

WEST MARVA DISTRICT CORE BELIEFS

The West Marva District Church of the Brethren Core Beliefs is a statement of many things we, as followers of Christ, believe. In consistency with the Brethren understanding that the “New Testament is our creed”, scripture documentation is provided with each statement. This document is intended to help us search the scriptures for God’s truth, to help us understand what we believe, how to grow as Christians, and how to be true to Him unto the end.

- **We believe the Bible is the Word of God.**
 - **The Bible is the inspired, trustworthy, written record of God’s self-revelation to humanity (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21).**
 - **The Bible is sufficient for faith and practice in any age (II Timothy 3:16-17).**
 - **The Bible has God for its author, salvation for its end because of His love for us, and truth for its matter (John 1:1; John 17:17).**
 - **Only the 66 books chosen by the leading of God through the early church are accepted as authoritative.**
 - **The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ, under the direction of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-15).**
- **We believe in the Trinity.**
 - **There is only one true, living God (I Corinthians 8:6; I Thessalonians 1:9-10).**
 - **God exists eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; John 14:9-11; II Corinthians 13:14).**
- **We believe in the following attributes of God.**
 - **God is present everywhere (omnipresent) (Psalm 139).**
 - **God has perfect knowledge of all things (omniscient) (Psalm 147:5).**
 - **God’s power knows no bounds or limitations; He rules and sustains the universe according to His nature (omnipotent) (Psalm 107:21-43; Isaiah 40:10-26; Job 38-39).**
 - **God is above all and is able to bring to pass everything that He wills (transcendent) (Job 42:2).**
 - **God’s nature is unchanging (immutable) (Exodus 3:14; James 1:17; Hebrews 13:8).**
 - **God is near and ever-present (immanent) (Leviticus 26:11-12; Matthew 28:20).**
 - **God is without beginning and ending (eternal) (Revelation 1:8).**
 - **God is a spiritual, and personal, Being; the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe (Genesis 1-2; Exodus 3:14; John 4:24).**
 - **God is holy and perfect (Leviticus 11:44-45; Matthew 5:48; Mark 10: 17-18)**
- **We believe in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, which means that our salvation has been made possible through the life, death, and physical resurrection, ascension, and intercessory work of Christ.**
 - **Conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, Jesus Christ was fully human yet also fully divine (Matthew 1:18-25; John 1:1-3, 14).**
 - **Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6).**

- 46 • Jesus Christ, through His shed blood, is the once-for-all final atonement for
47 humanity's sins (Romans 5:8-11; Ephesians 1:7).
- 48 • Jesus Christ is the Head of the church and we all must submit to His authority
49 (Ephesians 1:22-23).
- 50 • Jesus Christ will return to take believers to heaven (John 14:1-4; Acts 1:9-11).
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- 52 • We believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- 53 • Believers receive the gift of the Holy Spirit at salvation (Acts 2:38; 5:32).
- 54 • Believers are provided assurance of their salvation by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians
55 1:13-14).
- 56 • Believers will be empowered for testimony (Luke 12:11-12).
- 57 • The Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth and interpret the Scriptures (John 16:13-
58 14; John 17:14-17; John 14:23-26; I Corinthians 2:9-14).
- 59 • The Holy Spirit will empower and equip believers for service (John 14:16-18; I
60 Corinthians 12:4-11; Acts 1:8).
- 61 • The Holy Spirit binds people together in unity of fellowship (Ephesians 4:3; I
62 Corinthians 12:4-13).
- 63 • The Holy Spirit inspired men of old to write the Scriptures (II Peter 1:20-21).
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- 65 • We believe in the priesthood of all believers, with Jesus as our High Priest (I Peter 2:5;
66 Hebrews 4:14-16).
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- 68 • We believe in the need for personal salvation, thus responding to God's love and desire
69 for us to spend eternity with Him (John 10:10b; John 3:16).
- 70 • All persons are in need of salvation (Romans 3:23).
- 71 • We can do nothing to earn salvation; we are saved by the grace (unmerited favor) of
72 God (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- 73 • God forgives our sins (I John 1:9; Psalm 32:1-5; Psalm 103:11-12).
- 74 • Salvation involves the redemption of the whole person and is offered freely by God
75 to all who repent and accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Romans 3:21-26;
76 John 1:12-13; Acts 2:38; Titus 2:11-14).
- 77 • God desires that none would be lost, but consistent with the free will given to
78 persons by God, God allows the choice of salvation or eternal damnation (Ezekiel
79 33:11; II Peter 3:9; Joshua 24:15; Romans 6:23).
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- 81 • We believe that believers will enjoy a new heaven and earth with no pain or death
82 (Revelation 21:1, 4; Matthew 25:34).
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- 84 • We believe Satan and those who have not accepted the gift of salvation will be confined
85 to hell, which will ultimately be cast into the lake of fire forever (Revelation 20:10, 15;
86 Matthew 25:41; Matthew 13:49-50).
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92 **WEST MARVA DISTRICT CORE DISCIPLINES**

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94 *As Christians we are to be disciples of Jesus Christ. These Core Disciplines are Christian*
95 *lifestyle patterns, for the individual and church, that are useful in training for Godliness (I*
96 *Corinthians 9:24-27, I Timothy 4:7-8).*

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99 **INDIVIDUAL DISCIPLINES:**

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101 **PROCLAMATION:**

102 **Individually we are to be examples of Christian living to the world, as demonstrated by**
103 **Jesus’ life, and as He gave command to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and**
104 **with all your soul, and with all your mind,” and to “love your neighbor as yourself.”**
105 **(Matthew 22:37-40).**

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- 107 • **I will seek to be led by the Holy Spirit of God (Romans 8:13-16).**
 - 108 • **I will seek to persist in the faith, striving always to imitate Christ (Hebrews 3:14; I**
109 **Peter 1:13-15).**
 - 110 • **I will seek to develop the fruit of the Holy Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,**
111 **goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).**
 - 112 • **I will seek, acknowledge, and develop the spiritual gift(s) God has given me (I**
113 **Corinthians 12).**
 - 114 • **I will seek to discover my personal purpose, given by God to bring glory to Him, by**
115 **constantly seeking His will in my life (Ephesians 2:10; Romans 12:2).**
 - 116 • **I will seek to live at peace with everyone (Matthew 5:9, 38-48; 26:52; Mark 9:50;**
117 **Romans 12:14-21, 14:19).**
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 - 119 • **I commit to sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ as the Spirit gives opportunity,**
120 **seeking to save the lost (Matthew 28:18-20; I Peter 3:15; Luke 19:10).**
 - 121 • **I commit to forgiving others as God has forgiven me (Matthew 5:21-24, 6:12, 14-15;**
122 **Luke 17:3-4; Colossians 3:12-17; James 4:20).**
 - 123 • **I commit to regular church attendance (Hebrews 10:25).**
 - 124 • **I commit to honoring Christ with the time, talents and resources with which He has**
125 **blessed me, recognizing the tithe as a minimum (Malachi 3:8-12).**
 - 126 • **I commit to being temperate and self-controlled in all things (I Corinthians 6:12; 9:25-**
127 **27; 10:23).**
 - 128 • **I commit to a deepening relationship with God through regular reading of the Bible**
129 **and daily prayer (Matthew 6:11, 33-34, Psalm 119:11, 105; II Timothy 2:15).**
 - 130 • **I commit to living the simple life- that is being content with having my needs filled by**
131 **God and not yearning for wants that may be outside His will for me (Matthew 6:24-34,I**
132 **Tim. 6:5b-10, Phil. 4:10-13).**
 - 133 • **I commit to seeking the highest good for all in the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16;**
134 **John 13:1-17; Galatians 6:2).**
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137 **CORPORATE DISCIPLINES:**

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139 **PROCLAMATION:**

140 **Together we are to be Jesus Christ's constant witness in the world (Micah 6:8; Colossians**
141 **3:12-17), preaching the Good News of salvation to the world (Matthew 28:18-20), and**
142 **leading all people into a redeemed, reconciled relationship with God through Christ**
143 **(Matthew 28:18-20; II Corinthians 5:17-21).**

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146 **DISCIPLESHIP:**

- 147 • **Together we will seek to be led by the Holy Spirit of God (I Corinthians 12:3).**
- 148 • **Together we will seek to persist in the faith, striving always to imitate Christ (Hebrews**
149 **3:14; I Peter 1:13-15).**
- 150 • **Together we will seek to develop the fruit of the Holy Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience,**
151 **kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).**
- 152 • **Together we will seek, acknowledge, and develop the spiritual gifts God has given us (I**
153 **Corinthians 12).**
- 154 • **Together we will seek to discover each person's purpose, given by God to bring glory to**
155 **Him, by constantly seeking His will in our lives (Ephesians 2:10; Romans 12:2).**
- 156 • **Together we will seek to forgive others as God has forgiven us (Matthew 5:21-24;**
157 **Colossians 3:12-17; Matthew 6:12, 14-15).**
- 158 • **Together we will seek to provide a fellowship which fosters Christian growth and**
159 **development; to help people realize their fullest and highest spiritual potential**
160 **(Ephesians 4:11-16).**
- 161 • **Together we will seek to minister to the individual and corporate needs of the Body of**
162 **Christ (Acts 6:1-6).**
- 163 • **Together we will seek to provide a meaningful experience in worship (I Corinthians**
164 **14:26-33; I Chronicles 15:1 – 16:43).**
- 165 • **Together we will respect and appreciate the diversity of personalities, gifts, and**
166 **purposes that God has placed in our midst for His service (I Corinthians 12; Ephesians**
167 **4:11-16).**
- 168 • **Together we will respect and work through elements of the diversity to accomplish**
169 **God's will for unity, maturity, and completeness in Christ for all (I Corinthians 12;**
170 **Ephesians 4:11-16).**
- 171 • **Together we will equip each person to engage their purpose and gift into mission,**
172 **whether local or global, in whatever role it should take (I Corinthians 12; Ephesians**
173 **4:11-16).**
- 174 • **Together we will train and equip families and their spiritual leaders as to God's design**
175 **for the home (Ephesians 5:21-6:4; Proverbs 22:6).**
- 176 • **Together we will lovingly, with fear and trembling, hold each other accountable for**
177 **God's Biblical direction through the giving and receiving of counsel (Galatians 6:2).**
- 178 • **Together we will confess our sins to one another (caring and spiritually mature persons)**
179 **that we may be made well and whole (James 5:13-16).**

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183 **BRETHREN PRACTICES:**

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185 *Brethren practice and belief are diverse. The following Brethren practices are meant to be*
186 *descriptive, not prescriptive. The reader is encouraged to read the scriptures and allow the*
187 *Holy Spirit to guide their practices.*

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191 • **Believer's Baptism.**

192 • **Baptism is the symbol of the believer's faith in the crucified, entombed, and risen**
193 **Savior, and the believer's rebirth to a new way of life in Christ (Matthew 28:19;**
194 **Mark 1:9; Acts 2:41).**

195 • **The Brethren method of baptism is triune immersion (kneeling, baptized three times**
196 **forward) in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; Mark**
197 **1:9; Acts 2:41).**

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199 • **Love Feast and Communion.**

200 • **The Love Feast, which includes a service of examination and reconciliation,**
201 **feetwashing, agape meal, and the serving of the bread and cup, is a symbol**
202 **commemorating the Last Supper, the death of Christ, and anticipation of His**
203 **second coming (John 13:1-35; I Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 2:42-47).**

204 • **Persons who have accepted Christ may participate in the Love Feast and/or**
205 **Communion (I Corinthians 11:27-32).**

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207 • **Anointing Service**

208 • **Anointing with oil is an act of faith and obedience. Anointing is for physical,**
209 **emotional, mental, and spiritual healing. Confession of sin is important both for the**
210 **one being anointed and for the one(s) who are praying and anointing (James 5:14-**
211 **16).**

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213 • **Marriage and Family**

214 • **The church is the family of God, thus we refer to one another as brother and sister.**
215 **Neither marriage nor singleness is to be preferred; both have a special place in the**
216 **family of God (1 Corinthians 7:32-34).**

217 • **Marriage is a life long commitment of love between a man and a woman (Matthew**
218 **19:5-6, I Corinthians 7:10-11). The marriage relationship is so sacred it is**
219 **compared to Christ's love for the church (Ephesians 5:22-33). Sexuality is a gift**
220 **from God for the purpose of expressing love and for procreation; sexual relations**
221 **are to be expressed exclusively within marriage (Matthew 5:27-28).**

222 • **Families are a foundational unit in Christian nurture. Therefore families should**
223 **read scripture and pray together daily. Parents are to demonstrate Christ's love to**
224 **one another and their children (Ephesians 5:25-33, 6:1-4).**

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- 229 • **Simple Life**
230 • Jesus taught, “. . .where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew
231 6:19-21). Because Christ is our greatest treasure, we strive to live simple lives that
232 honor Jesus as Lord of our life.
233 • We try to maintain simplicity in lifestyle, so that spiritual devotion is a priority, not
234 something we attempt to fit into a busy life (Psalm 63:1).
235 • We try to maintain simplicity in possessions and money, avoiding consumerism and
236 debt, so that money does not control our lives (Proverbs 22:7; Matthew 6:24; 16:26).
237 • We practice first fruits giving, which recognizes that all we have - salvation, life and
238 possessions - are gifts from God. So we joyfully honor Him by sharing our lives and
239 gifts in service to others, as well as giving of our finances (tithe) as a testimony of all
240 He has given us (Exodus 23:19).
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- 242 • **Servanthood**
243 • Jesus taught, the one who wants be great in God’s Kingdom will be the servant
244 (Mark 10:44). In saying this He established an order different than the self-serving
245 attitude of the world around us. Jesus demonstrated servanthood in His life. In His
246 death, He demonstrated the ultimate self-sacrificial love.
247 • Serving others is a tangible expression of Jesus’ command to love one another (John
248 15:12,13; James 2:16).
249 • Servanthood is an extension of the simple life. Serving others is an investment that
250 has lasting value (Matthew 6:20; Matthew 25:31-46). Brethren have historically
251 expressed servanthood through Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS), Brethren
252 Disaster Service, and other service projects.
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- 254 • **Peace/Peacemaking (Non-Resistance)**
255 • Jesus taught, “Love your enemies” (Matthew 5:44), and “blessed are the
256 peacemakers” (Matthew 5:9). Along with loving our neighbors as ourselves
257 (Matthew 22:38, 39), Brethren have historically understood military service to be
258 inconsistent with Jesus’ call to love our enemies (Matthew 5:38-48; Romans 12:17-
259 21).
260 • Our highest allegiance is to Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, so we work for Kingdom
261 principles of love, justice and mercy (Micah 6:8; 1 Peter 2:9-11).
262 • Christians should resolve conflicts peacefully. If they need assistance in resolving
263 conflict they should use the resources of the church. Christians should not use court
264 litigation against one another (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8).
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- 266 • **No Force in Religion**
267 • Neither we nor God will ever force a person to believe and follow Christ. God has
268 expressed his love for us in all Christ said and did: through Christ fulfilling Old
269 Testament prophecies, through His miracles, His sinless life, His death on the cross,
270 and by God raising Him from the dead. It is up to the individual as to whether they
271 believe the above tenets and follow the way of life as taught and exemplified by
272 Jesus in Scripture.