

RQ. Birner

HISTORY

UNION PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

1888

1934

FISHER'S RIVER PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

and

LAUREL SPRINGS PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

With

Articles of Faith

and

Covenant

**Manner of Worship; Ordinances; Home Services; Sunday Schools;
Missions; Theological Seminaries; Church Conference Meetings; Dis-
cipline; Officers**

Approved as to content:

January 23, 1993

ARTICLES OF FAITH

UNION PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

FISHER'S RIVER PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Article I - Of God and the Holy Trinity.

We believe in one only true and living God, who rules all things after his own will; and that he, who created all things, is infinite in power, wisdom, knowledge and goodness; eternal, immortal, invisible, and unchangeable; and that this God has revealed himself in his word under the character of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that these three bear witness in earth; the water, the spirit and the blood, and that these three agree in one.

Article II - Of the Holy Scriptures.

We believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written word of God, and are a sufficient rule of faith and practice; that they are given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness; and that they contain all things necessary to be known for the salvation of men and women.

Article III - Of the Atonement.

We believe that Christ died and made a complete atonement for all who ever did, does now, or ever will believe on His name; and that all who are finally saved were given to Christ in covenant of the Father before the world was, that they should show forth his praise.

Article IV - Of Foreknowledge, Election and Predestination.

We believe that (all) whom God did foreknow he did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son; that God elected according to his foreknowledge, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, all who are finally saved, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that none come to Christ only those whom he loved with an everlasting love, and in due time calls to everlasting glory.

Article V - We believe in the doctrine of original sin.

Article VI - We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by his own free will and ability.

Article VII - We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God only by the imputed righteousness of Christ.

Article VIII - We believe that God's elect will be called, converted, regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Article IX - We believe the saints persevere in grace and never finally fall away.

Article X - We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that true believers are the only proper subjects of ordinances, and that the true mode of baptism is by immersion.

Article XI - We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and a general judgment.

Article XII - We believe the punishment of the wicked will be eternal and the joys of the righteous everlasting.

Article XIII - We believe that no minister has the right to administer the ordinances only such as are regularly called and have come under the imposition of the hands of the presbytery.

COVENANT

We do now in the presence of Almighty God, and in the faith of the gospel, and by the help of divine grace, unreservedly and unitedly give up ourselves to God the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Ghost, to be for Him and no other, freely submitting ourselves to him, to be at his disposal for his glory, taking him as our true guide and only portion, promising by the help of divine grace to watch against sin, temptation, and corruption; and to hold a continual warfare with the same, looking to Christ who is the author and finisher of our faith, and the only hope and surety of his people. Under his covenant of grace, we do now freely and joyfully give ourselves to one another by the will of God, freely covenanting and engaging to and with each other to bear one another's burdens in the gospel, and so fulfill the law of Christ unto obedience, promising to watch over one another in love and to hold communion together in the ordinances of the gospel, submitting ourselves in this, which we trust is a part of his mystical body, according as we shall be directed by his Spirit in his word; and by the help of divine grace to still pray for more light from the Lord, believing that he will further and more gloriously open to us his word and the mysteries of his kingdom—and to our Lord Jesus Christ, and our only Savior, to whom be glory forever and forever. Amen.

The Articles of Faith and the Covenant were adopted in the year 1888

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of

UNION PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Union Primitive Baptist Church was organized as an arm of Hogan's Creek Primitive Baptist Church. The Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association at its April, 1888 session held with Rock Spring Church authorized organization of the church.

In May, 1888, a presbytery composed of Elders A. M. Denny, G. Denny, Nathan Alberty and J. D. Draughn met with forty-five members with letters of dismission from other churches, found them to be orthodox in faith, and constituted them into a church, ordaining Brothers A. Z. M. Denny and King D. Key as deacons. The newly constituted church chose Elder M. G. Harbour as its moderator.

Except for the year 1934, the church has continuously remained affiliated with the Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association. The Association was organized on Friday before the third Sunday in November of 1832. Originally the Association had seven churches: Deep Creek, Fisher's River, State Road, Round Peak, Cody's Creek, Ararat and Swan Creek. The original name of the Association was Fisher's River Baptist Association. The name was changed as was the name of its churches to include the word "Primitive", meaning "original", to distinguish the Association and its churches from other Baptist churches because of their opposition to the then organized mission system, foreign and domestic, to Sunday Schools and theological seminaries.

The Articles of Faith adopted by the Association and which identify the church have remained essentially unchanged.

A history of the Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association was published in 1905. At that time the following churches were associated with the Association: Deep Creek (organized around 1778), Fisher's River (before 1808), Ararat (1822), Franklin (before 1824), Round Peak (around 1825), State Road (1830), Swan Creek (before 1832), Flat Shoals (before 1848), Rock Spring (1840), Flower Gap (1841), Fisher's Gap (1844), Tom's Creek (1856), White Oak Springs (1872), Elk Spur (1873), Cody's Creek (before 1832), Liberty (1879), Zion Hill (1878), Mulberry (1881), Hogan's Creek (1885), Albion (1888), Rock House (1889), Dover (1893), Martin (1875), Union (1888), Mountain View (1895), Pilot Mountain (1896), Stewart's Creek (before 1794) and Volunteer (1867).

In the year 1934 a division of the church at Union occurred concerning the doctrine of absolute predestination. A number of the churches left the Association to form the Laurel Springs Primitive Baptist Association. To the present day both factions of Union Primitive Baptist Church use the church building, each according to the other friendship and accommodation sharing in the cost of utilities and maintenance, and contributing generously toward improvements.

Manner of Worship. From the beginning the manner of worship has not changed. Services are begun with the singing of a hymn followed by an invocation. The elders present are afforded an opportunity to exercise their gifts. The deacons determine the order of preaching. Pastors may select hymns before preaching. No musical instruments are employed nor organized choirs chosen. None were believed found necessary or appropriate in the days of the Apostles. The service is kept deliberately simple with total focus upon worship, nothing appealing to human vanity. Services are concluded with the singing of a hymn during which occasion members of the church and visitors shake hands as an expression of love and fellowship. A call is usually made for anyone wanting to join the church to come forward to express their love for the church or to tell their experience offered as evidence of God's dealing with them, of repentance and their desire to unite with the church. The members of the church then vote whether to accept the applicant. The vote must be unanimous. Services end with a benediction.

Baptism. Baptism is by total immersion. The example of Christ's baptism is believed to be the only acceptable mode. Baptism is one of the two ordinances observed by the church.

The Lord's Supper. This is the second and only other ordinance observed by the church. It is also known as the communion service. This service is held once a year, although it would be appropriate to hold it more often. Wine, not grape juice, is used; unleavened bread is broken and served. Footwashing is part of the service. All who participate in this most humble part of the communion service confess a blessing received. Communion is closed. Only the members of the church or of sister churches in fellowship may participate. The first communion or Lord's Supper was closed.

Home Worship. Members are encouraged to read their Bibles at home with their families and to engage in sincere worship in their homes, teaching their children about the goodness and the mercies of God, about values, respect for authority, to honor parents, to follow the commandments and to obey the law of the land.

Sunday Schools; Missions; Theological Seminaries. The disciples of salvation by grace are persuaded that man is incapable of teaching men or children to know God, believing, instead, that God will add to the church such as He would have to serve Him. Whether at home or assembled at a meeting house, men of God can indeed teach about God but cannot convey God to the listener. Schools as such, on Sunday or otherwise, were not and are not encouraged: the prospect of teachers themselves unlearned misleading youth became a compelling reason not to establish Sunday Schools. ¶ Foreign missions were rejected: God is omnipresent. He works His pleasure among the inhabitants of the earth as well as with the armies of heaven, and is perfectly capable of revealing Himself to the most isolated person on earth, and needs no volunteers from abroad to accomplish His purpose. In like manner God is able to inspire men at home to serve Him. The institutions men create invite ambitious persons with their own agendas, or they elevate men to responsible positions who are or may be unenlightened or not competent to accomplish their mission, and the harm done is greater than the benefit sought to be extended. Better to leave missions to Him who inspires them,

and that is to God. He is as alive today as in the days of the Apostles. [M] Theological seminaries are man made institutions. For the same reasons mission systems are opposed, seminaries for the training of ministers to preach the gospel are opposed. Unenlightened teachers, men neither taught of God nor called by Him, would become a part of the faculties of seminaries. Education is not an impediment to the call to the ministry nor a requirement. Peter was uneducated but universally respected as a great preacher of the gospel. The Apostle Paul was one of the most educated men of his day; yet he continuously remonstrated that the gospel he preached was not received of man, nor was he taught it, but came by it by the revelation of Jesus Christ. The church is content to witness God call and to qualify His ministers.

Church Conferences; Discipline. The business meeting of the church is called the conference meeting and is held once each month on a Saturday. Those present constitute a quorum. An ordained deacon must be present for a conference meeting to be held. An inquiry is made as to the existence of peace and fellowship among members before business matters are considered. Voting on matters is done openly. A moderator may be elected by secret ballot. A simple majority resolves issues. Occasionally some misunderstanding interferes with the peace and fellowship of members. If it is a private offense, as between only two members, they are expected and required to resolve it discretely and quietly. If the offended member is unable alone to achieve satisfaction he is at liberty to ask another member of the church to accompany him to confront the offender. Should this second effort fail, the offended member is free to ask the church as a body to consider his grievance. Deacons are regarded as special stewards of the church, although all members have a duty to preserve the peace and fellowship of the church. Deacons often serve as the accompanying member in the second effort to secure satisfaction with an offender. When the conduct of a member is such as to bring the church itself into disrepute, as when he commits a public offense or does something commonly regarded as offensive or reprehensible known publicly, the church may deal with the offender summarily; a deacon may bring the matter to the attention of the church without private conference with the offender. The offender is notified to be present at a conference meeting to offer explanation or excuse or to plead for forgiveness and promise to reform his ways. Discipline within the church is accorded a high priority. Special efforts must be taken to preserve the church's standing and good reputation in the community.

Officers. The officers of the church are the moderator, who is an ordained elder; a deacon or deacons, who are also ordained; and a clerk. The moderator is not required to be a member of the church. The deacon is a member of the church, as is the clerk. The moderator presides at conference meetings; the deacon may preside in the absence of a moderator.

Prepared by the Clerk

Approved by the Church

1-23-93

ARTICLES OF FAITH

UNION PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

LAUREL SPRINGS PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

1. We believe in the being of God Almighty, eternal, unchangeable, of infinite wisdom, power, justice, holiness, goodness, mercy and truth; and that this God has revealed himself in His Word under the character of Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
2. We believe that Almighty God has made known His mind and will to the children of men in His word; which we believe to be of divine authority and contains all things necessary to be known for the salvation of men and women. The same is comprehended as contained in the Books of the Old and New Testaments as are commonly received.
3. We believe that God before the foundation of the world for the purpose of His own glory, did elect a certain number of men and angels to eternal life, and unconditional on the part of the creature.
4. We believe that Adam fell from his state of rectitude and he involved himself and all his natural offspring in the state of death, and for that original transgression, we are all both filthy and guilty in the sight of God.
5. We also believe that it is utterly out of the power of men as fallen creatures to keep the laws of God perfectly, and repent of their sins truly, as we believe in Christ, except that a man be drawn by the Holy Spirit.
6. We believe in God's appointed time and way by means which He has ordained, the elect shall be called, justified, pardoned and sanctified; and that it is utterly impossible that we can refuse the call, but shall be made willing by divine grace to receive the offer of mercy.
7. We believe that justification in the sight of God is only the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ; received and applied by faith alone.
8. We believe in like manner, that God's elect shall not only be called and justified, but they shall be converted, born again and changed by the effectual working of God's Holy Spirit.
9. We believe that such as are converted, justified, and called by His grace shall persevere in holiness and never fall finally away.
10. We believe it to be duty incumbent on all God's people to walk religiously in God's works, not in the old covenant of seeking life and favor of the Lord by it, but only as a duty from principal of love.

11. We believe baptism and the Lord's Supper are gospel ordinances, both belonging to the true believers; and that persons who are sprinkled or dipped while in unbelief were not regularly baptised according to God's Word, and that such ought to be baptised after they are savingly converted into the faith of Christ.
12. We believe every church is independent in matters of discipline, and that Associations, Councils and Conferences of several ministers or churches are not to impose on the churches the keeping or maintaining of any principal or practice contrary to the church's judgment.
13. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust, and a general judgment.
14. We believe the punishment of the wicked is everlasting and the joys of the righteous eternal.
15. We believe that no ministers have the right to the administration of the ordinances only such as are regularly called and come under the hands of the presbytery.
16. We believe that for the mutual comfort, union and satisfaction of several churches of the aforesaid faith and order ought to meet in an Association way, wherein each church is to represent their case by their delegates, and attend as often as necessary to advise in such matters, but Associations, as such, are to be in no wise binding on the churches without their consent, but only to sit and act as an advisory council.
17. Article 1 and 7, Chapter 3, London Confession of Faith: "God has (Isaiah 46:10; Eph. 1:11; Heb. 6-7; Rom. 9:15-18) decreed in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own free will, freely and unchangeable, all things whatsoever come to pass yet so as thereby God is neither the author of sin (James 1:15-17; John 1:5) nor hath fellowship with any therein, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather (Acts 4:27-28; John 19:11) established in which appeals His wisdom is disposing all things, and power and faithfulness (Num. 23: 19; Eph. 1:3-5) in accomplishing His decree."

"The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care; that men attending the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience thereunto may from the certainty of their effectual vocation be assured of their (Thess. 1-4; 2 Peter 1:10) eternal election; so shall this doctrine afford matter (Eph. 1:7; Rom 11:33) of praise, reverence and the admiration of God, and (Rom. 11:5,6) of humility, diligence and abundant (Luke 1:20) consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel."