

STATEMENT OF FAITH

This statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself, as the inspired, inerrant in its original manuscripts, 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 church doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our elders (pastors) are the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

SECTION 1: THE BIBLE

The Bible is God's Word, written by men who were uniquely inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is without error, the final authority on truth, and thus, serves as the sole authority for holy living. We believe the Bible (containing the sixty-six (66) books of the Old and New Testament) is the word of God, fully inspired by Him through the Holy Spirit in the original manuscripts (2 Timothy 3:15-17). Since God's word is both true and everlasting, it is our supreme authority for faith and conduct. His word is absolutely trustworthy, inerrant and infallible - it cannot be proven false, erroneous or mistaken (Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 24:35; John 14:23-24, 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 John 2:4-5; 1 Peter 1:24-25).

SECTION 2: GOD

There is one God who eternally exists in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three persons possess all the attributes of Deity and co-exist in perfect harmony. This co-existence is called the Godhead in Scripture and over the centuries, believers have chosen to call this Godhead the Trinity. According to Scripture, God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe and is sovereign over all things. We believe that there is but one living, true, personal and sovereign (supreme, independent ruler) God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 24:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:9). His being is Spirit (John 4:24), and His attributes are those essential qualities, which identify and describe His nature. Because God is perfect, He cannot and will not act contrary to His nature (Matthew 5:48; Leviticus 19:2). God is self-existent, eternal (John 5:26), truth (Numbers 23:19; Hebrews 6:18), infinite (Psalm 90:2), unchanging (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17), all-knowing (1 John 3:20), present everywhere at once (Psalm 139:7-10), all-powerful (Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 19:26), righteous (Psalm 145:17), gracious, merciful and abounding in loving-kindness (Exodus 34:6), holy (1 Peter 1:15 - 16), just (1 John 1:9), faithful (2 Timothy 2:13), wise (Romans 16:27), sovereign (Psalm 115:3; Acts 2:23, 17:24 - 27; Ephesians 1:11) and He hears and answers prayer. God is, at least, all of these attributes at all times while completing His plans and purposes. We believe in the triune God (Isaiah 48:16; Matthew 3:16 -17), one in essence (Deuteronomy 6:4), yet manifest in three persons -- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father is God (1 Corinthians 8:6), the Son is God (Hebrews 1:5-8; Matthew 1:23; 1 John 5:20) and the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4).

SECTION 3: JESUS

Jesus Christ, second Person of the Trinity, is the visible image of the invisible God, the Father. He is both God and man. He left heaven, was born of a virgin, and completely fulfilled the Father's will by living a sinless life. As our substitute, He voluntarily paid for our sins by dying on the cross as a perfect sacrifice. He rose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to heaven to become the only mediator between man and God. He will return to earth to consummate history and reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. In the flesh, Jesus was one person, with two natures -- true God and true man, yet without sin (Matthew 1:18, 23; Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 4:14-15; 1 John 4:9). We believe, according to the Scriptures, in the historical, literal death, burial and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. This act is the satisfaction for the sins of the whole world (Acts 26:22-23; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Hebrews 2:17-18; 1 John 2:2) and has provided redemption for mankind by His shed blood. We believe the resurrected Christ was taken into heaven where He is now and always lives to make intercession for the believers. He will appear two more times: at a time yet future, Christ will return and the believers will be caught up with Him in the air, to be with Him forever. In a separate event, Christ will also return from heaven and reign on earth for 1,000 years before the final judgment of evil (Acts 1:11; Ephesians 1:17; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; Hebrews 7:25; Revelation 1:7, 19:11, 20:15).

SECTION 4: HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit, third Person of the Trinity, draws sinners to Christ, making them aware of their sins and coming judgment. He causes sinners to be saved by the process of regeneration and then seals them for salvation by indwelling them. He equips every believer for service, gives them understanding of spiritual truth, and provides them with guidance and power for holy living. We believe the person of the Holy Spirit is God, and given by God to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, guide into all truth, comfort, regenerate, sanctify and daily lead those who are in Christ. He also indwells forever, from the moment of regeneration, and desires to empower, fill and minister through the believer (John 3:3-5, 14:16-17, 16:8, 13; Acts 1:8, 5:3-4; Romans 8:9, 14; 1 Corinthians 12:11-13; Titus 3:5-6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 Peter 1:2).

SECTION 5: SALVATION

Eternal life is a free gift that God offers to every individual person. We receive this gift by faith in Christ alone. Faith is trusting in what Christ did for us on the cross. When we place our faith in Christ, we must allow Him to become the Lord of our lives.

This means that we must be willing to repent (change) from our sinful way of living and begin to live according to His will. Those who trust Christ have the assurance of spending eternity in heaven. Those who do not trust Christ will die in their sins, face the judgment, and spend eternity away from God in hell. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (John 3:16-18). We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. 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 the church. We believe that man, in the person of Adam, was created in innocence, but by voluntary transgression entered into sin, thus plunging the whole human race into condemnation and death; so that now all mankind is, from conception, sinful and shaped in iniquity, and all become willful sinners with the first expression of a personal choice and so are without excuse before God (Genesis 3; Psalm 51:5; Romans 1:18-20, 5:10-19). We believe that the only escape from the condemnation of sin and eternal punishment in hell is through the redemption effected by Jesus Christ. He voluntarily took upon Himself a human body and nature, yet without sin; and by His suffering, death, burial and bodily resurrection, made full justification before God for the sin of man. God has graciously chosen and called the believer. The free gift of salvation is given solely by grace to all who personally repent and believe/trust in Him. Salvation is by God's grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, no works, however good, make this salvation more secure. (Matthew 25:46; Mark 1:14-15; John 1:12-13; Acts 16:30-33; Romans 2:5-6, 10:9-13; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 2:1-10; Philippians 2:5-8; 1 Timothy 1:16; Titus 3:5-7; Hebrews 4:15, 10:4-14; 1 Peter 1:18-19). In addition, believers need not and should not be expected to follow the Old Testament law (Galatians 5:1-3; Galatians 3:1-3; Acts 15:23-29). We believe that every Christian, as a new creation, will give some evidence of personal conversion (2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4; John 15:8; Colossians 1:10; 1 John 3:10). As individuals, all Christians are Priests alike. They can offer fitting sacrifices of praise and thanks to God while coming into His presence through Christ without any other human agent or mediator (1 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 13:15-16). We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, can never be snatched out of God's hand (John 10:28). They will also manifest, by faith, the work of that power in their lives daily by refraining from sin and conforming to Jesus Christ (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 8:38, 39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Galatians 2:20; 1 Peter 1:4-5). The believer's salvation is a matter for rejoicing and motivation on to maturity in Christ through daily obedience to God's Word, clearly forbidding the abuse of Christian liberty as an occasion to sin (Titus 2:11-15; John 20:31; 1 John 5:13; Galatians 5:13; 1 Corinthians 8:13; 2 Peter 1:3-11).

SECTION 6: THE CHURCH

We believe that the Church was initially identified in the New Testament, having been a mystery to the Old Testament prophets, but established by Jesus Christ who is its sole Head. It is empowered and perpetuated by the Holy Spirit. It is Christ's "body" for service and His "bride" for glory. Someday, Christ will present to Himself the church in all her glory (Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 12:12-28; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23-33; Revelation 19:11-16). We believe the "Church" is primarily manifest through local churches that are comprised of born-again believers who observe baptism and the Lord's Supper, are governed only by the word of God, and answer ultimately to Jesus Christ (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 7:17; 1 Timothy 3:1-15; Acts 2:41-47, 14:23; Ephesians 5:23, 27).

SECTION 7: BAPTISM

We believe, Baptism is one of only two ordinances in the church; the other is the Lord's Supper. Baptism is not necessary for salvation but is a symbol of salvation. By immersion, baptism illustrates salvation by picturing the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Although not necessary for salvation, baptism is an important act of obedience and should be experienced by every believer. The Scriptural order is: trust in Christ for salvation first, then baptism by immersion in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41; Acts 8:35-39; Romans 6:3-5)

SECTION 8: THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe, as with baptism, the Lord's Supper (often called communion) is symbolic. It was first instituted by Christ as He ate the Passover meal with His disciples just before His crucifixion. Jesus commanded that his followers celebrate the supper in remembrance of His death on the cross. Although not necessary for salvation, the Lord's Supper clearly illustrates what Jesus did for us on the cross and should be regularly observed by believers. The unleavened bread and wine (juice) symbolize His body which was broken and His blood which was shed for our salvation. Because of its sacredness, the Lord's Supper should never be observed carelessly. Before taking the supper, every believer should examine himself spiritually, repent of any known sin, and then partake with a pure heart and conscience. (Matthew 26:26-30; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29)

SECTION 9: ETERNAL SECURITY

We believe those who have trusted in Christ have received eternal life, the righteousness of Christ, spiritual adoption as God's children, and have been sealed by the Holy Spirit. Since salvation is based on God's grace, apart from man's works, no amount of good works can either acquire or retain it. Their salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by their self-efforts. God's Spirit and grace allows the true and faithful believer to persevere until the end. (1 Cor 3:11-15; John 10:28-29; Phil 1:6)

SECTION 10: PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER

We believe, all believers are servants and ministers of God. According to Scripture, every believer can approach God's throne for himself through the mediation of Christ. There is no need for a "third party" to tell the believer how to pray, how to understand the Bible, or how to live. The church does not have a special class of priests but instead, Scripture teaches that all believers are made "priests unto God." There is only one mediator between God and humanity and that mediator is Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:9; Hebrews 4:15-16)

SECTION 11: MARRIAGE

We believe that term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God. (Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:22-25; Romans 1:18-32; Hebrews 13:4)