



THE WAY

STATEMENT OF FAITH

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The Scriptures

We believe the Bible is God's special revelation of Himself to humanity. Although written by individuals who retained their own individual personalities, these individuals were superintended or moved by the Holy Spirit making the scripture error-free in the original autographs. (2 Pet 1:19-21) Being God-authored, we believe Scripture to be safe, trustworthy, sure, reliable, revealing, and applicable in all of its content for all matters of faith and practice. (Matt 5:17-18, John 10:35; 16:12-15) We affirm the belief that all scripture is inspired by God or God-breathed, and is the authoritative and supreme standard for the life of individuals as well as the Church. (2 Tim 3:16, James 1:19-27)

Triune God (The Father, Son, Holy Spirit)

We believe there is one God eternally existing (Gen 1:1, 2 Pet 3:8) in three persons (Gen 1:26; 11:7, 2 Cor 13:14, Matt 3:16-17; 28:19-20); the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as commonly referred to as the Trinity. These persons are of the same nature and each is fully God. (John 14:7-11) They exist in a relationship of mutual love (John 3:35), glory (John 17:5, 16:14) and honor (John 5:23) with one another.

We believe that God the Father reigns in providential care over His universe, creatures, and history for the purpose of His divine plan. (Eph 1:3-14, Acts 17:24-29) He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, intelligent, and personal. Furthermore, He reveals in most perfect clarity what it means to be holy, just, truthful, merciful, gracious, and loving and He is the standard by which we are to measure our definitions of such attributes. Although His existence is assumed from the very first line of Scripture, (Gen 1:1) He has made Himself known in creation, (Psalm 19, Rom 1:18-23) in the written Word (Psalm 19) and most expressly in the Living Word, Jesus Christ. (Matthew 3: 16-17; 1 John 5:1-5, Col 1:15-20,)

We believe Jesus Christ (1 Tim 3:16) is fully God (John 1:1, John 8:58, Col 1:15-19, Heb 1:3, Phil 2:6-11) and fully man. (John 1:14, Phil 2:6-11) In His humanity, He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born (Matt 1:20) of the Virgin Mary (Matt 1:23, Luke 1:34-35, Isa 7:14-16), and lived a sinless life. (Heb 4:15, Gal 3:13, 4:4) In death, (Mark 15:42-47) He was an atoning sacrifice for our sins (Rom 3:25, 5:19, 1 John 2:2, 4:10, Heb 1:3) and in His resurrection, He was victorious over death. (1 Cor 15:42-46), He has ascended into Heaven (Acts 1:6-11) where he now intercedes for His people as an eternal high priest (Heb 7:23-25) and from where he will return bodily and visibly to earth. (Acts 1:11, Rev 1:7)

We believe the Holy Spirit is equal in essence with the Father and Son and is Himself fully divine. (Gen 1:2, 2 Cor 13:14) He proceeds from the Father and the Son (John 14:26, 15:26, 16:7, Gal 4:6) to regenerate, (Titus 3:5, John 3:3-7, 1 Pet 1:23) indwell, (Rom 8:9, John 14:16-20, 1 John 3:24) and comfort believers. (John 16:1-7) He is active to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (John 16:8-11) He cultivates Christian character, (Eph 5:18) grants spiritual gifts, (1 Cor 12:11) and baptizes or identifies each believer at the time of salvation into the body of Christ. (1 Cor 12:13, Acts 10:44-47, Gal 3:27) The Holy Spirit also conforms and makes possible daily communion and fellowship with Christ, those who in daily obedience submit to His filling. (Eph 5:18, John 14:26, John 16:3, Rom 8:26, Acts 2:4, 2 Cor 3:18) Moreover, He seals believers for the final day of redemption. (2 Cor 1:22, Eph 1:13, 4:30)

Humanity

We believe humanity to be the special and deliberate creation of the Triune God. (Gen 1:26-30, 2:5-7) Male and female alike were made in God's image. (Gen 1:26-30) Original male and female were free from sin but able to sin. (Gen 1:31) This freedom of choice, we believe to be an endowment from God Himself. In their freedom of choice, the first male and female rebelled against God and began a personal and perpetual journey of sin, as seen in the fallen condition of the entire human race. (Gen 3, Matt 15:19-20, Luke 6:45, Rom 1:19-32) All humanity is now born with a sinful nature and apart from God's intervention, is destined to a life of rebellion and an eternity of separation from God. (Rom 5:12-21, Col 1:21) The result of man's rebellion has affected every part of every person and the image of God in man is now effaced and marred; yet, not erased or destroyed. (Gen 1:26-30, 5:1-5, 9:6, Psalm 8, James 3:9) God has made possible the renewal of His image (Rom 8:29, 1 Cor 15:49, 2 Cor 3:18, Col 3:10, Acts 17:26-30) in humanity, the restoration of His relationship with humanity, and the redemption of His people through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Salvation

We believe salvation to be the gracious and merciful work of God to save depraved humanity (Jer 17:9, Eze 11:19, Psalm 51, Matt 12:33-35, Rom 3:9-23, 7:18, Eph 2:3, 2 Pet 3:9) from the penalty (Justification), power (Sanctification) and presence (Glorification) of sin. He is both the author and finisher of salvation; as well as the one who initiates it and brings it to completion. (John 6:44-65, John 6:44, 2 Tim 2:10) Man is wholly incapable of earning, meriting, or attaining salvation through the means of good works or religious exercise. (John 1:12-13, Eph 2:8-9) Nevertheless, this redemptive work of God is accomplished neither by eradicating the free will and responsibility of man (Gen 3:8-10, Deut 30:19-20, Josh 24:15, Isa 1:18-19, Isa 65:2-12, John 5:39-40, John 7:17, Matt 23:37-38, Acts 7:51) nor by making God the author of sin. (James 1:13-14) There is no salvation apart from personal repentance and faith in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 3:1, Mark 1:14-15, Luke 9:31-32, Luke 13:3-5, Acts 20:21, 2 Cor 7:10, John 1:12, 3:16, 36) and the exercise of this faith we believe not to be a meritorious act of goodness but rather a God enabled response to the Gospel. (Rom 4:1-5) We recognize the mysterious relationship of God's sovereignty and man's freedom as a relationship of tension and embrace it with a large measure of humility. (Psalm 25:4-6) We believe the measure of freedom given to man not to be an omission of God's sovereignty but rather an expression of His sovereignty.

We believe those accepted in Christ through genuine faith and repentance are assured of their position in Christ through the indwelling witness of the Holy Spirit and will persevere until the end. (Rom 8:38-39, John 6:39, 10:28-29) We affirm the words of Jesus, that no one can come to Christ unless the Father draws them (John 6:44) but equally embrace the reality that one must count the cost of following Christ (Matthew 8:19-22; Luke 14:26-33), believe on Jesus, (Acts 16:31) and confess Him as Lord (Romans 10:9).

The Church

We believe the Church is made up of a body of regenerated, diverse (Eph 4:7-11), and unified (Eph 4:1-6) believers operating under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, (Col 1:18, Eph 1:22-23) for the purpose of glorifying God. We believe the Church is to engage in common fellowship with one another, exercise their gifts for the building up of the body (Rom 12:5, 1 Pet 4:8, Rom 12:10, 1 Thes 5:11, Heb 3:13, Rom 14:19,

James 5:16, 1 Cor 12:26, Col 3:13) and be wholly committed to the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) through both local evangelism and global mission. All efforts should be motivated by genuine love for God and for man. (Matt 22:34-40) We believe the local church should possess an environment where sacrificial giving, redemptive discipline, and biblical order are encouraged and exercised.

Ordinances/Discipline

We believe two ordinances were instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ; Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe the act of engaging in these ordinances is an expression of obedience with deep symbolic value rather than vehicles of grace. We believe baptism is the immersion of the believer in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, signifying a believer's death to sin and resurrection to new life as a result of faith in and obedience toward the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord's Supper is to be observed regularly to remember the Lord's sacrificial death for His people and to anticipate His return (Matthew 4:16,17; Mark 14:22-25; Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34).

Furthermore, we believe engaging in the Lord's Supper creates an environment of healthy evaluation and creates an opportunity for necessary confession in the life of individual believers and the body as a whole.

This attitude of obedience and confession we believe is necessary in the life of the Church and is further solidified through engaging in redemptive discipline when necessary. (Matt 18:15-17, Luke 17:3, 1 Tim 2:1, 3:7, 1 John 5:16, 2 Thes 3:14-15)

Order

We believe there are two biblical offices in the Church; Elders and Deacons.

The Scriptures show the Elders "serve by leading" and their responsibility involves the spiritual oversight of the congregation. All Elders are equal in authority but not necessarily equal in influence or gifting.

Scripture teaches a plurality of elders governed individual New Testament churches (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5; Philippians 1:1). Scripture does not seem to mention any congregations featuring a stand-alone pastor and leader. A plurality of godly elders, exercising their individual giftedness, squares with the Scripture's teaching that wisdom is found in a multitude of godly counselors (Proverbs 11:14; Proverbs 12:15; Proverbs 15:22; Proverbs 19:20; Proverbs 24:6.). This truth does not eliminate the possibility and likelihood that one or more elders will stand out from the others as more public in their ministries or more influential in their efforts.

The Bible teaches that Deacons "lead by serving" (Acts 6). The qualifications for Elders and Deacons are the same regarding an individual's character, but they differ in aptitude. For instance, the elders are to be "able to teach" while the deacons are to be "able and proved as servants."

Elders are assisted in both spiritual and practical areas by the Deacons who are called to be servants of the body. The primary function of the Deacon is to serve the congregation in practical ways as established in Acts 6. In keeping with the order established in the family (Gen 1-2), these offices are to be held by men who meet the qualifications as presented in Scripture. (Acts 20, 1 Tim 3, Titus 1, 1 Peter 5)

Missions

We believe it is the aim, duty, and privilege of every believer and local church fellowship to glorify God by responding as active participants in the Great Commission call of Jesus Christ to go and make disciples of all nations. As stated in the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Marriage

We believe marriage is a monogamous, heterosexual union instituted and ordained by God (Genesis 2:18-25; Ephesians 5:22-33). As such, it is to be an exclusive covenantal union of one man and one woman for the purpose of a lifetime of mutual commitment and companionship. A civil government's sanction of a union will be recognized as a legitimate marriage by this church only to the extent that it is consistent with this belief. Accordingly, this Church, its Elders, staff, and members will not officiate in same-sex unions or "same-sex marriages,"* nor shall its property or resources be used for such purposes. Every pastor, staff member, and church member by virtue of their membership affirms their agreement with this Article and agrees to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with this belief. Genesis 2:18-24; Ephesians 5:22-31; 1 Corinthians 6:9, Leviticus 20:13; and Romans 1:26-27.

*This phrase is used as a legal term. However biblically, the phrase "same-sex marriage" refers to a concept that does not exist. The following scripture supports our belief:

- Genesis 2:18, 20-21, 23-24
- Romans 7:2
- Leviticus 18:6-19, 20-30
- I Corinthians 7:10
- Malachi 3:6
- Ephesians 5:22-28
- Mark 10:6-9
- Hebrew 13:4
- Matthew 19:4-6

Biblical Sexuality

Our church embraces the position statement on biblical sexuality which can be read in its entirety in Appendix A.

Last Things

In his own time and way, God will bring the world to its appropriate end. Jesus Christ will return to the earth bodily and visibly in glory, the bodies of the dead will be raised, and Christ will judge all people in

righteousness. The unrighteous, along with the Devil and his demons, will be consigned to hell, the place of eternal punishment and torment. The righteous, in their glorified bodies, will receive their reward and will forever dwell, along with the elect angels, in the glory of heaven with the Lord. (Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 15; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10; 2 Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; Revelation 20:4–6, 11–15)