

OUR GOVERNMENT

The Orchard's government is described in the New Testament. The pastor is the leader and is a permanent, local figure. He is not moved from church to church by a board. He stays through good times and bad, guiding his plan through its 30 or 40 year lifespan. The pastor appoints elders who meet the biblical qualifications of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 2. The pastor believes in and submits to the counsel of the elders.

The Orchard is not a part of a denomination, although we are vitally (and more importantly) linked to other churches by shared goals. We are a legally incorporated organization, having a board consisting of a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Our financial support comes solely from the tithes and offerings of the people.

OUR BELIEFS

We believe that the entire Bible is the inspired Word of God and is truth. Therefore, we believe:

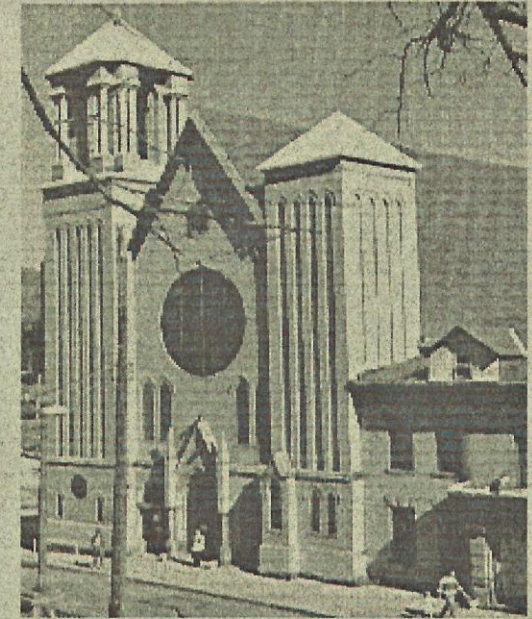
1. That there is one God, eternally existent in three persons; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
2. That Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God.
3. In His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension to the right hand of God the Father, and in His personal return to earth in power and glory.
4. That all have sinned and that the only means of cleansing from sin is through the blood of Christ.
5. That regeneration by the Holy Spirit is essential for personal salvation.
6. That man is justified by faith in Jesus Christ, apart from works.
7. That the redemptive work done by Christ provides healing for the whole man: body, soul, and spirit.
8. That, with rare exceptions, a person baptized in the Holy Spirit will speak with new tongues.
9. In the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling presence the believer can live a godly life and exhibit the fruits of the Spirit.
10. That the gifts of the Spirit, as listed in the New Testament, should be practiced in the church today.

11. In the resurrection of both the saved and the lost, the saved to eternal life and the lost to eternal judgment.
12. In water baptism by immersion in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
13. That the Bible is the infallible Word of God, given to men by inspiration of God.
14. In the reality of deliverance from demonic bondage for all persons, saved or unsaved, and that a Christian cannot be demon possessed.
15. In the remembrance of the Lord's death in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.



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WELCOME!

We're glad you chose to visit us! Every church has its own personality, so we've written the following articles to help you know who we are and where we're going.

WHO WE ARE

The Orchard Christian Fellowship is a biblically based, Christ-centered church of believers who, like people in the Bible, are discovering Christianity as it was intended to be...simple, dynamic, vital, and Jesus-centered. You'll find our gatherings devoid of the formalities of "church," comfortably casual, pleasantly warmed by hugs, guitars, and the clapping of hands, and enjoyed by people of all ages having Christ's love as a common bond.

OUR PASTOR

John Custer was born in 1949 in Johnstown, PA and was born again in 1971. He graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy and left the military as a captain to serve as a Bible teacher and counselor at the Abbott Loop Christian Center in Anchorage, Alaska. He was ordained as a pastor there in 1978. John, along with his wife, Jethe, and daughters, Tara, Wendy, and Teena, was sent to start a church in the Pittsburgh, PA area in 1983.

WHERE WE ARE GOING

Our mission is to make disciples for Christ. We are to bring Jesus to as many people as possible through a church body structured to meet the needs of every individual. We are achieving this, in part, through small home groups of 8-12 people who pray for each other throughout the week and keep church life vibrant and effective. Our goal is to build *people*, not buildings or institutions. At the Orchard, the work of the ministry is accomplished not only through the pastor, but also by delegating it to people in the pews, training workers to meet the needs of our community.

HOW YOU CAN JOIN

It's easy. Just start attending a home fellowship. At the Orchard, we do not have a membership roster, but we enjoy membership in Christ's Body through the various connections that develop as we involve ourselves in home fellowships and small groups throughout the week. They are the entry point for newcomers, the place where resources—physical and spiritual—meet the needy. They are the training ground for ministry and the place to get prayer for healing. Home fellowships are the real backbone of our church, so we encourage every person who calls the Orchard his home to be involved in one. If your schedule limits you to one of our gatherings, this is the one to choose.

Phone numbers, home fellowship locations and times, and ministries are listed in our Orchard Directory. There's something for everyone at the Orchard—just find a comfortable place, settle in, and get to know the family!

OUR VALUES AND PRIORITIES

Worship

Our highest priority is to worship the Lord. By "worship," we mean a lifestyle of closeness and communion with Jesus seven days a week. Our worship "service" is only a small part of this broad relationship which affects our entire way of life, both individually and as a group. In our gatherings, much emphasis is given to the development of the gifts of the Holy Spirit—"God's time," as we call it. We encourage each other to "stir up the gift of God," as evidenced in 2 Timothy 1:6. Congregational worship, the most complex and powerful worship expression, brings us into Jesus' presence where healings of all types occur. The Bible describes a wide range of vocal and bodily expressions of worship. One may stand, sit, kneel, raise his hands, clap, dance, meditate, or speak to Jesus as the Holy Spirit leads.

A unique aspect of our worship service occurs once a month when we observe "Believers' Teaching Sunday." A pastoral message is not preached. Instead, teaching from the congregation is encouraged in accordance with 1 Corinthians 14:26 which states that, "When you assemble, *each one* has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation." Remarkable messages are birthed right before our eyes during this spontaneous, unrehearsed orchestration of congregational sharing.

The Bible

The Bible is the absolute authority for all that we do. Therefore, we give plenty of time to the teaching of it. Knowing the Bible is not an end in itself, however, Jesus emphasized the *doing* of God's Word. We strive, then, to be a well-informed army of *doers* in contrast to being merely *well-informed*. We take the Bible as literally as possible, interpreting it against the backdrop of Middle Eastern culture, considering its idioms, figures of speech, and storytelling methods. The New American Standard Bible is our primary text, aided by occasional references to the New International Version, King James Version, and the Amplified Bible.

Grace

The grace of God is God's unmerited favor toward us. All good things—food, clothing, shelter, friends, provision, healing, special skills, even the desire to obey Him—come from this grace. We want our church to be one in which people live by this grace, discover the rest and relative ease of it, and spread its peaceful effect to others. Grace prompts us to be a loving, accepting, forgiving, growing church where the Holy Spirit teaches us individually what to eat, drink, see, or wear, as well as where to go and with whom to keep company. Where the scriptures call for order, we seek the minimum necessary; when discipline is needed, we do so mercifully.

The Kingdom

We view the kingdom of God as the "rule" or "kingship" of God. When Jesus' kingship confronted the devil's, a violent struggle ensued, and healing, provision, and well-being replaced sickness, poverty, and despair. These dramatic encounters usually drew crowds and were the primary means used by Jesus to expand His kingdom. Therefore, we endeavor to be supernatural Christians who can train others to effectively pray for the sick, cast out demons, and perform miracles. We are only one small part of God's master plan. We yearn to cooperate with and love other local churches to promote unity and functionality in the Body of Christ. As the Lord directs, we plant churches locally and beyond.

Youth

Much emphasis is placed on reaching out to children and young people in our families and community, so a youth program is a great priority at the Orchard. Sunday school classes are available for children 4-8 years old and 9-12 years old. In addition, our weekly teen ministry, known as *Fishgate*, attracts an ever-growing number of youth from the community, serving as "church" for many of them. Providing food, fun, fellowship, and sound Bible teaching for our young population is vitally important to us as we endeavor to build up and edify the Body of Christ.