

OZARKS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Early Learning Center Handbook

210 Allen Street
West Plains, MO 65775

Welcome:

We are so grateful for the opportunity to partner with you in the discipleship and education of your child. This handbook has been designed to provide you with important information about our program. Please take the time to read through it and be sure to keep it accessible for future reference. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our director by phone at 417-255-1622 or by email at amurphy@ozarkschristianacademy.com.

Mission:

OCA-ELC glorifies God by partnering with families in the Christ-centered, biblically-directed education of their children.

Philosophy:

Children are a gift from God, uniquely created in His image and flourish in a learning environment led by caring, competent adults designed to engage them at their developmental level in the pursuit of educational and moral training grounded in a biblical worldview.

Goals:

To provide an early learning environment where Christ is the center of all learning

To provide a service to families in our community in need of a safe, early learning environment

To provide a window into the life of OCA k-12 and the community of families that exist

Prior to your child's first day of attendance

In order for your child to begin attending the Early Learning Center (ELC), parents must:

- Complete the enrollment form and be accepted for admission
- Sign and return the Early Learning Center Handbook Acknowledgement form
- Complete the medical form from your child's physician including allergy identification and plan
- Provide a copy of your child's immunizations or fill out the immunization exemption form

- Complete an emergency contact form and authorized person pick up form
- Complete and sign photo/video/media usage permission form
- Provide legal documentation specifying custody where appropriate
- Pay the enrollment fee and the first tuition payment

Registration

OCA Early Learning Center is available to children beginning at age one. We follow Ozarks Christian Academy decisions in cases of unexpected closures. The enrollment fee of \$100 is due after acceptance into the ELC. This non-refundable fee reserves a space in the class for your child.

The center operates from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday, year-round. The center may close periodically for staff training. The following are a list of holidays that the center will be closed:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (July 4th)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

If a holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday will be recognized as the holiday. If the holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday will be observed as the holiday. Weekly fees are charged regardless of attendance or closing.

Tuition

Tuition charges are set yearly by the Board of Directors. Tuition rates are subject to change.

- Fully Potty Trained = \$162 per week for a full-time spot, \$81 per week for ½ day
- Not Potty Trained = \$175 per week for a full-time spot, \$87 per week for ½ day
- Toddlers (1 yr old) = \$195 per week
- Partial weeks are also available with approval. Speak with the Director about this option.

Families are responsible for paying for the days their child cannot attend due to illness or family situations. If there is an unexpected closing, and you have already paid for the tuition,

you will receive credit on your account for the days missed. Weekly tuition is due on Monday for the current week of care. Payments are considered late after Wednesday of the week of care. A \$5 late fee will be applied daily if tuition is not received when due. A \$25.00 fee is applied to all returned checks. After a month of missed tuition, we reserve the right to cancel your child's enrollment in our program. If you have questions regarding tuition, please feel free to contact the OCA Early Learning Center director.

Please make checks payable to OCA Early Learning Center. To help us process your tuition check, please include your child's name in the memo section of each check. We would prefer all tuition payments to be mailed to P.O. Box 1620, West Plains, MO 65775. Tuition payments can also be made through the Brightwheel app. A Brightwheel invitation specific to our program will be sent after acceptance into the ELC.

Arrival/Dismissal

Arrival time is 7:30-8:30 am. Parking will be in front of the OCA K-12 building. The ELC entrance will be through the main lobby and to the right. Upon arrival, please sign your child in, say a quick good-bye, and exit the building. A teacher will assist the children in putting their belongings away.

Each morning, you will be responsible for signing your child in. If someone other than you is picking your child up from our facility, their information must be on our approved pick-up list. The person **MUST** be on your enrollment form as an emergency contact/authorized person. Please notify the people on your list that **they should bring a photo ID** in order to leave with the child until the staff is able to identify this person as an approved person for pick up. This is for the safety of all students.

Only parents or those listed on the Sign-in/Sign-out sheet can pick up your child. This person must also be listed as Authorized Persons on your child's enrollment form.

The teacher will require identification if unfamiliar with the designated pick-up person. If your child is not picked up by 5:30, we will begin calling people on the Authorized Persons section of your enrollment form. There is a late pick-up fee of \$25 plus \$1 per minute after 5:30. Continuous tardiness could potentially mean losing your child's spot in the Early Learning Center.

Confidentiality

We will not release your information to other parents without your consent, nor will we provide you with the information of other parents without their consent. Photographs and videos may be taken of your child by the center and used internally and externally in print or digital/electronic media. Please see our enrollment form if you would rather your child not participate. ¹

Daily Schedule

7:30-8:30 - Arrival and sign-in/ indoor play
8:30-9:00 - Bible time
9:00-9:15 - Restroom break/handwashing
9:15-9:30 - Snack
9:30-10:00 – Center time
10:00-10:30 – Craft/activity time
10:30-11:00 - Outside play
11:00-11:15 - Restroom break/handwashing
11:15-11:45 – Lunch
11:45-12:00 - Prep for afternoon Preschool start
12:15-2:15 - Rest time/nap time
2:15-3:00 – Closing story time, circle time, song time
3:15-3:45 – Handwashing, snack
3:45-4:15 – Outside time
4:15-4:30 - Restroom break, handwashing
4:30-5:00 - Playtime
5:00-5:15 - Story time
5:15 – Prep for dismissal
5:30 – Pick-up/Sign-out
5:30 – Close Center

Center time, crafts, and lessons will be on a rotation based on the development of the child.

Nap Time

A nap or rest time is scheduled after lunch and a cot is provided by the center. You will need to bring a toddler-sized fitted sheet and a blanket for your child. A pillow is optional. Your child may bring a favorite blanket or soft animal to make naptime more comfortable.

Curriculum

Story, song, play, movement, memorization, and exploration consistent with the developmental needs of the children will be embedded in the learning process. As often as possible we will seek to integrate the learning of content (numbers, colors, shapes, etc.) with Bible stories, songs, hands-on activities, and movements. Instruction will often be framed in weekly themes to aid in retention and facilitate our ability to partner with parents to reinforce the learning at home. These themes along with supporting activities for parent engagement at home will be communicated through our digital communication platform.

A mid-year and end-of-the-year assessment will be provided to reflect your child's learning growth.

Communication

Daily Communication - Brightwheel will be our main source for daily communication. This allows us to share newsletters, alerts, photos, and videos to keep you easily connected to your child's daily experience in the classroom.

Conferences - As we see ourselves as partners with you in the education of your child, parent/teacher conferences are always available based upon parent or staff requests. These are great opportunities to discuss growth, set goals, and communicate concerns. Of course, emails and phone calls can also be used to address more immediate concerns. We ask our families to provide both an email address and phone number.

Food/Nutrition

Food Allergies - If your child has food allergies you must identify the allergy in writing so we can make appropriate accommodation for your child. A written action plan in case of emergency related to the food allergy should be completed by your family physician and must be on file with us before your child can attend our Early Learning Center.

Lunch/Snacks - To keep tuition costs as low as possible, families will be asked to bring their own lunch along with appropriate utensils, napkins, and water bottles. Morning and afternoon snacks will be provided by the Early Learning Center. Refrigerator space is available for meals that must be refrigerated. Please pack all lunches and snacks in a lunchbox with a freezer pack when appropriate. Also, please label your child's lunchbox and/or water bottle.

Students will not be allowed to share food. Any leftover food will be discarded at the end of the day except for pre-packaged, non-perishable items that have not been opened.

Parents are welcome to provide special snacks in celebration of their child's birthday. These snacks must be store-bought and in their original package. They must be approved by the Early Learning Center director in order to ensure the safety of other children in the center who may have food allergies and in consideration of other potential safety issues.

We will celebrate other holidays and special occasions such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter.

We will start our mealtimes in prayer/song, thanking God.

Personal Belongings

Toys - Do not send toys from home to the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity, and this has been communicated to you by staff. This includes hats and costumes. Do not send toy guns or toys with a violent theme for show-and-tell. If an item is questionable in your mind, please ask the center staff or administration who will make the final decision on such items.

Clothing - Please bring at least one change of clothes, including undergarments, socks, shoes, and blanket/towel in a bag that can stay at the center to be used in case of an accident that would require a change of clothing. Ages 1-2 years old or not potty-trained, please bring at least 2 sets of clothes. Please label all items individually and the bag with your child's name. Soiled clothing will be sent home to be laundered.

Diapering – Children who are not potty trained, please bring diapers/pull-ups, wipes and diaper ointment for your child. These supplies will be kept separate and used only for your child.

Bedding – Please bring a toddler-sized fitted sheet, blanket and a pillow (optional) for naptime.

Lost and Found - Lost and found items will be brought to the front desk at the main entrance of the school. Please check here for missing items. The center is not responsible for lost or missing items.

Safety/Health

Dress- Please dress your child in practical clothing that is appropriate for the weather and take into account both indoor and outdoor time during the day. Please be mindful of the potential for temperature fluctuation during the day and prepare appropriately. Please remember coats, hats, and gloves on cold days (labeled with your child's name). All drawstrings should be removed from clothing as precaution against choking and entanglement. Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center activities. Please send

your child in clothes and shoes that are casual, clean, and comfortable and you expect may get messy or dirty because of the day's activities.

Immunizations- We follow our state regulations regarding immunization of children attending the center including exemptions for religious or medical reasons. We are required to report on our center's status annually. Failure to comply with state regulations regarding immunizations will result in removal from the center.

A copy of your child's health records must be on file before your child can start at the center. It is the responsibility of the family to ensure the child's physicals and immunizations are kept up to date and a copy of these results are provided to the center.

Sick Policy

You may not bring a sick child to the center. We retain the right to refuse a child who appears to be ill. Each child shall be observed for contagious diseases and other signs of illness on arrival and throughout each day.

A parent or guardian shall be contacted when signs of illness are observed. Unusual behavior shall be monitored closely, and parent(s) shall be contacted if the behavior continues or if other symptoms develop. These behaviors include, but shall not be limited to:

- Cranky or less active than usual
- Crying more than usual
- Feels general discomfort or seems unwell
- Has loss of appetite

When a child exhibits any of the following, the parent(s) shall be contacted, and the child shall be sent home. Parental contact shall be recorded/filed in the child's records. The child **MUST** be picked up within the hour of initial contact. Symptoms that require parental contact and sending a child home are—

- More than one (1) abnormally loose stool
- Severe Coughing, red or blue in the face or makes high-pitched croupy or whooping sounds after coughing
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Tears, redness of eyelid lining or irritation, followed by swelling or discharge of pus
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Sore throat or swallowing difficulty
- An infected skin patch—crusty, bright yellow, dry, or gummy areas of the skin
- Unusually dark, tea-colored urine
- Gray or white stool
- Fever over one hundred degrees Fahrenheit (100°F)
- Headache and stiff neck
- Vomiting more than once
- A child is in the contagious period of a disease

- Severe itching of the body or scalp or scratching of the scalp which may be symptoms of lice or scabies¹

Intentional disregard for this policy or concealment of pertinent information may result in dismissal from our Early Learning Center.

As an all-inclusive list is impossible to compile, the following principles will be applied in determining if a child will be sent home from the center or should stay home:

- An illness that poses a risk of spreading to others (including fever of 100 degrees F or higher without medication)
- An illness that prevents your child from participating in center activities
- An illness that creates a greater need for care than the staff can provide

You will be called and asked to pick up your child if he or she exhibits signs of illness. Your child must be picked up within the hour. Your child will be excluded from all activities at the center until you arrive.

Children who have been ill may return when they are free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for 24 hours without the aid of medication and they are able to participate in all center activities without difficulty. They may also return if they have been treated with antibiotics for 24 hours (48 hours in case of strep).

Open, oozing skin conditions require a physician's note stating the condition is not contagious.

If a child has a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to the center is required. Children with head lice will not be allowed to return to the center until they have been treated, and no lice or nits are detected during the health check. Please note that for the safety of the center community, we will confidentially make our center community (and when necessary, our school community) aware when there has been exposure to a communicable disease (including head lice). A doctor's note can be left at the office or emailed to the Director at amurphy@ozarkschristianacademy.com.

Medications - Children with a medical condition (temporary or ongoing) who require routine administration of medication should consult with a physician to establish an administration schedule that does not include administration during center hours. In the rare case that your child needs to receive medication during center hours, a REQUEST TO ADMINISTER MEDICATION FORM must be completed and approved prior to a staff member giving or administering any medication to your child. Please see the director for this form and to discuss the medical needs of your child. The director will determine if the center will be able to meet this need. Should medication be sent to the center, it must be labeled with the

child's name, the name of the medication, dosage requirements, and specific dates and times for administering. Staff will record the dispensing of medication accordingly.

Discipline Philosophy

Discipline at the center is viewed as an opportunity for discipleship where children are taught to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, strength, and mind and to love their neighbors as themselves. Behavioral expectations, classroom processes and procedures, and consequences for misbehavior all have the goal of creating a classroom of joyful conformity where students feel loved and are encouraged to adopt a disposition of responsibility and respectful kindness toward others as those created in the image of God.

Child Protection and Emergencies

Injuries- Safety and the well-being of our students is our top priority. Minor injuries such as scratches and scrapes will be treated directly by staff. The area will be cleaned, a band-aid applied, and ice used as necessary. Parents will be contacted so that appropriate follow-up may take place at home. If there is a major injury, staff will immediately call 911 and then parents will be contacted. Parents are responsible for all costs involved in emergency medical treatment including emergency medical transportation.

Respectful Behavior- The center will take a proactive approach to encourage the development of self-discipline in our students. Planning a wide variety of engaging activities, limiting the number of children in each area, identifying and reinforcing positive behaviors, and modeling kindness and respect will be part of our positive approach to creating a classroom in line with our discipline philosophy. If a student is having difficulty demonstrating appropriate behavior, the general process for correction will be as follows:

- A teacher will join the child, model the appropriate behavior and reinforce the positive behaviors being demonstrated by other students.
- A teacher may also redirect the child by clearly defining what the child *cannot* do and providing appropriate options for what the child *can* do.
- If the child does not follow the redirection, he or she will be redirected to another activity or separated from the current activity for a short time, no longer than one minute for each year of the child's age.
- Ongoing misbehavior will result in a parent conference to establish an agreed upon behavior plan.
- Ongoing, unmanageable behavior will result in removal from the center. Removal can be temporary or permanent.

There are some challenging behaviors that will require a different intervention process and will not follow the above general process. Verbally or physically aggressive behaviors (including biting) as well as other unsafe or inappropriate behaviors that impact the well-

being of other children or staff require immediate intervention. In rare cases where a child's behavior puts the child, other children, or staff in danger, dismissal from the center may result.

Child Custody - For the safety of your child, please make sure that the center is aware of any unique circumstances surrounding the custody of your child. Unique circumstances would include but are not limited to the following: restraining order, court-ordered visitation schedule, or any other court-ordered documentation regarding the custody of your child. The center does not accept responsibility for determining which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation. The center will not act as a liaison in custody disputes.

Child Abuse and Neglect - All center staff are mandated reporters and are required to report to child protective services any suspected child abuse or neglect or danger of abuse or neglect. Once reported, child protective services determine the appropriate action. The center will fully cooperate with child protective services regarding any investigation of child abuse or neglect.

Potty Training

Children do not have to be fully potty trained to enroll in the ELC. However, there is a price break for children who are fully potty trained. By fully potty trained we mean able to enter the bathroom alone, use the toilet, wipe properly, and redress without assistance.

Attendance/Withdrawal/Termination/Transfer of Records

Attendance - If your child is going to be absent or will arrive after 8:30 a.m. please call the Early Learning Center or email the director. Your communication helps us ensure proper planning and activities for our class. If we do not hear from you and your child is not in attendance by 8:30, we reserve the right to deny a learning center spot for the day.

Withdrawal - If you plan to discontinue attendance at the learning center, we ask that you give us as much notice as possible. A written notice provided two weeks in advance is beneficial for the center, and we do ask that you pay for the final two weeks regardless of attendance.

Termination Policy - The center reserves the right to terminate enrollment at will. Circumstances that may lead to terminating enrollment include, but are not limited to the following:

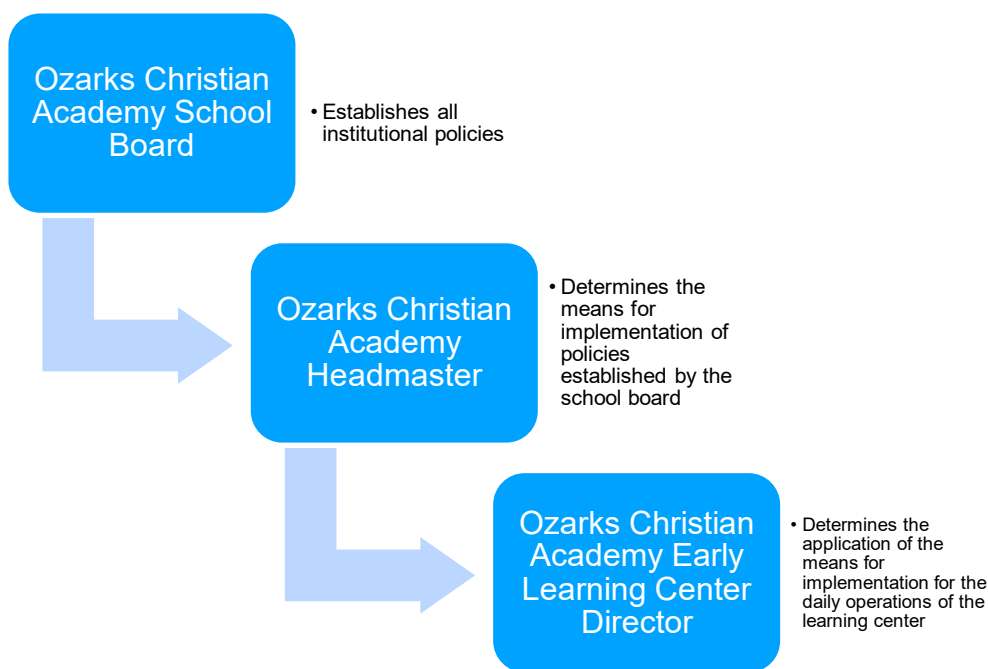
- Non-compliance with required forms, processes, or procedures
- Failure to pay tuition after one month
- Physical or verbal abuse toward any person or property, or threat of physical or verbal abuse toward any person or property
- Any action or failure to act deemed reasonable as cause for termination of enrollment by the Board of Directors

Transfer of Records- If your child is transferring to a new classroom in the learning center or to Ozarks Christian Academy, your child's records will transfer internally. If your child is transferring to a new school or day care provider, no records will be sent without a written request signed by the parent or guardian.

Enrollment in Ozarks Christian Academy

*Enrollment in the learning center is **not** a guarantee of enrollment in Ozarks Christian Academy. All learning center families who desire to attend Ozarks Christian Academy must go through the same application process as any new family would go through who wishes to attend Ozarks Christian Academy. Those who wish to consider enrollment in Ozarks Christian Academy should contact the administration of the academy to initiate the application process.*

Organizational Chart



OCA Early Learning Center

Handbook Acknowledgement

I have received and read the learning center handbook in its entirety. I have asked for and received clarification from the Early Learning Center on information that was unclear. I understand the handbook fully including my responsibilities as outlined in the handbook, and I agree to be in full compliance with the Early Learning Center Handbook.

Child's Name _____

Signature: _____

Print: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Print: _____

Date: _____

ⁱ The OCA Learning Center Handbook was developed using Cabool Second Baptist Daycare Family Handbook and Growing in Grace Academy Family Handbook as source material.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

This is a statement of the primary doctrines OCA embraces and teaches. The OCA Board of Directors will function as the final arbiter for this statement of faith.

WE BELIEVE and teach that there is one sovereign God, eternally existing in three persons: the everlasting Father; His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the Holy Spirit, the giver of life, and we believe and teach that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing by His spoken Word and for His own glory. (Deuteronomy 6:4, Mark 12:29, John 1:1-18, II Corinthians 3:17, Genesis 1:1)

WE BELIEVE and teach that God has revealed Himself and His truth in the created order, in the Scriptures and supremely in Jesus Christ and that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are verbally inspired by God and inerrant in the original writing so that they are fully trustworthy and of supreme and final authority in all they say. (John 17:17, II Timothy 3:16, II Peter 3:15-16)

WE BELIEVE and teach that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary and was true God and true man, existing in one person and without sin, and we believe in and teach the physical resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, His ascension into heaven and in His present life there for us as Lord of all, High Priest and Advocate. (Matthew 1:18-20, Luke 1:28-38, John 1:1-3, John 8:58, John 20:28, Acts 20:28, Romans 9:5, Hebrews 4:15, Luke 24:36-43, John 20:28, Acts 1:9-10, Matthew 28:18, Hebrews 5, I John 2:1-2)

WE BELIEVE and teach that God directly created Adam and Eve, the historical parents of the entire human race, and that they were created in His own image, distinct from all other living creatures and in a state of original righteousness. (Matthew 19:4-6, Acts 17:26, Romans 5:12, I Timothy 2:13-15)

WE BELIEVE and teach that God placed Adam and Eve in a distinct relationship to complement one another in marriage (Genesis 2:23-24). We believe that heterosexual relationships in marriage between one man and one woman are God's design from the very beginning of time (Matthew 19:4-6) and Adam and Eve are a model of this beautiful institution. Sex outside of marriage including homosexual behavior are outside of God's design (I Cor. 6:9-10, Rom. 1:26-27). We reject any teaching contrary to the biblical teaching regarding marriage and believe that the Bible is the final authority on such weighty matters (II Tim. 3:16).

WE BELIEVE and teach that God creates each person distinctly male or female (Gen. 2:23). We believe that if one rejects their individual biological sex they are rejecting a gift from God. These distinctions between male and female are God given so that we might see more clearly the beauty and image of God. God's Word is clear from the beginning that He made them distinctly male and female (Gen. 1:26, Matthew 19:4-6) and to argue anything to the contrary is error (I Corinthians 6:9).

WE BELIEVE and teach that our first parents sinned by rebelling against God's revealed will and thereby incurred both physical and spiritual death and that as a result all human beings are born with a sinful nature that leads them to sin in thought, word and deed. (Genesis 2:16-17, 3:8, Romans 5:12, John 5:25-29, Romans 3:23)

WE BELIEVE in and teach the existence of Satan, sin, evil powers and that God has defeated all these through the cross of Christ. (Genesis 3:1, Revelation 12:1-9, Jude 9, Matthew 28:18-20)

WE BELIEVE and teach that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, triumphing over all evil and that all who repent and believe in Him are justified by His shed blood and forgiven of all their sins. (I Corinthians 15:1-4, John 3:16, II Corinthians 5:21, Acts 2:38-39, Acts 4:12, Ephesians 1:7, Titus 3:5)

WE BELIEVE and teach that all who embrace the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God and are enabled to offer spiritual worship acceptable to God. (John 1:12; 3:3, 3:16; 16:8-15, Romans 12:1-2)

WE BELIEVE and teach that God the Holy Spirit indwells and gives life to believers, enables them to understand the Scriptures, empowers them for godly living and equips them for service and witness. (John 14:16-23, I Corinthians 2:14-15, Galatians 5:16-17, 22, I Thessalonians 4:1-5, II Timothy 3:16)

WE BELIEVE and teach that the one, holy, universal Church is the body of Christ and is composed of the communities of Christ's people. The task of the Church is to be God's redeemed community, embodying His love by worshipping God with confession, prayer and praise; by proclaiming the gospel of God's redemptive love through our Lord Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth by word and deed; by caring for all of God's creation and actively seeking the good of everyone, especially the poor and needy. (I Corinthians 1:11-17, Ephesians 4:5, Titus 2:13-14, I Timothy 3:16, I Timothy 2:8, Acts 1:8, Revelation 5, James 1:22, Matthew 25, James 1:27)

WE BELIEVE in and teach the blessed hope that Jesus Christ will return to this earth, personally, visibly and unexpectedly, in power and great glory, to gather His elect, to raise the dead, to judge the nations and to bring His Kingdom to fulfillment. (I Thessalonians 1:10, Acts 1:11, I Thessalonians 4:13-18, II Thessalonians 1:1-5-10, Matthew 24:31, Acts 24:21, Revelation 20)

WE BELIEVE in and teach the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting punishment of the lost and the everlasting blessedness of the saved. (Acts 24:21, II Thessalonians 1:9)