in the House of the Lord. They set a pleasant tone for what all who enter our doors. Our goal is to welcome you to our Father's house.



WOMEN'S MINISTRY

The Women's Ministry is committed to the spiritual growth and development of Abyssinian women. Annual Revivals, Retreats, and Sister Circle Fellowships bring Abyssinian women together to share their faith with other Christian women. Through worship, study, and fellowship opportunities, the Abyssinian Women's ministry seeks to help transform the mind, body, and spirit of every Abyssinian woman.

YOUTH MINISTRY

The Youth Ministry of The Abyssinian Baptist Church seeks to cultivate young disciples for Christ. To this end, we engage in regular worship services, Christian education classes, and weekly spiritual and cultural activities. We aim to support youth and young adults in their Christian journey by providing a ministry that is both relevant and transformative.

***Junior Church** is a Sunday Morning worship service for our youth and young adults. During this time, the children worship and praise God in a setting where their experience is privileged and they are given the freedom to express themselves in a rhythm and style all their own. Through our Youth Choir and the preached word, we aim to win more souls for Christ.

Meets Sundays at 11 am.

***"In the Word" Teen Bible Study** provides the opportunity for Abyssinian youth to think about important matters and questions of faith. Abyssinian youth are invited to explore these questions by reading the bible through a lens that is culturally sensitive, socially relevant, and age-appropriate.

Meets every Friday at 6:30 pm.

***2nd Hour** programming seeks to engage children and youth through cultural discussions and enrichment projects. During the 2nd Hour of Sunday morning worship, Abyssinian youth are given the opportunity to explore and critique the influence of art & culture, in its various forms, on issues of gender, race, and class. *Meets every Sunday following Junior Church service at 12 pm.*

***HYPE (Helping Young People Excel)** is a non-evangelical meeting space for teens in our church and wider community. During our weekly sessions, young adults are invited to discuss a range of topics from spirituality to gang violence. HYPE teens are inspired to wrestle with contemporary issues that

challenge their self-worth. HYPE promotes thoughtful transformation, and inevitably empowers Abyssinian youth to live changed lives.
Meets Fridays at 7:30 pm.

***SOS (Saving Our Sons)** is a weekly male-centered development program for adolescent boys ages 12 and up. SOS is designed to address the unique struggles and challenges of growing up Black and male in America. SOS offers a platform for young men to share their concerns and perspectives on issues they encounter in their daily lives. Group sessions are guided by Christian men who are concerned with the future of African American boys. It is the goal of SOS to cultivate the spiritual, moral, and emotional sensibilities of a future generation of African American Christian men.
Meets Tuesdays at 6 pm.

***Youth Liturgical Dance** is a ministry that praises God through dance. This ministry is open to youth ages 12 and up. Young people are encouraged to worship and praise God through the movement of their bodies. While encouraging Abyssinian youth to acknowledge their bodies as temples “holy and acceptable unto God,” Youth Liturgical Dance also seeks to enhance self-esteem and foster positive body images amongst our young people. All Teens are welcome to participate. Children under 12 may participate with permission from the ministry leader. No prior dance training is required.
Meets Mondays at 6 pm.

***Youth Council** The mission of the Youth Council is to assist teenagers in their development as young adults and expose them to various cultural events and experiences in New York City. The Youth Council seeks to prepare youth in the area of public speaking, building confidence and self-esteem through participation in worship services, the Abyssinian Docent program, and a host of other leadership activities. *Meets every 1st and 3rd Saturday at 12:30 pm.*

NEW MEMBER'S CLASS

Session #4: Giving God Our Best – Worship & Stewardship

Welcome to Session #4 of your New Members Class. By the end of this session you will:

- ✚ Understand what worship is and why it is important
- ✚ Know how Christians worship God
- ✚ Explore the meaning and significance of Christian stewardship
- ✚ Discover what God requires of all believers

“Therefore, I urge you, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:1-2

What is worship?

In Christian communities, worship means giving honor and glory to God. It is the way by which believers demonstrate their loyalty to God. Through worship, believers are able to remember and center their lives on the Christian story. Worship reminds us that we are followers of Christ and help us orient our lives to serve the world. Many Christians also believe that through worship they receive all the gifts of the Holy Spirit they need for their journey with God.

“Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.” Acts 2:46

Early Christians found it necessary to **remember Jesus** in the everydayness of life. They gathered together every day at the rising of the sun to sing psalms and offer prayers. In order to distinguish themselves from their Jewish neighbors, the early Christians recited the Lord’s Prayer, baptized one another in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and shared a holy meal of bread and wine.

Worship reframes our lives. Through the Word of God, hymns, prayers, ordinances, offerings and a host of other activities, we are reminded of our loving God and reconnected with all who share our faith.

Why do we worship? (Psalm 22:22, 35:18)

Christians are motivated to worship because of the eternal “mercies of God” (Romans 12:1) – love, grace, peace, joy, comfort, strength, hope, life, forgiveness, reconciliation and so much more. No matter what our present circumstances, God has given us much more than we deserve. We do not worship God because we expect something in return. Believers worship the Lord deserves it. Our knowledge of the “mercies of God,” the priceless gifts God has freely given to us, motivates us to worship with praise and thanksgiving.

How do we worship?

Worship is more than just showing up to church on Sunday morning. It is much more than the building we meet in and/or the songs we sing. Jesus says that true worship is when believers worship God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). This means that worship is an act of love and adoration that pours forth from the very heart and spirit of the believer.

The Apostle Paul further reminds us that Christians worship by offering their “bodies as living sacrifices – holy and pleasing to God” (Romans 12:1). This means that we are to give everything we have (hearts, minds, thoughts) to God. Paul suggests that believers are able to sacrifice everything to God only “by the renewing of [their] minds” (Romans 12:2).

How do I renew my mind?

Word of God – Understanding God

“Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Matthew 4:4

The Word of God has many meanings. It refers to Jesus Christ, the Holy Scriptures, and the spoken interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, also known as the “sermon.” Knowledge of the Word of God helps us move out of human isolation and into the fullness of God’s story.

Do you know any Scripture from memory? Write it below.

Prayer – Talking to God

“This, then is how you should pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be Thy name,

Thy Kingdom come,

Thy will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.” Matthew 6:9-13



Prayer is talking with God. It is the soul’s sincere desire to commune with God. God knows your heart and is not concerned with your words. In prayer, God is more concerned with the attitude of your heart.

What do you want to say to God right now?

Fellowship – Gathering with God’s People

“For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”

Matthew 18:20

Gathering with others for celebration and remembrance is part of being human. Worship enables a community of believers to gather and connect with one another as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Word of God states that “where two or three are gathered” in Jesus’ name, there God will be in their midst. Coming together for worship and fellowship offers Christians opportunity to praise God together.

Faithful Living – Sharing the Love of God with the World

“You are the light of the world...let your light shine before men [and women] that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:14-16

As Christians, we are called to live in a way that makes God’s love visible to others. Through the Word of God, prayer, and the fellowship of the saints, believers are able to experience the grace and mercy of God. As Christ extends grace to us, we are to freely extend this same gracious spirit to others.

The primary mechanism of faithful living is **Stewardship**. Stewardship is a partnership with God that begins when one recognizes that *everything* belongs to God. A steward manages the affairs of a household or an estate for the owner. As Christian stewards, we manage the affairs of God on earth.

Each of us has been called by God to be stewards. God has given us unique and valuable abilities to use in the service of the Church – all to God’s honor and glory! A Christian steward serves God graciously and in love with their respective gifts. S/he realizes that it is not the amount of what we have received from God, but what we do with what God has freely given us that matters most!

Read *The Parable of the Talents*, Matthew 25:14-30. How does this story speak to you?

As Christians, we are called to be:

Stewards of Time

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.” Matthew 25:13

Time is a gift from God. We must use our time wisely in every activity of each day. We must schedule our time efficiently so we are able to give of our time to fulfilling God’s plan.

Which of your daily activities make it difficult to commit more time to prayer and bible study?

Stewards of Body & Mind

“Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.” Luke 12:23

With our minds, we are privileged to understand God’s plan for the world. With our bodies, we are able to accomplish God’s work. Our bodies must be respected and maintained – not harmed by unhealthy living and ungodly behavior.

What activities negatively affect your ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle?

Stewards of Relationships

“Love your neighbor as yourself.” Matthew 19:19

Our relationships with others are a measure of our Christian stewardship. As Christians, all of our personal and professional relationships should bring glory to God. At home, we are to educate our children in Christian faith. At work, we are to demonstrate moral integrity. We are to exhibit the love ethic of Christ at all times.

How does corporate/popular culture make it difficult to demonstrate Christian ideals at work/at play?

Stewards of the Gospel

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.” Romans 1:16

We are to *receive the gospel* by faith in God through Jesus Christ. We are to *share the Gospel* so that all might come to know Jesus. We are to *live the Gospel* every day of our lives.

How do you “*live the Gospel*” in your personal life?

Stewards of our Spiritual Gifts

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.” I Corinthians 12:4

God endows each of us with natural talents when we are born. When we are born again into the Body of Christ, God gives us spiritual gifts. By utilizing our spiritual gifts we are able to serve God and God’s people.



Types of Spiritual Gifts:

- ✠ **Administration** – Organizational skills; an initiator
- ✠ **Knowledge** – Ability to retain the Word of God; “walking Bible”
- ✠ **Wisdom** – Ability to use knowledge in a practical way; counselor
- ✠ **Faith** – Dependent on God and God’s Word; an optimist
- ✠ **Prophecy** – Declarer of truth; bold
- ✠ **Mercy** – Genuinely sensitive to suffering ; caring
- ✠ **Giving** – Ability to share with others freely
- ✠ **Discernment** – Ability to see through confusion to pinpoint solutions
- ✠ **Teaching** – Concern for sharing knowledge with others
- ✠ **Pastor/Shepherding** – Motivated to lead with God’s guidance
- ✠ **Hospitality** – Loves to help meet the needs of others; selfless
- ✠ **Exhortation** – Communicators of the truth; encourager
- ✠ **Evangelism** – Motivated to witness for Christ
- ✠ **Healing** – Able to effect a change in another’s physical/psychological status
- ✠ **Miracles** – Able to affect circumstances in a way that defies logic
- ✠ **Speaking in Tongues** – Communicate with God in unknown spiritual languages
- ✠ **Interpretation of Tongues** – Able to decipher unknown spiritual utterances

What is the difference between a talent and a spiritual gift?

Stewards of Money

“Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.” 1 Chronicles 29:14

Money and material possessions are prominent candidates for idolatry. As Christian stewards, we must remember that everything belongs to God. Our recognition of this leads us to be careful to *give* regularly and systematically in proportion to our gifts.

Giving to God is an act of worship, and expression of faith, as well as a spiritual discipline. Because we love God, trust God, and believe God’s Word, we cheerfully give money to the critical task of building God’s Kingdom on earth.

Is God pleased with how you acquire your money?

Giving as an Act of Worship

“How can I repay the Lord for all His goodness to me?” Psalm 116:12

The Sunday morning offering is an act of worship in which we are invited to express our devotion to our God who is so good to us. Our offering is not a fundraising ritual; it is an opportunity to offer our treasures to God in a spirit of devotion and adoration.

The essence of worship is sacrifice. When we worship God, God becomes the center of our focus. By giving up things that we value we are forced to transfer our attention, from *our* wants and *our* needs, to God.



Tithing – Our Duty

A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil, or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord. Leviticus 27:30

Church members are called to support the life and mission of the church of which they are a part with reasonable contributions proportionate to their income and circumstances.

Tithing is the spiritual practice of giving 10% of one’s increase back to God. Some people give considerably more than 10%. Tithing is a primary mechanism by which believers actively participate in building God’s Kingdom on earth. Tithing also explicitly acknowledges God’s ownership of all we possess, including our time, talent, and treasure.

Offering – God’s Delight

“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” II Corinthians 9:7

An offering assumes that we are already fulfilling the basic expectation of supporting the church. Therefore, an offering is anything given in addition to the tithe. By offering sacrificial gifts beyond the tithe, we are free to follow our intuition in deciding how much to give and when to give it.

There is a radical difference between fulfilling our duty, our reasonable commitment to God’s church and giving our way in the sacrificial spirit of Christ. It is when we offer gifts to God “above & beyond” our means that we enter into the arena of sacrificial giving. When this occurs the goodness of God takes hold of our lives and transforms us according to the Gospel. Thus, we move beyond our human duty to the delight of the Lord.

Do you think of “giving to the church” as something you ought to do or something you want to do? Why?

What do you think about tithing?

How does tithing compare to your current level of giving?

APPENDIX I

Articles of Faith

I. The Scriptures

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Psalm 119:105

Scripture teaches that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired of God, and is a perfect reassurance of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and the truth without any mixture of error as its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us, and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried.

II. The True God

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” John 4:24

Scripture teaches that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth. The True God is inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Each is equal in every divine perfection, and executes distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

III. The Fall of Humanity

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

Scripture teaches that humanity was created in holiness, under the law of God; but by voluntary transgressions fell from that happy and holy estate. All human beings are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

IV. God’s Purpose of Grace

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” Ephesians 2:8

Scripture teaches that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which God graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners. God’s grace is perfectly consistent with the free agency of humanity and is the most glorious display of

God's sovereign goodness. God's grace excludes boasting and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of God's free mercy. Grace may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regards to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

V. The Way of Salvation

"Salvation is of the Lord." Jonah 2:9

Scripture teaches that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace through the mediating office of Jesus Christ. Being without sin, Jesus fully took upon himself our nature, and honored the divine law by his personal obedience. By his death, Christ made a full atonement for human sin. Having risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven. Jesus Christ is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior.

VI. Repentance

"[Jesus said], 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye, and believe the gospel.'" Mark 1:15

Scripture teaches that repentance is wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God. It is the act wherein we are deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness. It is the moment wherein we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy.

VII. Regeneration

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3

Scripture teaches that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again. Regeneration consists of giving a holy disposition to the mind that is affected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel.

VIII. Faith

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of that which is unseen."
Hebrews 11:1

Scripture teaches that faith is a sacred duty whereby we are convinced of the way of salvation through Christ. It is receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our prophet, priest, and king, and relying on Him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.

IX. Justification

“Therefore we conclude that [humanity] is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” Romans 3:28

Scripture teaches that justification is the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures for all who believe in Him. It includes the pardon of sin and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness. Justification is bestowed by faith in Christ’s blood and not in any consideration of any works of righteousness that we have done.

Justification brings us into a state of blessed peace and favor with God.

X. Adoption

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’” Romans 8:15

Scripture teaches that adoption is a sovereign, legal act of God grounded in the atonement of Jesus Christ. Through adoption we become the sons and daughters of God and experience God as our loving Father. Believers are admitted into the family of God and become joint-heirs with Christ.

XI. Sanctification

“Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” I Corinthians 6:11

Scripture teaches that sanctification is the process whereby we are made partakers in God’s holiness. It is a progressive work that is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Sanctification is accomplished through the appointed means of the word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.

XII. Perseverance of the Saints

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.” Jude 1:25

Scripture teaches that true believers endure until the end. The Providence of Christ watches over their welfare and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

XIII. The Law & the Gospel

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.” Matthew 5:17

Scripture teaches that the Law is the eternal, unchangeable rule of God’s moral government. The Law is holy, just, and good. Because of their love of sin, fallen humanity is incapable of fulfilling the precepts of the Law. Therefore, the great end of the gospel is to reconcile humanity with God through the Mediator’s unfeigned obedience to the Law and by the means of grace.

XIV. Gospel Church

“...Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Matthew 16:18

Scripture teaches that the church of Christ is a visible congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith of the Gospel. The Gospel church observes the ordinances of Christ, is governed by His laws, and exercises the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by God’s Word. There are two scriptural offices in the Gospel church: that of the Pastor and the Deacon.

XVI. Baptism

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Matthew 28:19

Scripture teaches that baptism is by immersion in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. It is a symbol whereby believers demonstrate their faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baptism is the prerequisite to the privileges of church relation.

XVII. The Lord’s Supper

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come.” I Corinthians 11:26

Scripture teaches that the Lord’s Supper is celebrated in memory of the dying love of Jesus Christ. Through the sacred use of bread and wine, believers commemorate the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ. The Lord’s Supper is always preceded by solemn self-examination.

XV. Christian Sabbath

“But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.” Exodus 20:10

Scripture teaches that the first day of the week is the Lord’s Day. Believers are to abstain from all manner of work through the devout observance of all the means of grace, both public and private.

XIII. Civil Government

“Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God that things that are God’s. Matthew 22:21

Scripture teaches that government is divinely appointed by God for the interest and good order of society. Government officials are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ.

XIX. Righteous and the Wicked

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things..., but the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone...” Revelation 21:7-8

Scripture teaches that there is a radical and distinct difference between the righteous and the wicked. The righteous continue in faith in the Lord Jesus and are sanctified by the Spirit of God. The wicked continue in impenitence and unbelief. As such, the wicked are under the curse of death.

XX. The World to Come

“...I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Revelation 20:12

Scripture teaches that at the last day, Christ will descend from heaven and raise the dead from their graves for the final judgment. At such time, a solemn separation will take place. The wicked will inherit endless punishment and the righteous endless joy. This final judgment will forever fix the final state of humanity in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

