

The PROPOSED Doctrinal Statement of Rothbury Community Church
DRAFT 3.1 (April 13, 2025)

The Doctrinal Statement of Rothbury Community Church

Prologue

The purpose of this document is to make clear the doctrine corporately confessed by the membership of Rothbury Community Church. It is a summary of what we understand the Scriptures would have us teach and submit to. It helps us identify and unify the body of Christ in our local context. It serves as a resource for discipleship in our fellowship and families. And it gives guidance for partnership with individuals and organizations.

Included in this statement are creeds that come from the early church. Some language may be unclear to the modern reader, but understood in their original context, they have served the faithful for centuries in their expression of doctrine. We consciously connect ourselves to that line of faithfulness and desire to pass these truths onto the coming generations.

Alterations to this document must be brought to the membership of Rothbury Community Church per “The Bylaws of Rothbury Community Church.”

Part 1: The Need for Redemption

1. God’s Revelation

- a. We believe that God has revealed His glory, character, and power to all people in the works of creation so as to leave all without excuse of ignorance on the day of judgment (Psalm 19:1-3; Romans 1:19-20; 2:14-16).
- b. He also has revealed His love, grace, and redeeming purposes to all people in the Scriptures for instruction and encouragement to trust in Jesus Christ, Who is the central and unifying theme of the Scriptures (Luke 24:27, 44-47; John 5:39; 20:31; Acts 17:2-3; 28:23; Romans 3:2; 15:4; 16:25-26; Ephesians 3:2-5, 9; Colossians 1:25-26; 1 Corinthians 10:9-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 John 5:13).
- c. Every word of the sixty-six books of the Scriptures is living, unchanging, eternal, infallible, and inspired by God, coming to us by certain men carried along by the Holy Spirit in former days, and therefore was without error in its original writing (Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; Psalm 119:89; Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 5:17-18; 24:35; Luke 21:33; John 10:35; 16:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 6:18; 1 Peter 1:23-25; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Revelation 22:18-19).
- d. Consequently, Scripture is to be humbly and gratefully received as the only sufficient, final, and clear authority for matters to which it speaks (Deuteronomy 12:32; Psalm 119:11, 105; Jeremiah 15:16; Mark 12:26; Luke 16:29-31; John 17:17; Acts 17:11; 18:28; Galatians 1:8-9; Ephesians 2:20; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:3; 1 John 5:9).
- e. Due to the fallenness and finitude of all people, the Holy Spirit is needed for the right understanding of, acceptance of, and submission to the Scriptures and its teachings (Psalm 119:130; Matthew 22:29-32; John 6:45; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Peter 3:15-16; 1 John 2:20, 27).

2. God’s Being

- a. We believe that the God revealed in the Scriptures is the only self-existent and true God, eternally and indivisibly existing in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, each identical in nature, power, authority, character, and worth (Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 20:2-6; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 45:5-7; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; Daniel 4:34-35; Matthew

28:18-19; Mark 1:9-11; 12:29; John 1:14-18; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6; 5:11-14).

- b. These Persons are distinguished in that the Father is neither begotten nor proceeding, the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, and the Holy Spirit is eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son (Psalm 2:7; Matthew 3:17; John 1:1-4; 3:16, 18; 5:26; 8:42; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7, 13-15; Acts 1:5; Romans 8:9; 1 Peter 1:11; 1 John 4:9, 14).
- c. God's being can only be fully comprehended in Himself, but He has revealed himself to be spirit, invisible, and fully present everywhere; He is simple (without parts), unchanging, and impassible (without passions); He is pure, holy, and dwells in unapproachable light; He is all wise, sovereign, and absolutely free; He is almighty, all knowing, and good; He is loving, merciful, and gracious towards all; He is righteous, just, and wrathful towards sin; He is forgiving of the repentant, a rewarder of those who seek Him, and faithful in all His ways (Exodus 15:11-18; 34:6-7; Deuteronomy 4:15-16; 1 Kings 8:27; 1 Chronicles 28:9; 29:10-11; Psalm 5:5-6; 103:19; 119:68; 145:8-9; 145:17; Proverbs 8:17; Isaiah 6:3; 43:3, 15, 46:10; Jeremiah 23:23; 29:11-14; Ezekiel 11:5; Nahum 1:2-3, 7; Habakkuk 1:13; Malachi 3:6; Matthew 6:33; John 4:24; Acts 1:7; 15:17-18; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:13-16; Hebrews 4:13; 11:6; James 1:17).
- d. God created all things not out of want or need, for He is wholly perfect in Himself, but according to the counsel of His own will, He was pleased to create all things for His own glory and is therefore worthy of all praise, and honor, and glory (Genesis 1:1-31; 2:7; Job 22:2-3; Psalm 115:1; 148:13; Romans 11:34-36; Ephesians 1:11).

3. God's Foundational Acts

- a. We believe that before the foundation of the world God freely and unchangeably decreed all that comes to pass according to the counsel of His will, for His own supreme glorification, and in such a way that He remains holy, without sin (Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Job 42:2; Psalm 5:4; 33:11; 115:1; 135:6; Isaiah 14:27; 43:10; 46:10-11; 48:11-13; Ezekiel 36:22; Daniel 4:35; 9:18-19; Matthew 25:34; Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 1:3-5, 11; 3:11; Hebrews 6:17; James 1:13; 1 John 1:5; 2:16).
- b. In creating all things out of nothing in six literal days, both visible and invisible, God is the rightful owner and ruler of all, including all of humanity (Genesis 1:1, 26-27, 31; 2:7; Deuteronomy 32:6; Psalm 8:3-8; 24:1-2; Isaiah 44:24; John 1:2-3; Romans 1:20; Ephesians 3:9; 4:6; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2).
- c. God reigns providentially and sovereignly over His creation, actively working out His will without violation of His perfect character or of human responsibility, for the good of those who love Him and for His glory (Genesis 50:20; 2 Samuel 7:3; Psalm 115:3; Proverbs 16:33; 19:21; Jeremiah 32:35; Daniel 11:3, 36; Matthew 10:29-31; John 19:11; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; Romans 8:28; 9:19-20; 11:32-34; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 2:13; Hebrews 1:3; James 4:13-15).

4. Humanity and the Fall

- a. We believe that, according to the counsel of His will and for His own glory, God was pleased to create humanity in His own likeness and image, crowning humanity with glory and honor, and giving humanity the responsibility to fill, subdue, and exercise dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5-7; 9:2, 6-7; Psalm 8:5; Isaiah 43:7; Ephesians 1:11; James 3:7; Revelation 4:11).
- b. Every human life, regardless of distinctions such as sex, ethnicity, age, or abilities, is to be uniformly honored and valued by all since every human is created in the likeness and image of

God (Genesis 5:1; Psalm 139:13-16; Isaiah 44:2, 24; Jeremiah 1:5; Matthew 6:25-34; Luke 20:24-25; James 3:9).

- c. The first humans, Adam and Eve, though initially sinless, were given commands and warned of transgression and, listening to the temptation of the serpent, chose sin by attempting to usurp God, doubting His goodness and word (Genesis 3:1-7; Hosea 6:7; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 John 2:16).
- d. In complete consistency with His character, God cursed His creation because sin had entered it, and Adam, as representative of all humanity, plunged all of humanity into a naturally depraved state, each born with the guilt and disposition for sin, with every part corrupted, unable to choose or do that which is pleasing in God's sight (1 Kings 8:46; Job 14:4; Psalm 51:5; Proverbs 20:9; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:12-21; 6:20; 7:18, 8:7-8; 1 Corinthians 2:14; 6:9-10; 15:21-22, 49; Galatians 5:17; Ephesians 2:1-3; Titus 1:15-16; Hebrews 2:14-15; 11:6; James 1:14-15; 1 John 1:8-10).
- e. Now instead of innocence, all humanity is characterized by guilt; instead of purity, all are characterized by shame; instead of being children of righteousness, all are by nature children of wrath; instead of having perfect fellowship with God, all are alienated from God; and instead of being destined for everlasting life, all are naturally destined for everlasting damnation (Matthew 18:8; 25:41, 46; Mark 9:43, 48; John 3:36; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:12; Colossians 1:21; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

Part 2: The Provision of Redemption

1. The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

- a. We believe that the Lord Jesus is God, the Second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, eternally begotten of the Father, identical in nature, power, authority, character, and worth with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Exodus 3:14; Psalm 2:7; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-2, 18; 8:58; 10:30; 14:9; Acts 13:33; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:1-5; 13:8).
- b. Before the foundation of the world it was decreed that when the fullness of time would come, Jesus, remaining truly God, would be sent by the Father to become truly human, in order to be the one mediator between holy God and fallen man, for the redemption of the elect and the glorification of God (Genesis 3:15; Deuteronomy 18:15-17; Matthew 3:17; 8:29; 14:33; 16:15-16, 27; 17:5; Mark 1:1, 11; 3:11; Luke 4:41; 22:70; John 3:16; 11:27; 12:49; Acts 3:22; 9:20; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:9-10; 3:11; Colossians 1:19; 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 5:5; 1 Peter 1:10-11, 20; 1 John 4:14-15; 5:20; 2 John 7).
- c. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary, taking upon Himself the likeness of sinful men, yet without sin, living in the power of the Holy Spirit as unfallen in a fallen world (Psalm 45:7; Isaiah 7:14; 42:1; Matthew 1:18-23; 12:28; Luke 1:26-27, 31; 4:1, 14; John 1:14; Acts 10:38; Romans 8:3; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Philippians 2:5-8; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26).
- d. To redeem the elect, Jesus perfectly fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, willingly suffered, shed His blood, and died on the cross, bearing the sins of all who believe in Him by becoming sin and a curse for them so that His righteousness is credited to them, saving them from the wrath of God, restoring them to fellowship with God, setting them free from enslavement to sin and the power of the Devil (Genesis 3:24; Psalm 40:7-8; Matthew 3:15; 5:17; 22:36-40; 26:39; 27:34-43, 50; Mark 15:34-38; Luke 22:42; 23:46; John 1:29; 10:18; 15:25; 19:30; Acts 2:23; Romans 4:3-5,

22-25; 5:6-9; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 10:4; 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13-14; Ephesians 1:7-8; Colossians 1:13-14; 2:13-14; Hebrews 2:14-15; 4:2; 9:22; 10:5-18; 12:2; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6).

- e. Upon His death, Jesus' spirit went to the place of the dead and His body was placed in the tomb; after three days He was resurrected by the power of God, proving the sufficiency and acceptance of His substitutionary death and propitiatory sacrifice, reconciling holy God and sinful man (Isaiah 53:10; Matthew 28:6; John 14:6; 20:15-16; Acts 2:24-32; 13:39; Romans 1:4; 3:25-26; 5:10-11; 1 Corinthians 15:4; Ephesians 4:7-10; Colossians 1:20-23; Hebrews 9:14-15; 1 Peter 1:21).
- f. After forty days He ascended to heaven where He now sits in exaltation at the right hand of the Father, interceding for the elect as the great high priest and is the head of the Church (Matthew 28:18; John 20:17; Acts 1:9-11; 2:36; 7:55-56; 9:4-6; 20:28; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20-23; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 2:10; 5:5-6; 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).
- g. At the proper time, He will return to judge the living and the dead and to gather the redeemed of all time to be with Him forever (Matthew 24:30; 25:31-46; Luke 1:33; John 5:22, 27; 17:2; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Romans 14:9-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 5:1-2; 2 Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 2:4).

2. The Salvation of the Sinner

- a. We believe that salvation is given by God's grace alone and cannot be merited, is received by faith alone absent of works, is accomplished through Christ alone as the only mediator between God and man, and thus results in God alone receiving the glory for it (Acts 4:12; 15:11; Romans 3:20-28; 4:6, 22-25; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 1:27-29; Galatians 3:8; 5:6; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Timothy 2:5; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:4-5).
- b. All people are to heed the general call of the Gospel which consists of an understanding of God's character and work, man's sinfulness, the good news of redemption in Jesus Christ, and the command to repent and to believe (Psalm 19:1-6; Isaiah 55:6-7; 66:2; Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; 36:31; Matthew 13:18-23; Luke 13:3; John 3:16-18, 36; 5:24, 39-40; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 16:31; 17:24-31; Romans 1:19-20; 2:4; 10:9-17; 1 Corinthians 1:18-21; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Revelation 3:20; 22:17).
- c. Those whom God has elected, foreknown, and predestined are effectually called to salvation upon being given spiritual life through regeneration by the Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 36:26; Matthew 22:14; John 3:3-8; 5:25; 6:37-40, 44-45, 65; 10:27-30; Acts 11:18; 13:48; Romans 8:28-30; 9:22-23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; 12:3; Ephesians 1:4, 11; 2:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-13; 2 Timothy 2:10; Hebrews 6:4-6; 1 Peter 1:1-2).
- d. The moment a sinner trusts in Christ they are united to Christ for the enjoyment of all the benefits of salvation including being justified before God with the righteousness of Christ, forgiven of all sins, baptized with the Holy Spirit, adopted as a child of God, and sealed by the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing inheritance in Christ (Ezekiel 36:27; John 1:12-13; 17:3; Acts 26:16-18; Romans 5:17-19; 8:14-17, 33; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 6:18; Galatians 2:19-20; 4:4-6; Ephesians 1:3, 5-10, 13-14; 4:30; Philippians 1:6; 3:8-9; Colossians 1:21-22; 1 Timothy 1:12-17; Titus 3:6-7; Hebrews 10:14; 12:6-10; 2 Peter 1:1).
- e. Now instead of guilt, the Christian has been declared righteous before God; instead of shame, the Christian is treated as a loved child of God; instead of enslavement to sin, the Christian is free in Christ; instead of alienation from God, the Christian is reconciled to God; instead of being

destined for everlasting damnation, the Christian has confidence in the promise of everlasting life (Isaiah 1:16-18; Romans 5:9-11; 8:1; 1 Corinthians 1:4-9, 30; 6:19-20; Galatians 4:7; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 6:11-12; 7:25; 13:5-6; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 18-19; 2:24-25; 2 Peter 1:3-4; 1 John 2:25; Jude 24-25).

3. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

- a. We believe that the Holy Spirit is God, the Third Person of the Trinity, eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son, identical in nature, power, authority, character, and worth with the Father and the Son (Exodus 3:14; Matthew 28:19; Luke 11:13; 24:49; John 15:26; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 9:14).
- b. The Holy Spirit is active in many ways in redemptive history, including at creation, the writing of Scripture, the incarnation of the Son, and other acts of providence (Genesis 1:2; 41:16, 38; Exodus 31:3; 35:31; Numbers 11:17, 25-29; 24:2; 27:18; Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14-15; 1 Samuel 10:6, 10; 11:6; 16:13-14; 19:20, 23; 2 Samuel 23:2; 1 Kings 18:12; 1 Chronicles 12:18; 2 Chronicles 15:1; 20:14; 24:20; Nehemiah 9:20, 30; Job 33:4; Psalm 51:11; 139:7; Isaiah 11:1-2; 42:1; 48:16; 59:21; 61:1; 63:10-14; Ezekiel 2:2; 3:12-14, 24; 8:3; 11:1, 5, 24; 37:1; 43:5; Daniel 2:27-28; Micah 3:8; Haggai 2:5; Zechariah 4:6; 6:8; 7:12; Malachi 2:15; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; Mark 1:10, 12; Luke 1:35; 4:1, 14, 17-19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; Hebrews 9:8; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Revelation 1:10).
- c. He convicts the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; He has mercy on whomever He wills, and He hardens whomever He wills (Exodus 14:4, 17; Deuteronomy 2:30; Joshua 11:20; Isaiah 63:17; Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26; John 3:8; 12:39-40; 16:7-11; Acts 28:25-27; Romans 9:18; Revelation 22:17).
- d. He is also active in the conversion and life of the Christian through acts including regeneration, sanctification, and sealing for the day of redemption; the granting of gifts for service, understanding, and power; indwelling, filling, and blessing; adopting, comforting, and leading; assuring, interceding, and bearing spiritual fruit; baptizing all Christians into Christ and His body, unifying the Church (Psalm 143:10; Ezekiel 36:27; Luke 12:11-12; John 3:5-6; 14:16-17, 26; 16:12-14; Acts 1:5, 8; 2:4, 38; 4:31; 6:3; 7:55; 9:31; 10:44-45; 13:2; 15:24-29; 16:6; Romans 8:9-17, 26-27; 15:16; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 3:16; 6:11, 19; 12:4-14; 2 Corinthians 3:6, 17-18; Galatians 4:6; 5:16-18, 22-23; Ephesians 1:13-14, 17; 2:22; 4:3, 30; 5:18; Philippians 1:19; 3:3; 2 Timothy 1:14; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 2:3-4; 6:4; 10:15-17; 1 John 2:20; 4:13; 5:6-7).

Part 3: Living as the Redeemed

1. Marriage, Family, and Human Sexuality

- a. We believe that God made humanity unalterably male and female from the beginning, equal in dignity, differing in design, and complementary in purpose; God also created the institution of marriage, the lifelong covenantal union of one man and one woman, for the purposes of procreation, partnership, oneness, sanctification, and to point to Christ's relationship with the Church (Genesis 2:18-25; Deuteronomy 22:5; Matthew 19:3-9; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5; Ephesians 5:32; 1 Timothy 2:13).
- b. The family is composed of individuals related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption, and is the fundamental institution upon which human society is built and is therefore to be

protected and honored by all (Genesis 1:26-28, 9:1, 7; 12:3; 13:8; 31:17-18; Numbers 16:27; Joshua 7:24; Ruth 1:1; Matthew 1:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8).

- c. God's design for Christians who marry is for a Christian man and a Christian woman to marry in the Lord; in submission to the headship of Christ, the husband as the head of the wife is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, and the wife is to respect and submit to her husband as to the Lord (1 Kings 11:4; Nehemiah 13:23-27; Proverbs 12:4; 18:22; 31:10-31; 1 Corinthians 11:3; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Ephesians 5:22-31, 33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:1-7).
- d. The married are to seek to be fruitful and to multiply; God gives children to their parents as a blessing and a heritage, and instructs parents to raise them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord; children are to honor and obey their parents in the Lord (Genesis 4:1; 13:15; 15:5-6; 18:16, 29-30; 24:60; 33:5; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16; 6:6-7; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalm 78:1-8; 127; Proverbs 1:8-9; 6:20-22; 13:24; 17:6; 22:6, 15; 23:13-14; 29:15, 17; Matthew 18:2-6; Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20-21; 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15; Hebrews 12:5-11).
- e. The dissolution of the marriage covenant is the result of sin and God's desire is always for reconciliation; divorce is sin, except in cases of adultery or separation by an unbelieving spouse (Hosea 2:16, 19-20; Malachi 2:15; Matthew 5:31-32; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2-3; 1 Corinthians 7:8-16, 39; 1 Timothy 5:14).
- f. Singleness for the unmarried and the widowed is a gift as the unmarried Christian can undividedly devote their attention to the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord, and how to be holy in body and spirit (1 Corinthians 7:6-7, 25-35).
- g. God's design for sex is that it be reserved for the marital relationship and any sexual expression outside of that is sin (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:6-23; 19:29; Deuteronomy 5:18; Proverbs 5:15-20; Matthew 5:27-28; 19:4; Mark 7:21; Acts 15:20; 21:25; Romans 1:24-27; 13:13; 1 Corinthians 5:1-11; 6:9-18; 10:8; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3-5; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; 1 Timothy 1:8-11; 2 Timothy 2:22; Hebrews 12:15-16; 13:4; Jude 7; Revelation 2:14, 20-22; 9:20-21; 21:8; 22:15).

2. The Church and Sacraments

- a. We believe that all who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation are members of His body, the invisible Church, which includes all the redeemed of all time from every tribe and language and people and nation (Matthew 16:18; John 10:16; 12:32; Romans 11:7, 17-18; Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:11-22; 3:6; 4:4-6; Hebrews 12:22-23; 1 John 1:3; Revelation 5:9).
- b. Since the giving of the Holy Spirit from Christ to His Church and until Christ returns, members of the invisible Church are commanded to formally gather with other Christians in their particular locality to constitute an autonomous visible church with Christ as head; the Scriptural pattern being for members to do the work of ministry, elders to lead and shepherd, and deacons to serve (Matthew 18:15-20; Luke 24:49; John 20:22; Acts 2:1-4; 6:1-4; 11:26; 13:1; 14:23, 27; 15:22-31; 20:17, 28; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 5:4-5, 13; 7:17; 11:18-19; 12:12-13, 27; Galatians 1:2; Ephesians 4:11-12; 5:23, 29-30; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 4:14-17; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 10:25; 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:1-3; 3 John 5, 9; Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14).
- c. The purpose of the church is to glorify God by building itself up in love through the pure preaching and teaching of the Word, prayer, fellowship with and accountability to one another, and proper

observance of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper; and to glorify God by bringing the Gospel to all people (Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; 2:42; 11:19-21, 29-30; 16:5; Romans 1:12; 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7, 14-26; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 3:21; 4:13-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14; 2 Timothy 2:2, 15; 3:16-17; 4:1-2; Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:24; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

- d. Baptism is the initial sign of the New Covenant where, upon a credible confession of faith in Christ and as an act of obedience, a Christian is immersed in water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, symbolizing their unity with Christ in His death and resurrection having died to sin and given new life, and publicly identifying them with Christ and His people (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12; 36-39; 16:30-33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16; Romans 6:1-11; Colossians 2:12).
- e. The Lord's Supper is the ongoing sign of the New Covenant where a church welcomes Christians to continue to publicly identify with Christ and His people in the remembrance and proclamation of the Lord's death by together eating of the bread and drinking of the cup, symbolizing the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ; all are warned from partaking in an unworthy manner (Matthew 5:23-24; 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, 27; 11:23-26).

3. Civil Authority

- a. We believe that God has ordained the offices of civil authority for His own glory and for the public good by acting as God's servants within the civil realm, ruling justly through punishing those who do evil and praising those who do good as defined by God (Genesis 9:5-6; Deuteronomy 16:18-20; 2 Samuel 23:3-4; Psalm 75:4-7; 82:2-4; Proverbs 21:1; Daniel 2:21; 4:27; John 19:11; Romans 13:1-4; 1 Peter 2:13-15).
- b. Christians are to pray for, honor, and be subject to civil authorities, seeking to lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way, and to live as free, using their freedom to serve God (Deuteronomy 17:8-13; Jeremiah 29:7; Matthew 17:24-27; 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:9-16, 25; Acts 25:10-11; Romans 13:5-7; Galatians 5:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; 1 Peter 2:16-17; 4:12-19).
- c. Civil authorities are opposed to the will of God when they exceed the God-given authority of their office or betray the God-ordained purpose of their office; if they do so, Christians are to submit to God rather than men (Exodus 1:17-20; 2:23-25; Deuteronomy 17:14-20; 2 Samuel 12:7-9; 94:20; Isaiah 5:20; Daniel 3:8-20; 6:6-13; Hosea 8:4; Matthew 14:4-11; Mark 6:17-28; 10:42; Luke 3:12-14; 22:25; John 18:36-37; Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-29; 8:5-6; Galatians 1:10; 1 John 5:3-4; Revelation 1:9).

4. Christian Obedience and Liberty

- a. We believe that the commands of God found in the Scriptures reveal God's design for flourishing and fulfillment, guiding those who obey them away from sin and toward righteousness, wisdom, and joy (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3; 16:11; 19:7-11; 94:12; 119: 1-3, 97-104, 113, 119, 163-165; Proverbs 29:18; Luke 11:28; John 13:17; James 1:25; 1 John 5:3).
- b. Jesus fulfilled the righteous requirement of the Law on behalf of the Christian, including perfectly obeying all the commands of God, earning righteousness for the unrighteous who turn to Christ in repentance and faith (Matthew 5:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 24:44; John 15:25; Acts 3:19-26; 11:18, 21; 13:38-39; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20; Romans 2:4; 4:5, 20-25; 7:4; 8:2-4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:20-21; Galatians 3:13-14; 5:18; Hebrews 6:1).

- c. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Christian as a new creation, is commanded to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, doing the good works that God prepared beforehand, showing love for Christ through obedience to his commands, and bearing the fruit of the Spirit, that they might bring glory to God (Matthew 5:16; John 14:15, 21; 15:8-11; Romans 6:19-23; 12:1; 2 Corinthians 3:5; 5:17; Galatians 2:20; 5:22-24; Ephesians 2:10; 4:1-3; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-11; 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12; 4:3-8; James 2:18-26; 1 Peter 2:12, 15; 2 Peter 1:5-8; 1 John 2:3-6; 5:2).
- d. The Christian's good works in no way merit righteousness before God but instead are done in worship, in thankfulness, and in faith that God uses them for His good pleasure (Job 9:2-3; Psalm 116:12-14; 143:2; Luke 12:32; 17:7-10; Romans 3:20; 8:28; 12:2; 1 Corinthians 15:10; Galatians 2:15-16; Ephesians 1:5, 11; 2:8-9; Philippians 2:12-13; Titus 3:4-5; Hebrews 13:15-16; 1 Peter 2:5).
- e. The Christian's conscience is to be informed by the Word of God, is to be in submission to the Spirit of God, and is free of the mere doctrines and commandments of men which stand in contradiction to it; in areas not specifically addressed in Scripture, Christians are to respect the liberty of conscience and not cause others to stumble (Isaiah 29:13-14; Matthew 15:7-9; Mark 7:6-7; Acts 4:19; 5:29; Romans 14:1-23; 1 Corinthians 7:23; 8:9-11; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Galatians 5:7-8, 13; Colossians 2:8, 20-23; 1 Timothy 6:20-21; James 4:12).
- f. Those who claim liberty as an excuse to practice unrepentant sin reveal their lack of love for Christ, the absence of the Holy Spirit, their need of spiritual life, and a fearful expectation of judgment (Isaiah 5:20; Matthew 25:41-46; John 3:3-8; 15:4-6; Romans 6:1-2, 15-16; Galatians 2:17-18; Ephesians 2:1-3; Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 1 Peter 2:16; 2 Peter 2:19-21; 1 John 1:6; 2:9-11, 15-16, 19; 3:4-10).

5. Last Things

- a. We believe that death has spread to all mankind due to sin; upon death the body returns to dust and the spirit returns to God: the righteous enter the fullness of the Lord's presence and the wicked enter torment (Genesis 2:7; 3:19; 1 Samuel 2:6; Job 7:7-10; 14:11-14; 34:15; Psalm 39:4; 49:7-9; 89:48; 102:3; 103:14; 104:29; 116:15; Ecclesiastes 3:20; 8:8; 12:7; Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 16:19-23; 23:42-43; Acts 13:36; Romans 5:12; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:21-24; Hebrews 12:23; James 2:26; 4:14; 2 Peter 1:14; Revelation 6:9-11; 7:15-16).
- b. Jesus will come suddenly, visibly, triumphantly, and soon; the dead in Christ will rise first, and then those who are alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so they will always be with the Lord (Matthew 24:44; Mark 13:32-37; 14:62; Luke 12:35-40; 17:20-37; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 35-57; Colossians 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; 5:1-10; 2 Peter 3:9-10; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 3:11).
- c. Jesus is coming to judge the living and the dead, to punish the wicked with conscious eternal destruction in hell and to reward the righteous with crowns and everlasting life (Daniel 12:2-3; Isaiah 26:19-21; Matthew 7:21-23; 8:11-12; 10:28; 12:36-37; 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50; 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28-29; 22:1-14; 23:33; 24:45-51; 25:31-46; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:4-5; 41-48; 13:22-30; 20:34-40; John 5:22-29; 6:39-40; Acts 17:30-31; 24:14-15; Romans 8:10-11; 9:22-23; 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 1:12; 4:12; 2 Peter 3:7; 5:4; Jude 14-15; Revelation 14:9-11; 20:11-15).
- d. Until then, the Christian is called to live faithfully in the sure hope that the Lord will return soon and with the anticipation of beholding the face of God in glory forever (Job 19:26-27; Psalm 11:7; 16:11; 17:15; 27:4; 73:23-25; Isaiah 33:17; Matthew 5:8; John 17:3, 24; Acts 7:55; Romans 8:22-

25; 1 Corinthians 1:4-9; 13:12; 16:22; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 1:5; 1 Timothy 6:13-16; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 6:11-12; 11:1, 6; 12:1-2; James 5:8; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 2 Peter 3:11-18; 1 John 2:25, 28; Jude 24-25; Revelation 22:7, 12, 20).

Historic Creeds

1. The Apostle's Creed

- a. We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
- b. We believe in Jesus Christ, His only-begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended to the dead; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
- c. We believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

2. The Nicene Creed

- a. We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.
- b. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by Whom all things were made. Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended to heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.
- c. And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; Who spoke through the prophets. And we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look forward for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

3. The Athanasian Creed

- a. Whoever desires to be saved should above all hold to the catholic faith. Anyone who does not keep it whole and unbroken will doubtless perish eternally.
- b. Now this is the catholic faith: that we worship one God in Trinity and the Trinity in unity, neither confounding their persons nor dividing the essence. For the person of the Father is a distinct person, the person of the Son is another, and that of the Holy Spirit still another. But the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son and such is the Holy Spirit. The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, the Holy Spirit is uncreated. The Father is immeasurable, the Son is immeasurable, the Holy Spirit is immeasurable. The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, the Holy Spirit is eternal. And yet there are not three eternal beings; there is but one eternal being. So too there are not three uncreated

or immeasurable beings; there is but one uncreated and immeasurable being. Similarly, the Father is almighty, the Son is almighty, the Holy Spirit is almighty. Yet there are not three almighty beings; there is but one almighty being. Thus the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. Yet there are not three gods; there is but one God. Thus the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord. Yet there are not three lords; there is but one Lord. Just as Christian truth compels us to confess each person individually as both God and Lord, so catholic religion forbids us to say that there are three gods or lords. The Father was neither made nor created nor begotten from anyone. The Son was neither made nor created; He was begotten from the Father alone. The Holy Spirit was neither made nor created nor begotten; He proceeds from the Father and the Son. Accordingly, there is one Father, not three fathers; there is one Son, not three sons; there is one Holy Spirit, not three holy spirits. None in this Trinity is before or after, none is greater or smaller; in their entirety the three persons are coeternal and coequal with each other. So in everything, as was said earlier, the unity in Trinity and the Trinity in unity, is to be worshiped. Anyone then who desires to be saved should think thus about the Trinity. But it is necessary for eternal salvation that one also believe in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ faithfully. Now this is the true faith: that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, is both God and man, equally. He is God from the essence of the Father, begotten before time; and He is man from the essence of His mother, born in time; completely God, completely human, with a rational soul and human flesh; equal to the Father as regards divinity, less than the Father as regards humanity. Although He is God and human, yet Christ is not two, but one. He is one, however, not by His divinity being turned into flesh, but by God's taking humanity to himself. He is one, certainly not by the blending of His essence, but by the unity of His person. For just as one man is both rational soul and flesh, so too the one Christ is both God and man. He suffered for our salvation; He descended to Hades; He arose from the dead on the third day; He ascended to heaven; He is seated at the Father's right hand; from there He will come to judge the living and the dead. At His coming all people will arise bodily and give an accounting of their own deeds. Those who have done good will enter eternal life, and those who have done evil will enter eternal fire.

- c. This is the catholic faith: that one cannot be saved without believing it firmly and faithfully.

4. The Chalcedonian Definition

- a. Following the saintly fathers, we all with one voice teach the confession of one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: the same perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and a body; consubstantial with the Father as regards His divinity, and the same consubstantial with us as regards His humanity; like us in all respects except for sin; begotten before the ages from the Father as regards His divinity, and in the last days the same for us and for our salvation from Mary, the virgin God-bearer, as regards His humanity; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, acknowledged in two natures which undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no separation; at no point was the difference between the natures taken away through the union, but rather the property of both natures is preserved and comes together into a single person and a single subsistent being; He is not parted or divided into two persons, but is one and the same only-begotten Son, God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ, just as the prophets taught from the beginning about Him, and as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself instructed us, and as the creed of the fathers handed it down to us.