

## Article 6 – The Ordinances of Jesus Christ

*“We believe that baptism and the Lord’s Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that feet washing is an example, a duty, connected with the supper, and that true believers are the only subjects of either and should be practiced by the churches; and that baptism by immersion is the apostolic mode.”*

This sixth Article of Faith addresses the purposes and organization of the New Testament Church. The church, also referred to as the house of God, is a local assembly of believers who have been called out of the world to walk in the kingdom and fellowship of Jesus Christ. *“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”* 1 Timothy 3:15.

God designed the church to carry out several important and related functions, including glorifying Jesus Christ, providing a testimony against the sinfulness of the world, worshipping God in a manner that pleases Him, teaching the Word of God, and administering His ordinances. *“Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.”* 1 Corinthians 11:2.

Men tend to prefer complex and ornate religion, but the true worship of Jesus Christ is simple and unadorned. Jesus Christ gave only two ordinances to be observed by the churches. These ordinances are (1) water baptism, and (2) the Lord’s Supper. Both profoundly demonstrate the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the newness of life that His disciples have in Him. Sadly, both ordinances have been largely disregarded and corrupted by the world.

Water baptism is required to join the local church. The word “baptized” literally means immersed, or being fully engulfed and covered. It is a powerful symbol of the believer’s union with Christ, both in His death and His life. Romans 6:3-6. Water baptism also represents the baptism by fire and the Holy Ghost that Jesus Christ gives every one of His Elect in the new birth. Matthew 3:11-17. As such, upon a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, every believer should be lawfully baptized by an authorized administrator. One cannot reasonably claim to be a follower of Christ without following Him in true baptism. Acts 8:35-39.

The Lord’s Supper, or Communion, is the highest form of worship and fellowship for the church. We cannot partake of this second ordinance without first submitting to the first. The night before Jesus was crucified, He broke unleavened bread and gave it to His disciples, saying *“Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you.”* 1 Corinthians 11:24. Jesus also gave them the cup of wine, saying *“This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.”* Mark 14:24. The bread and wine serve as a powerful symbol of the death that Jesus suffered on the cross on our behalf. It is crucial that unleavened bread and real wine be used, since neither have any leaven (yeast), which represents sin in the Bible. *“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.”* 1 Corinthians 11:26.

The washing of the Saint’s feet is an example and a duty associated with the Lord’s Supper. Prior to the Communion, Jesus took the form of a servant and washed each of the twelve disciples’ feet. John 13:2-11. Just as the unleavened bread and wine are literal elements, Jesus’ command for us to humbly wash each other’s feet is literal as well. In all these things, the name of Jesus Christ is glorified and brought to mind by the church. *“This do in remembrance of me.”* Luke 22:19; *“If ye know these things, happy are ye if you do them.”* John 13:12-17.