A picture containing emblem, symbol, crest, text

Description automatically generated

STUDENT

HANDBOOK

Table of Context

About Us and Mission Statement 3

Registration and Tuition Fees 4 - 5

Admissions Procedure 6

New and Transfer Students -

Applying After the School Year -

Attendance Policies 7 – 8

Health-Related Matters 9 – 11

School Rules 12 – 13

Consequences for not following rules 13

Bullying 13

Lunch Time Rules 14

Dress and Grooming 14 - 15

Preparedness Drills 15 - 16

Fundamental Beliefs 17 - 24

About Us

Bell Faith Academy is a Seventh-day Adventist Christian homeschool co-op. Our SDA Christian homeschool educational environment reflects an active partnership of students, staff, parents, and the church community. BFA operates somewhat as a hybrid between a traditional private school and a home school co-op. The co-op uses the Abeka home school curriculum and meets Monday through Thursday, 8:30am – 3:00pm. Parents partner with tutors/teachers in the education of their children. While the teachers have the primary responsibility of leading student through the curriculum, we ask parents to partner with the coop by volunteering 1 hour/week of in class time or by other means as their availability allows. We currently offer three class divisions: Pre-K-Kindergarten class; 1-3 grade class; and 4-8 grade class. Our goal is not only to provide a quality education that will prepare students to be productive citizens in our society but more importantly, help guide students to be citizens of God’s kingdom.

With that in mind, we will strive to provide all students with a Christ-centered education as well as provide a well-rounded bona fide education. All of our curriculums are in visual form and include **reading**, **spelling**, **grammar**, **mathematics**, and **good citizenship**, which is in compliance with the State of Texas guidelines for homeschools/private schools.

In 1994 the Texas Supreme Court unanimously upheld lower court decisions that homeschools, by law, are considered private schools. There are only three requirements to homeschool in Texas: instruction must be bona fide, the curriculum must be visual, and must include the five basic subjects (which have been mentioned above).

We will also seek to meet the standards as outlined in the Texas Essentials Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards for what students should know and be able to do depending on their grade level.

https://tea.texas.gov/academics/curriculum-standards/teks/texas-essential-knowledge-and-skills

All of our staff members and volunteers are background checked.

Mission Statement

Bell Faith Academy strives to provide a Christ-centered education that allows students to grow and develop a closer relationship with our savior and redeemer Jesus. We nurture biblical teachings and believe God’s written word to be inspired by him and to be the ultimate authority for Christians. (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We will also promote academic achievement, good citizenship, and civic service in a safe and healthy environment.

**REGISTRATION and TUITION INFORMATION**

**REGISTRATION**

Registration goes toward your child’s textbooks for the school year. Each tutor is only allowed a maximum of 10 students per classroom.

Registration fee is **non-refundable** and it reserves a place for your student at the school.

Early Registration on or before May 29 - $250 /per student.

Regular Registration May 30 – July 31- $300 /per student.

Late Registration on or after Aug 1 – $350 /per student.

It’s better and cheaper to make one order for supplies than to make multiple orders and having to pay more for shipping, so please if possible, try to make the early registration deadline.

**MONTHLY TUITION**

Pre-K through Kindergarten: $250/student ($250 paid directly to teacher / $25 admin. fee paid to the church BFA account).

1st through 8th grade: $275/student. ($275.00 paid directly to teacher / $25 admin. fee paid to the church BFA account).

Households with two or more students enrolled will only need to pay an admin. fee of $25.00

Tuition is due to class teacher no later than the first school day of the month. A grace period of 5 days will be given. On day 6 and after, a $25 late fee is required. If tuition is not received by the 8th of the month, we will need to evaluate student’s place in the school. If tuition is continually late we will not be able to hold your student’s place in the school.

If paying by check, please make check out to your student’s class teacher, not the school. Zelle or cash is also accepted.

Electives may require an extra monthly cost. Electives are optional when available.

Field trips are offered throughout the year and may require additional expenses.

Please return the registration form to the BFA administrator as soon as possible to register for school year. Other forms required: Release of Liability, and Parental Consent Form.

**STUDENT PICK UP**

Students pick up time is from 3:00 PM till 3:30 PM. After 3:30 PM we will start calling student contacts, and at 3:40 PM, a late pickup fee of $20 will be charged. An additional $10 fee will be charged every 15 minutes thereafter until student is picked up. Late fees will be collected by the present staff at the time of pick up.

**ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE**

Bell Faith Academy admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin, to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities available to students at the school. We do not discriminate based on race, color, ethnic background, country of origin, or gender in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and other school-administered programs.

Parents are encouraged to direct their children to act in harmony with the standards, requirements, and philosophies of the school, and to support the school’s principles, programs, and teachers. The Teachers, administrator, and/or BFA board reserves the right to refuse admittance to any students who do not exhibit behavior in harmony with the school’s principles. Although a low student-to-teacher ratio allows for a great deal of individual attention, our school is not designed to provide special education for students with learning disabilities or behavioral challenges at this time.

**NEW AND TRANSFER STUDENTS**

In considering a student, the Admissions Committee looks at chronological age, emotional, physical, and social development, academic achievement, test scores, student behavior, attitude, attendance record, and special needs. Before a student is placed in a classroom, he/she will:

● Complete and submit the Registration Packet.

● Provide verification of grade level and achievement from the school last attended. This may be a report card, cumulative folder, or any homeschool record keeping.

● Students may need to make an appointment to take a proficiency exam before entering. Parents may present results from an alternate approved national exam taken within the previous school year.

**APPLYING AFTER THE SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS**

● Students who apply after the school year begins will follow the process, as outlined above, for New and Transfer Students.

● In addition, an interview with the teacher is required before a decision is made by the teachers, administrator, and/or BFA board.

**ATTENDANCE**

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education— to benefit from teacher‐led and school activities, to build each day’s learning on the previous days, and to grow as an individual. At BFA, we strive to teach our students the positive habit of being responsible with their time.

We ask that parents help us with this area, through their example, by having their children on campus prior to or by 8:25 A.M. Habitual timeliness contributes positively to their school achievement and the lifetime responsibility of being on time for work and other responsibilities. We also want to honor God during our worship time, which is one of the first class activities at 8:30 A.M. Students entering the classroom late are a disruption.

DAILY ATTENDANCE

Students who are not in their classroom by 8:30 A.M. will be marked tardy. Students need to be in the classroom, seated, and ready for school to begin no later than 8:35 A.M. The total days of attendance for a BFA student will be the number of days school was actually taught, minus the sum of his/her absences.

TARDIES

A student who is repeatedly tardy to class will require a parent/teacher conference to discuss solutions.

EXCUSED ABSENCE

Teachers will mark a tardy or absence as excused if the school receives a call, note, or email from the parent indicating one of the following reasons: travel / vacation, illness, quarantine, health appointment, religious observance, or death in the family.

EXCESSIVE ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS

Class attendance and punctuality are very important and are valued highly. The staff wishes to encourage habits of responsible attendance. Excessive unexcused tardies and absences are unacceptable. We expect you to make appropriate arrangements to have your child in regular, punctual attendance. If unacceptable attendance problems do not improve, the student spot will need to be evaluated.

**UNEXCUSED ABSENCE**

Absences beyond four (4) consecutive days without parental notice or physician’s statement will be considered unexcused.

**ILLNESS AND ATTENDANCE (Also see Health Section)**

Elementary school classrooms are the perfect breeding grounds for all sorts of communicable illnesses. It is important that sick children (including those with common colds) stay at home -- not only to allow their bodies to heal but also to keep the rest of us from getting sick.

Follow these general guidelines:

● Don’t send your child to school if they are contagious, have a fever of 99.5 F\* or more, are vomiting, or have inadequate energy to participate in school activities.

● Keep your child home for 24 hours after vomiting has ceased, his/her temperature has been normal without the use of Tylenol or other fever-reducing medicine, or after antibiotics have been started for contagious conditions.

● If your child arrives at school unwell and unable to participate or if they become ill during school time, they will be asked to wait separate from other students and staff until someone can pick them up.

TCA staff follows these guidelines:

If a child has a fever of 99.5 F\* or higher, experiencing continued discomfort or pain, the family will be notified. It is essential for us to have emergency information and phone numbers on file so we may contact you as needed. Please keep this information updated and current so we can contact the appropriate person. The ill student will stay isolated until an approved person, arrives. This helps limit the exposure of the rest of the class to the illness.

If your child has sustained an injury but is able to participate in scholastic activities, they may attend school as soon as their pain is manageable. Please send a doctor’s note that outlines their restrictions, so they can be properly supervised during recess and PE activities.

**PRE-ARRANGED ABSENCE**

At times, a family may need to travel on dates other than regular vacation times. If you know that your child will miss classes for one or more days, a Pre-Arranged Absence Form should be completed so that you and your child know what work needs to be completed and turned in. This form needs to be completed at least one (1) week before the requested absence so that there is time for the teacher to prepare alternate assignments for the student.

**Health-Related Matters**

**STUDENT ILLNESS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she will not be attending that day. For example, if your child has a fever over 100 degrees, he or she must stay out of school until fever‐free for 24 hours **without** fever‐reducing medications. In addition, students with diarrheal illnesses must stay home until they are diarrhea‐free **without** diarrhea‐suppressing medications for at least 24 hours. If a student becomes ill during the school day, inform his or her teacher immediately. If it is determined that the child should go home, the teacher will contact the parent. It is also required to report certain contagious (communicable) diseases or illnesses to your primary care doctor and the administration. Contact the school if you have questions or if you are concerned about whether or not your child should stay home.

**BACTERIAL MENINGITIS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

State law requires schools to provide information about bacterial meningitis:

What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is common and most people recover fully. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are very rare. Bacterial meningitis is very serious and may involve complicated medical, surgical, pharmaceutical, and life support management.

What are the symptoms?

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

Children (over 2 years old) and adults with bacterial meningitis commonly have a severe headache, high fever, and neck stiffness. Other symptoms might include nausea, vomiting, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion, and sleepiness. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red‐purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

How serious is bacterial meningitis?

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases, it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

How is bacterial meningitis spread?

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. They are spread when people exchange respiratory or throat secretions (such as by kissing, coughing, or sneezing).

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body’s immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

Maintaining healthy habits, like getting plenty of rest, can help prevent infection. Using good health practices such as covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing and washing your hands frequently with soap and water can also help stop the spread of the bacteria. It’s a good idea not to share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, etc. There are vaccines available to offer protection from some of the bacteria that can cause bacterial meningitis. The vaccines are safe and effective (85–90 percent). They can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?

You should seek prompt medical attention.

Where can you get more information?

Your family doctor and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the websites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, particularly the CDC’s information on bacterial meningitis, and the Texas Department of State Health Services.

Note: DSHS requires at least one meningococcal vaccination on or after the student’s 11th birthday, unless the student received the vaccine at age 10. Also note that entering college students must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five‐year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution of higher education.

**FOOD ALLERGIES (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

The school requests to be notified when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially those allergies that could result in dangerous or possibly life‐threatening reactions either by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact with the particular food. It is important to disclose the food to which the student is allergic, as well as the nature of the allergic reaction. Please contact the school if your child has a known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy. The school has annually reviewed a food allergy management plan, which will address employee training, dealing with common food allergens, and specific strategies for dealing with students diagnosed with severe food allergies if the need arises. When the school receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, individual care plans will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment.

**HEAD LICE (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

Head lice, although not an illness or a disease, is very common among children and is spread very easily through head‐to‐head contact during play, sports, or nap time, and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, and headphones. If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school will contact the student’s parent to determine whether the student will need to be picked up from school and to discuss a plan for treatment with an FDA‐approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from any drug or grocery store. After the student has undergone one treatment, the parent should check in with the school to discuss the treatment used. The administrator can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments and how best to get rid of lice and prevent their return. A general notice will also be provided to parents of elementary school students in the affected classroom.

**SCHOOL RULES**

**Five basic rules cover nearly every area of behavior appropriate for students.**

1. Treat everyone with respect.

2. Respectfully follow the directions of all adults.

3. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.

4. Use all equipment and facilities safely and responsibly.

5. Stay in assigned areas.

**Each of these major areas is further defined below.**

**Treat everyone with respect.**

1. Respect and obey any adult.

2. Control your temper. No fighting.

3. No use of profanity.

4. Use your best manners at all times.

5. No language or behavior that injures, degrades, or disgraces another person.

**Respectfully follow the directions of all adults.**

1. All adults at school oversee your safety and well-being. Follow their directions.

2. On field trips be respectful toward the driver and follow all car safety rules.

**Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.**

1. Hitting, fighting, and kicking are not permitted.

2. No object is to be thrown at another person.

3. Never touch other people’s s property without permission.

**Use all equipment and facilities safely and responsibly.**

1. Walk at all times in the buildings.

2. Put litter in wastebaskets, never on the floor or left out on tables.

3. Always return playground equipment to its proper place.

4. Do not bring any toys, playing cards, or play equipment from home unless it is teacher approved.

5. Phone calls are permitted in an emergency, with teacher permission.

6. Damage or destruction of any school property is a serious offense. You will be required to pay for any replacement or repairs.

7. No food is to be taken from the designated eating area. No gum, candy, food, or drink is permitted outside of food designated areas.

8. Follow the specific rules and regulations for playground games and specific equipment.

**Stay in assigned areas.**

1. Once you arrive at school you are required to remain at school until dismissal time or until signed out by your parent.

2. Students are not to arrive on the school grounds until 8:00 A.M.

3. At noon and recesses, remain in your designated play areas.

4. Use restrooms for their designated purpose. Restrooms are not playgrounds.

5. Students are not allowed in classrooms at any time unless under teacher supervision or with teacher permission.

6. Use of the outside quarters is only with teacher permission/supervision.

7. The staircases are not areas for play. Always walk up/down the stairs.

If a situation arises which is not covered specifically by the above rules, the adult in charge will determine what is appropriate, safe and fair. Students will follow that adult’s direction.

**CONSEQUENCES OF FAILING TO FOLLOW RULES**

The consequences for breaking rules are as follows:

**First Offense:** Incident report issued. Parent signature/return to teacher.

**Second Offense:** Incident report issued. Parent signature/return to the teacher and loss of recess.

**Third Offense:** Incident report issued. Parent signature/return to the teacher, loss of recess, and parent/teacher conference.

**Severe Offense:** The BFA admin will review issue and consider appropriate action and possibly refer to school board for suspension consideration.

**BULLYING**

No staff member or student should participate in bullying another person. Bullying is taken very seriously and will be addressed accordingly.

**LUNCH TIME RULES**

RESPECT each other and other adults as you would respect your teachers.

All students are to bring a lunch from home. No unclean animal products (as defined in Leviticus 11) are permitted.

No leaving the lunch area. You must raise your hand for permission to leave the table to use the bathroom.

Use normal conversation voices in the lunch area and halls.

Good manners are expected: use “please,” “thank you,” and “excuse me.”

Language should not be rude or inappropriate.

We do not share food or drinks unless it’s a sibling.

We do not touch food that is not ours.

We do not throw food.

Clean up the table and floor around you before you leave.

When you line up, PLEASE:

FACE FRONT; BE QUIET, NO HORSE-PLAYING.

If the rules are not followed:

You will be given a warning.

If the warning is ignored, you will go to an isolated area.

If there are still problems, you will be sent to the administrator by your teacher.

**Dress and Grooming (All Grade Levels)**

The school’s dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and minimize safety hazards. Students and parents may determine a student’s personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

•Sunglasses, bandanas, or other head coverings may not be worn at school except for approved medical or religious reasons or outdoor activities.

•Spaghetti straps, halter tops, and other clothing that reveals cleavage are inappropriate for school.

•Anything that displays profanity, degrades a person or group or promotes the use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or any affiliation with gangs is prohibited. Apparel with inappropriate writing, inappropriate drawings, or inappropriate advertisements, including but not limited to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, violence, prison activities, gang activities, sexual innuendoes, cultural divisiveness, and racial intolerance may not be worn.

•Clothing must conceal skin and undergarments so that belly and thighs are not shown.

•Oversized or excessively baggy shirts or pants are not permitted. Pants must be properly pulled up and neat in appearance. Pants must be worn at the waistline.

•Shoes must be worn at all times. No house shoes / slippers are allowed.

•Pajamas of any type, except on campus designated days are not permitted.

•Ear piercing is the only visible body piercing allowed. Other visible body piercing is not permitted.

•In cold weather, jackets or coats may be worn to school. Coats may be worn in the building. Jackets and coats should be worn as appropriate to the environment.

•Trench coats, capes, robes, and any other outerwear deemed by the administration to be a distraction or potential safety hazard will not be permitted. Campus administration has the authority to impose additional standards for outerwear.

•Accessories (such as distracting jewelry, wallet/pocket chains, spiked or studded rings, collars, mouth grills, etc.) which can be deemed dangerous or inappropriate are not allowed.

The school cannot anticipate every style change, the administrator has the authority to interpret the violation of these policies. The general policy will be to notify the parent(s) of the student considered to be dressing improperly. The staff will take disciplinary action suiting the offense. If the administrator determines that a student’s grooming or clothing violates the school’s dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school. If not corrected, the student may be assigned to in‐school suspension for the remainder of the day, until the problem is corrected, or until a parent or designee brings an acceptable change of clothing to the school.

**Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies**

Occasionally, students, teachers, and other school volunteer will participate in preparedness drills for emergency procedures. When the command is given or an alarm is sounded, students need to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

School Drills conducted will be as follows:

\*Evacuation. Students and staff quickly exit the school building if there is a hazard inside.

\*Reverse Evacuation. Students are protected from an incident by remaining in the building with doors locked. Instructional day will continue to the extent possible.

\*Lockdown. Students are protected from an incident within the school building by remaining behind locked classroom doors. There is no movement in the building/instruction stops.

\*Shelter‐In‐Place. For use in external gas leak or chemical hazard scenarios. Students are sheltered in the building when there is an incident outside the building.

\*Severe Weather. Based on the severity of the storm and current weather conditions, portable building occupants will be instructed to move inside to the main building. Once instructed, students and staff quickly move to pre‐designated safe areas.

**28 Fundamental Beliefs**

At any given time during our Bible studies, students can be exposed to any of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the SDA community. Included in the following pages is a description of each one of our beliefs, what it means, and Scripture texts that can be explored in the matter.

**The Holy Scriptures**

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration. The inspired authors spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to humanity the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the supreme, authoritative, and the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the definitive revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God’s acts in history. (Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.)

**The Trinity**

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. God, who is love, is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Gen. 1:26; Deut. 6:4; Isa. 6:8; Matt. 28:19; John 3:16 2 Cor. 1:21, 22; 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2.)

**The Father**

God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also those of the Father. (Gen. 1:1; Deut. 4:35; Ps. 110:1, 4; John 3:16; 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:28; 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 John 4:8; Rev. 4:11.)

**The Son**

God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly human, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God’s power and was attested as God’s promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (Isa. 53:4-6; Dan. 9:25-27; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-3, 14; 5:22; 10:30; 14:1-3, 9, 13; Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:17-19; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-19; Heb. 2:9- 18; 8:1, 2.)

**The Holy Spirit**

God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He is as much a person as are the Father and the Son. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ’s life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth. (Gen. 1:1, 2; 2 Sam. 23:2; Ps. 51:11; Isa. 61:1; Luke 1:35; 4:18; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26; 16:7-13; Acts 1:8; 5:3; 10:38; Rom. 5:5; 1 Cor. 12:7-11; 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Peter 1:21.)

**Creation**

God has revealed in Scripture the authentic and historical account of His creative activity. He created the universe, and in a recent six-day creation the Lord made “the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them” and rested on the seventh day. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of the work He performed and completed during six literal days that together with the Sabbath constituted the same unit of time that we call a week today. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was “very good,” declaring the glory of God. (Gen. 1-2; 5; 11; Exod. 20:8-11; Ps. 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Isa. 45:12, 18; Acts 17:24; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2; 11:3; Rev. 10:6; 14:7.)

**The Nature of Humanity**

Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power and freedom to think and to do. Though created free beings, each is an indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else. When our first parents disobeyed God, they denied their dependence upon Him and fell from their high position. The image of God in them was marred and they became subject to death. Their descendants share this fallen nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker. Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and one another, and to care for their environment. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7, 15; 3; Ps. 8:4-8; 51:5, 10; 58:3; Jer. 17:9; Acts 17:24-28)

**The Great Controversy**

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God’s adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the global flood, as presented in the historical account of Genesis 1-11. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation. (Gen. 3; 6-8; Job 1:6-12; Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12-18; Rom. 1:19-32; 3:4; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 1:14; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 3:6; Rev. 12:4-9.)

**The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ**

In Christ’s life of perfect obedience to God’s will, His suffering, death, and resurrection, God provided the only means of atonement for human sin, so that those who by faith accept this atonement may have eternal life, and the whole creation may better understand the infinite and holy love of the Creator. This perfect atonement vindicates the righteousness of God’s law and the graciousness of His character; for it both condemns our sin and provides for our forgiveness. The death of Christ is substitutionary and expiatory, reconciling and transforming. The bodily resurrection of Christ proclaims God’s triumph over the forces of evil, and for those who accept the atonement assures their final victory over sin and death. It declares the Lordship of Jesus Christ, before whom every knee in heaven and on earth will bow. (Gen. 3:15; Ps. 22:1; Isa. 53; John 3:16; 14:30; Rom. 1:4; 3:25; 4:25; 8:3, 4; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4, 20-22; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 19-21; Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 2:15; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; 1 John 2:2; 4:10.)

**The Experience of Salvation**

In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord, Substitute and Example. This saving faith comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God’s grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God’s sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God’s law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment. (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 45:22; 53; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 33:11; 36:25-27; Hab. 2:4; Mark 9:23, 24; John 3:3-8, 16; 16:8; Rom. 3:21-26; 8:1-4, 14-17; 5:6-10; 10:17; 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Gal. 1:4; 3:13, 14, 26; 4:4-7; Eph. 2:4-10; Col. 1:13, 14; Titus 3:3-7; Heb. 8:7-12; 1 Peter 1:23; 2:21, 22; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rev. 13:8.)

**Growing in Christ**

By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their ultimate doom. Jesus’ victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us, as we walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His love. Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and empowers us. Continually committed to Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we are set free from the burden of our past deeds. No longer do we live in the darkness, fear of evil powers, ignorance, and meaninglessness of our former way of life. In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His character, communing with Him daily in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the Church.

We are also called to follow Christ’s example by compassionately ministering to the physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of humanity. As we give ourselves in loving service to those around us and in witnessing to His salvation, His constant presence with us through the Spirit transforms every moment and every task into a spiritual experience. (1 Chron. 29:11; Ps. 1:1, 2; 23:4; 77:11, 12; Matt. 20:25-28; 25:31-46; Luke 10:17-20; John 20:21; Rom. 8:38, 39; 2 Cor. 3:17, 18; Gal. 5:22-25; Eph. 5:19, 20; 6:12-18; Phil. 3:7-14; Col. 1:13, 14; 2:6, 14, 15; 1 Thess. 5:16-18, 23; Heb. 10:25; James 1:27; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:18; 1 John 4:4.)

**The Church**

The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In continuity with the people of God in Old Testament times, we are called out from the world; and we join together for worship, for fellowship, for instruction in the Word, for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, for service to humanity, and for the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. The church derives its authority from Christ, who is the incarnate Word revealed in the Scriptures. The church is God’s family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant. The church is the body of Christ, a community of faith of which Christ Himself is the Head. The church is the bride for whom Christ died that He might sanctify and cleanse her. At His return in triumph, He will present her to Himself a glorious church, the faithful of all the ages, the purchase of His blood, not having spot or wrinkle, but holy and without blemish. (Gen. 12:1-3; Exod. 19:3-7; Matt. 16:13-20; 18:18; 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38-42; 7:38; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:22, 23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11; 5:23-27; Col. 1:17, 18; 1 Peter 2:9.)

**The Remnant and Its Mission**

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness. (Dan. 7:9-14; Isa. 1:9; 11:11; Jer. 23:3; Mic. 2:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 4:17; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Jude 3, 14; Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4.)

**Unity in the Body of Christ**

The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children. (Ps. 133:1; Matt. 28:19, 20; John 17:20-23; Acts 17:26, 27; Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Gal. 3:27-29; Eph. 2:13-16; 4:3-6, 11-16; Col. 3:10-15.)

**Baptism**

By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour, become His people, and are received as members by His church. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, and our reception of the Holy Spirit. It is by immersion in water and is contingent on an affirmation of faith in Jesus and evidence of repentance of sin. It follows instruction in the Holy Scriptures and acceptance of their teachings. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38; 16:30-33; 22:16; Rom. 6:1-6; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12, 13.)

**The Lord’s Supper**

The Lord’s Supper is a participation in the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus as an expression of faith in Him, our Lord and Saviour. In this experience of communion Christ is present to meet and strengthen His people. As we partake, we joyfully proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes again. Preparation for the Supper includes self-examination, repentance, and confession. The Master ordained the service of foot-washing to signify renewed cleansing, to express a willingness to serve one another in Christ like humility, and to unite our hearts in love. The communion service is open to all believing Christians. (Matt. 26:17-30; John 6:48-63; 13:1-17; 1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:23-30; Rev. 3:20.)

**Spiritual Gifts and Ministries**

God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts that each member is to employ in loving minis- try for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, ad- ministration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and endowed by the Spirit for functions recognized by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, and teaching ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God’s varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love. (Acts 6:1-7; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-11, 27, 28; Eph. 4:8, 11-16; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.)

**The Gift of Prophecy**

The Scriptures testify that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and we believe it was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. Her writings speak with prophetic authority and provide comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction to the church. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Num. 12:6; 2 Chron. 20:20; Amos 3:7; Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 22:8, 9.)

**The Law of God**

The great principles of God’s law are embodied in the Ten Commandments and exemplified in the life of Christ. They express God’s love, will, and purposes concerning human conduct and relationships and are binding upon all people in every age. These precepts are the basis of God’s covenant with His people and the standard in God’s judgment. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit they point out sin and awaken a sense of need for a Saviour. Salvation is all of grace and not of works, and its fruit is obedience to the Commandments. This obedience develops Christian character and results in a sense of well-being. It is evidence of our love for the Lord and our concern for our fellow human beings. The obedience of faith demonstrates the power of Christ to transform lives, and therefore strengthens Christian witness. (Exod. 20:1-17; Deut. 28:1- 14; Ps. 19:7-14; 40:7, 8; Matt. 5:17-20; 22:36-40; John 14:15; 15:7-10; Rom. 8:3, 4; Eph. 2:8-10; Heb. 8:8-10; 1 John 2:3; 5:3; Rev. 12:17; 14:12.)

**The Sabbath**

The gracious Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God’s unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sab- bath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God’s kingdom. The Sabbath is God’s perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God’s creative and redemptive acts. (Gen. 2:1-3; Exod. 20:8-11; 31:13-17; Lev. 23:32; Deut. 5:12-15; Isa. 56:5, 6; 58:13, 14; Ezek. 20:12, 20; Matt. 12:1-12; Mark 1:32; Luke 4:16; Heb. 4:1-11.)

**Stewardship**

We are God’s stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use. We acknowledge God’s ownership by faithful service to Him and our fellow human beings, and by returning tithe and giving offerings for the proclamation of His gospel and the support and growth of His church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. Stewards rejoice in the blessings that come to others as a result of their faithfulness. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15; 1 Chron. 29:14; Haggai 1:3-11; Mal. 3:8-12; Matt. 23:23; Rom. 15:26, 27; 1 Cor. 9:9-14; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; 9:7.)

**Christian Behavior**

We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with biblical principles in all aspects of personal and social life. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things that will produce Christ like purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness. (Gen. 7:2; Exod. 20:15; Lev. 11:1-47; Ps. 106:3; Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 10:31; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 10:5; Eph. 5:1-21; Phil. 2:4; 4:8; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10; Titus 2:11, 12; 1 Peter 3:1-4; 1 John 2:6; 3 John 2.)

**Marriage and the Family**

Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between a man and a woman who share a common faith. Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. Regarding divorce, Jesus taught that the person who divorces a spouse, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery. Although some family relationships may fall short of the ideal, a man and a woman who fully commit themselves to each other in Christ through marriage may achieve loving unity through the guidance of the Spirit and the nurture of the church. God blesses the family and intends that its members shall assist each other toward complete maturity. Increasing family closeness is one of the earmarks of the final gospel message. Parents are to bring up their children to love and obey the Lord. By their example and their words they are to teach them that Christ is a loving, tender, and caring guide who wants them to become members of His body, the family of God which embraces both single and married persons. (Gen. 2:18-25; Exod. 20:12; Deut. 6:5-9; Prov. 22:6; Mal. 4:5, 6; Matt. 5:31, 32; 19:3-9, 12; Mark 10:11, 12; John 2:1-11; 1 Cor. 7:7, 10, 11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4.)

**Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary**

There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle that the Lord set up and not humans. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. At His ascension, He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and, began His intercessory ministry, which was typified by the work of the high priest in the holy place of the earthly sanctuary. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry, which was typified by the work of the high priest in the most holy place of the earthly sanctuary. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent. (Lev. 16; Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Heb. 1:3; 2:16, 17; 4:14-16; 8:1-5; 9:11-28; 10:19- 22; Rev. 8:3-5; 11:19; 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:11, 12.)

**The Second Coming of Christ**

The second coming of Christ is the blessed hope of the church, the grand climax of the gospel. The Saviour’s coming will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die. The almost complete fulfillment of most lines of prophecy, together with the present condition of the world, indicates that Christ’s coming is near. The time of that event has not been revealed, and we are therefore exhorted to be ready at all times. (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-6; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2:8; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; Rev. 1:7; 14:14-20; 19:11-21.)

**Death and Resurrection**

The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ, who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later. (Job 19:25-27; Ps. 146:3, 4; Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10; Dan. 12:2, 13; Isa. 25:8; John 5:28, 29; 11:11-14; Rom. 6:23; 16; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 20:1-10.)

**The Millennium and the End of Sin**

The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever. (Jer. 4:23-26; Ezek. 28:18, 19; Mal. 4:1; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Rev. 20; 21:1-5.)

**The New Earth**

On the new earth, in which righteousness dwells, God will provide an eternal home for the redeemed and a perfect environment for everlasting life, love, joy, and learning in His presence. For here God Himself will dwell with His people, and suffering and death will have passed away. The great controversy will be ended, and sin will be no more. All things, animate and inanimate, will declare that God is love; and He shall reign forever. Amen. (Isa. 35; 65:17-25; Matt. 5:5; 2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 11:15; 21:1-7; 22:1-5.)