#### **THEOLOGICAL POSITION AND STATEMENT OF FAITH OF THE FIRST COMMUNITY CHURCH**

We, the members of the First Community Church of Buckeye Lake, believe that Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary and is the visible image of God and that He is the fullest expression of God available to us.

Because scripture calls on us to proclaim Christ everywhere we go and in whatever we do, we recognize that our Christian beliefs relate to every facet of our lives. If we are to proclaim Him at all times, it is necessary that we maintain our Christian beliefs in all parts of our lives.

We believe that salvation through Jesus Christ is made available to everybody, but is possible only through repentance and acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

We believe that, in accepting the Bible is without error and is the Inspired Word of God, we must also accept the Bible in its entirety. The Bible informs us that satan is a real presence in the world and that Good will triumph over evil. We accept the Bible teaching that God exists in three persons: God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit (the Trinity).

In accepting that ‘the Holy Spirit is an active presence of God made known in spiritual gifts, we also accept the writings of Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 in which Paul addresses orderly Worship Services. Our Worship Services are not characterized by speaking in tongues, and we believe that doing so in a public Worship setting would edify self rather than God, except as described by Paul in the above noted scripture reference. We believe, as recorded in scripture, that spiritual gifts extend beyond speaking in tongues and prophecy, and include wisdom, discernment, teaching, etc. We believe the Holy Spirit is capable of equipping all who do their part in seeking and accepting those gifts.

We believe that prayer can be as powerful or, conversely, as limited as people allow it to be. Through prayer, it is possible to receive strength, comfort, healing, and guidance. It is through prayer that we confess our sins before God and ask for His forgiveness, give Him praise and thanksgiving, and make our requests known. God’s will is then made known to us in His own time. In this way, God speaks to us personally and guides our daily lives.

Currently, communion is served once per month, typically on the first Sunday of each month. In December we also serve communion during the Christmas Eve Service and, during the month in which Passion Week falls, we serve communion during the Maundy Thursday Service. The elements are normally distributed by the Deacons as the congregation remains seated. We believe the importance of communion is in the individual partaking doing so with the proper attitude and preparation of their heart.

Finally, we believe that baptism is an outward symbol of having experienced a rebirth in, and a commitment to Jesus Christ. We believe that, as a symbol, the method of baptism is a matter of personal choice. Since we do not have a baptismal in our Church, baptisms performed in the Church are done via sprinkling. If an individual prefers to be immersed, he or she and the Minister would work out the details. Infant baptisms are not performed, however infant dedications may be requested.

**STATEMENT OF FAITH**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female, and that these two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God.

We believe that God created marriage to be exclusively the union of one man and one woman, and that intimate sexual activity is to occur exclusively within that union.

**STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, GENDER AND SEXUALITY**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: The uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; and Hebrews 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of First Community Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a Biblical role model to the Church's members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by First Community Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender and Sexuality (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of this Church.

**STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE**

Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, the First Community Church of Buckeye Lake, Ohio will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, the Pastor and staff of First Community Church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. Finally, the facilities and property of First Community Church shall only host weddings between one man and one woman.

**STATEMENT ON THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE**

We, the members of First Community Church of Buckeye Lake, Ohio, believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Psalm 139).

**STATEMENT OF FINAL AUTHORITY FOR MATTERS OF BELIEF AND CONDUCT**

The Theological Position and Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of the First Community Church of Buckeye Lake's faith, doctrine, practice, policy and discipline, our Pastor, in conjunction with the Board of Trustees, is the Church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

**STATEMENT ON CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

The threefold purpose of Church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local Church (1 Corinthians 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin and promoting purity (1 Timothy 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a Biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).

The Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted the local Church with the authority and responsibility to discipline members for flagrant sin or serious doctrinal error, with the goal of the restoration of the offender. This discipline is entrusted to the Pastor and the Spiritual Life Committee in conjunction with the Board of Trustees and is to follow the Biblical pattern as set forth in Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:7-8; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 3:10-11; and 2 John 7-11. Any member of this Church who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct that, in the judgment of the Pastor and the Spiritual Life Committee in conjunction with the Board of Trustees, is opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, or is threatening to the testimony of this Church, or is divisive to the body, shall be subject to Church discipline.

Discipline will follow the stated Biblical pattern, and is an effort to bring the individual to repentance and protect the Church from unrepentant sin. Discipline may involve exclusion from participation in ministry and communion, as well as dismissal from the fellowship of this Church. An individual may be disciplined by the Pastor and the Spiritual Life Committee in conjunction with the Board of Trustees short of dismissal from the fellowship, as they deem appropriate for the specific circumstance (for example, an individual may remain in certain circumstances a member of this Church but be denied the privilege of serving in a particular ministry). The Pastor and the Spiritual Life Committee in conjunction with the Board of Trustees, as required by Scripture, may report to the congregation the names of those who have lost membership by reason of Church discipline, and the reason for that discipline, as described in Matthew 18:15-20.

The members of this Church further knowingly and voluntarily agree that a member cannot voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership in the midst of the discipline process, and may only voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership if they are not the subject of a discipline proceeding at the time or only after a disciplinary process, of which they are the subject, has been concluded as determined by the Pastor and the Spiritual Life Committee in conjunction with the Board of Trustees.

**STATEMENT ON MEDIATION**

Members of the Church agree to submit any legal dispute with the Church for mediation before a mutually agreed-upon, Christian mediator, or if none can be agreed upon, one selected by Peacemaker Ministries, or a similar Christian organization. Lawsuits between believers, or threats of lawsuits between believers, are a matter of grave concern for the Church, and are contrary to Biblical and Church teaching. Mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a Biblical fashion (1 Corinthians 6:1-7)