

# Statement of Faith



# The Scriptures

The Scriptures are God's written communication to man. They are inspired by the Holy Spirit in their entirety and are not merely man's opinion, even though men were God's means of recording the holy message (1 Peter 1:20–21; 1 Corinthians 14:37; 2 Timothy 3:16). Having been inspired by God, the Scriptures are reliable and authoritative. They are to be considered the complete and final authority for all matters of Christian doctrine and practice (Psalm 119:105; Matthew. 4:4; Psalm 119:9).

Because the Bible is God's Word to us, we live by it. Jesus said, "... it is written, 'man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:4). We preach it. We teach it. We urge every member of the church to read it, to study it, to memorize it, meditate on it and most of all, to obey it. Because the Bible is God-breathed, it is a spiritual book. And since it is a spiritual book, we need the help of the Holy Spirit to understand it. The Holy Spirit is the illuminator Who teaches, guides and enlightens God's Word to the understanding of the believer (John 14:26, 16:23; 1 Corinthians 2:10–12, 15–16; 1 John 2:27).

# The Father

The one and only true God has revealed Himself in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father, as the first person of the Trinity, is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Matthew 3:17) and is the Father of all who trust in the Lord Jesus (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 2:19, 5:1). He is also the Father of all creation (Ephesians 3:14–15; Malachi 2:10; Acts 17:29;

1 Corinthians 8:6). Therefore, all that has been created, alive and lifeless, share a common origin in God the Father. The Father's attributes are many and are also shared by the Son and the Holy Spirit. Some of these attributes are that He is eternal (Deuteronomy 33:27; Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 57:15); He is Spirit (John 4:24); He is love (1 John 4:8, 16); He is changeless (Psalm 102:7; Malachi 3:6); He knows everything (Hebrews 4:13); He is all powerful (Jeremiah 32:17, 23); He is always present (Psalm 139:7–12).

# Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, is fully God and fully human (John 1:14; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:3, 8–9, 2:14–17; John 1:1, 5:18, 8:58, 10:30, 20:28–29). He was born of the Virgin Mary, according to biblical prophecy, yet He existed from all eternity with God the Father (Isaiah 9:6–7; Matthew 1:18–25; John 1:1; Micah 5:2). Jesus, God's only begotten Son, was sent by His Father to die a substitutionary death for humanity's sin and thus become the means by which people could enter into an eternal relationship with the holy God (John

3:16, 1:12; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18). Through His resurrection from the dead He demonstrated His power over sin and death. His resurrection, testified to by over 500 eye witnesses, is the cornerstone of Christian faith, for "if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:5–8, 14, 17).

By virtue of His death for our sins and His resurrection from death, Jesus was given "all authority in Heaven and Earth ..." (Matthew 28:18). As such, Jesus is Lord of all Heaven and Earth, and Lord of the Church, His Body. Those who entrust their lives to Jesus Christ, surrender to Him as Lord.

# The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is fully God, as are the Father and Jesus, the Son (Acts 5:3,4; compare Isaiah 6:8–9 with Acts 28:25–26 and Jeremiah 31:31–34 with Hebrews 10:15–17). It is the Holy Spirit Who is active in convicting sinners of their need for Christ (John 16:8–11). It is He Who brings about spiritual birth (regeneration) (John 3:5–8). It is the Holy Spirit Who baptizes the believer into the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13),

indwells and seals the believer (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13, 4:30), fills the believer (Ephesians 5:18; Acts 2:4, 4:8, 31), guides the Christian into all truth (John 16:13), comforts (John 14:16–17, 16:7), teaches (John 14:26), intercedes in prayer, (Romans 8:26) and leads the believer (Galatians 5:18; Romans 8:14; Acts 8:29; 10:19–20). Jesus told His disciples that it was to their advantage that He return to the Father because the Holy Spirit would be sent (John 16:7). The Holy Spirit, therefore, is not a second-rate compensation to the believer, but He is the full presence of God dwelling within.

# The Church

The Church, both the universal and the local, is comprised of those who have entered into a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2, 12:12–13; Galatians 1:2; Acts 2:41; Philippians 1:1). Jesus Christ, having died for the Church, saving her from the penalty of sin, is the Head. As a result, the Church is to be subject to His bidding (Ephesians 5:23–25). The mission of the Church is to go into all the world and make disciples (Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 1:8). This disciple-making process includes evangelism, grounding the disciple in the faith and discipling him to the point of becoming one who evangelizes and discipled others (Acts 1:8, 2:42; Colossians 1:28–29, 2:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8, 11; 2 Timothy 2:2; Ephesians 4:11–18). Elements which should characterize the local Church are worship (Acts 2:47; 1 Corinthians 14:26), fellowship (Acts 2:42–47; Hebrews 10:24–25),

evangelism (Acts 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5), prayer (Acts 2:42; 1 Thessalonians 5:17), service (Galatians 5:13–14, Ephesians 4:11–12), observing the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:14–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–39) and baptism (Acts 2:41; Romans 6:3–4; Matthew 28:18–20).

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic remembrance of the Lord's death on our behalf; recognizing His broken body and His shed blood (1 Corinthians 11:23–26).

Baptism is a symbol of the believer's sharing in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ and is a pledge which publicly identifies the believer with Christ (Romans 6:3–4; 1 Peter 3:21). In accordance with New Testament practice, we baptize only those who have already made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:41). We also baptize by immersion, which not only agrees with the meaning of the word "baptize" ("to dip"), but also with the symbolic meaning of baptism (Romans 6:1–4).

# Salvation

Salvation is God's work on behalf of man to rescue him from sin, making possible eternal life (Jonah 2:9; Titus 2:11, 14; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; John 3:16). This salvation is granted by God to all those who place their faith in Jesus Christ, accepting His sacrificial death on the cross as their own right standing with God (Romans 5:1; John 3:16, 36, 14:6; 1 Corinthians 15:1–4; Hebrews 10:1–18). Salvation is granted by faith alone. Religious or moral good works are not

a means of earning or adding to salvation (Romans 5:1, 8:1; John 6:28–29; Ephesians 2:8–9; Titus 3:5). One who has been born of God need not fear death, for eternal life is God's personal promise. The fourfold basis for a believer's security of eternal life is faith (John 3:16; Romans 5:1, 8:1), the fruit of a changed life (James 2:14, 17, 20; Titus 2:14; 1 John 3:7–10; Galatians 5:19–21), the promise of God's Word (John 5:24, 10:27–29; Romans 8:1; 1 John 5:11–13) and the witness of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14–16; John 14:16–17, 26).

# Man

Man is the unique creation of God, bearing His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26–27) and has been given stewardship over all of God’s earthly creation (Genesis 1:28). God has demonstrated His tremendous love for people by giving His only Son to die a sacrificial death on their behalf (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 3:18). People consist of an outward, material part, as well as inward, immaterial parts (2 Corinthians 4:16; Romans 7:14–25; Galatians 5:16). Although a person is indivisible, various terms are used to describe different areas or perspectives of a person, including flesh (Galatians 5:16; Romans 7:14, 18), spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 4:12), soul (1 Thessalonians 5:23; James 1:21), mind (Romans 1:28, 7:23; Titus 1:15), conscience

(Acts 23:1, 1 Timothy 3:9, 4:2), and heart (Psalm 37:4; Ephesians 3:17).

A tendency toward sin is part of every person’s nature (Romans 5:19; Ephesians 2:3). The unregenerate person is unable to seek God or do any untainted good (Psalm 53:1–3; Ephesians 2:3; Romans 3:10–18). He is under the condemnation of God (John 3:36; Hebrews 3:18–19). But, when God draws a person to Himself, opening his or her eyes to sin, righteousness and judgment, and giving the grace of faith, the person then is given the ability to choose to believe in and follow God by faith in Jesus Christ (John 6:40, 44, 16:8; Ephesians 2:8–10). The person who places his or her faith in Jesus Christ receives a new nature with the capacity to do good and please God by faith (2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 3:9–10; Hebrews 11:6; Ephesians 2:8–10; Titus 2:14).

# Sin

Sin is any lack of conformity to God’s perfection (Isaiah 55:8–9; Romans 3:23). It is seen as turning from God’s Law (Romans 3:10–23; 1 John 3:4), active rebellion (Isaiah 53:6; Romans 1:21), passive indifference (James 4:17), intentional (Isaiah 53:6; Romans 1:21) and unintentional (Leviticus 4:2, 15:1–12; Numbers 15:27). Sin is engrained in the nature of every human (Romans 5:19; Ephesians 2:3; Romans 3:10–23) and has marked all of the physical creation (Genesis 3:17–18; Romans 8:19–22) as well as fallen angels (Isaiah 14:12–14; Ezekiel 28:14–15;

Revelation 12:7–9). Sin results in physical death (Genesis 2:16–17, 3:19; Romans 5:12) as well as spiritual death (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1). Jesus Christ, by virtue of His resurrection and power over sin and death (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, 22–23), gives to all those who trust in Him that same power over sin and the certainty of eternal life (1 Corinthians 15:52; Galatians 5:16; Romans 8:2–4; 1 John 5:11–13). In this life, however, the tendency toward sin is never totally eradicated (Romans 7:14–25, 8:5–8; 1 John 1:8–2:1). Those who die in sin will face all of eternity separated from God in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:15; Matthew 25:41, 46; 2 Thessalonians 1:9).

# Satan

Satan is a fallen angel, cast down from God’s Heaven because of his sin in seeking to usurp God’s rightful position of authority (Isaiah 14:13–15; Ezekiel 28:14–18). Titles assigned to him in Scripture reveal some of his work: accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10), adversary of Christians (1 Peter 5:8), murderer (John 8:44), ruler of demons (Matthew 12:24), ruler of the world (John 14:30), evil one (Matthew 13:19). The unbelieving are his children

(Acts 13:10; 1 John 3:10). He blinds (2 Corinthians 4:4) and deceives the wicked (Revelation 20:7–8) who will be eternally punished with him (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10, 15). The believer is able to resist and overcome Satan as he makes use of God-given means (Ephesians 6:11–16; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9; 1 John 2:13; Revelation 12:11). Demons are under Satan’s direction (Matthew 12:24, 27, 25:41). They were a part of Satan’s army of revolution against God (2 Peter 2:4; Matthew 25:41) and share in the destructive work of Satan (Matthew 8:29; Mark 1:23–26; Luke 13:16; Genesis 3:1–6).

# The Future

Jesus Christ will return to this Earth personally, visibly, on the clouds, suddenly and unexpectedly, at a time known only to the Father (Matthew 24:27, 30, 37–44). Upon His return, He will raise the dead in Christ and gather all His people to meet Him in the air and to enjoy His presence forever (1 Corinthians 15:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:1). The promise of the return of Jesus is to serve as a constant motivation for the Christian to be pure and obedient; fulfilling the Lord's will (Matthew 24:42–25:30; 1 John 3:2–3; 1 Peter 3:11–12; 1 Corinthians 15:58). Jesus' return will reveal His lordship to the world. It will be the means by which all evil shall be destroyed and the world subjected to Him as Lord (Philippians 2:10–11; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 19:20–21, 21:10).

This kingdom will then be delivered to God the Father that He may be "all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:24–28). Those who have trusted in the finished work of Jesus Christ for their salvation will enjoy the presence of God forever and will be judged according to the stewardship of their lives (Revelation 21:3; 1 John 5:1–13; John 3:16; Romans 2:6–7, 10; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:12–15). Those receiving the reward of the presence of God will be bestowed with a resurrection body which is imperishable, glorious, powerful and spiritual (1 Corinthians 15:42–54). People who have rejected God's loving and free offer of a relationship with Himself will face judgment and be expelled from His presence for all eternity in the Lake of Fire, with the devil and his demons (2 Thessalonians 1:8–9; John 3:36; Romans 2:5–6, 8–9, 11–16; Revelation 20:10–15).

## Marriage

Marriage is ordained by God. It is the union of one man and one woman until death separates them. The only exception to death separating a husband and wife was given by Jesus, "except for sexual immorality" (Matthew 5:32; 19:9). The Apostle Paul, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says that if a married couple divorces (apart from sexual immorality) they must remain single or reconcile their marriage to one another (1 Corinthians 7:10–11). Marriage was first instituted by God in the early chapters of Genesis and codified in the Levitical law. The Old Testament prophets compared it to a relationship between God and His people. Examples of it abound in the Scriptures, including the unique unity of this relationship. Jesus explained the original intention and core elements of marriage, and several New Testament epistles give explicit instructions on this union. Marriage is a typology of Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:22–33). As such, the Church views marriage as a profound spiritual institution established by God. Due to the importance of marriage, this church adopts the following practices:

### Clergy

1. Only duly ordained or licensed clergy and lay ministers shall officiate at marriage ceremonies conducted on church property.
2. Clergy employed by the church and lay ministers shall be subject to dismissal and/or loss of licensing and/or ordination for officiating or participating in a same-gender marriage ceremony.

### Applicants

1. Applicants wishing to have a ceremony performed by a member of the clergy employed by the church or lay minister, or to use the church facilities, shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.
2. Applicants shall complete a premarital training course as prescribed by the church. This instruction will be given by clergy or counselors appointed by the church or other persons who, in the sole opinion of the pastoral staff of the church, have appropriate training, experience and spiritual understanding to provide such counseling.

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## Marriage, continued

### Premises

1. Any marriage performed on church premises shall be officiated by a member of the clergy or church-licensed lay minister.
2. Clergy or lay ministers officiating marriage ceremonies on church premises, whether or not employed by the church, shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.
3. The clergy or lay minister assigned by the church to implement the procedures contained in this marriage policy may, in his sole discretion,

decline to make church facilities available for, and/or decline to officiate at, a ceremony when, in his judgment, there are significant concerns that one or both of the applicants may not be qualified to enter into the sacred bond of marriage for theological, doctrinal, moral or legal reasons. Marriage has been established by God. This church defines marriage as the exclusive covenantal union of one man and one woman in which such union is a lifetime commitment. A civil government's sanction of a union will be recognized as a legitimate marriage by the church only to the extent that it is consistent with the definition of marriage found in this statement of faith.

## Human Sexuality

God created sex when He created man and woman. Therefore sex is good and holy and right. We believe God creates male and female at birth and this creation dictates his or her sexuality. (Genesis 1:27, 1:31; Psalm 139:14). God created a process by which one man and one woman become married and enjoy marital intimacy (Genesis 2:24–25, cf. Matthew 19:5, Mark 10:7–8, Ephesians 5:31).

Scripture gives several reasons for sexual intimacy:

1. Oneness (Genesis 2:24)
2. Children (Genesis 1:28)
3. Pleasure (Song of Songs)
4. Comfort (2 Samuel 12:24)
5. Protection (1 Corinthians 7:2–5)

Because of the biblical message, legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely within heterosexual marriage. Hence, sexual activities outside of

heterosexual marriage (referred to in the New Testament as “porneia”—πορνεία) including but not limited to, adultery, homosexuality, premarital sex, bisexuality, bestiality, pedophilia, lust, cybersex, phone sex and any other sexual expression that is not solely between a husband and wife are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the Church. Further, lascivious conduct, transgender behavior, and the creation and/or viewing of pornography, are incompatible with the biblical witness.

In our rebellion and sin, we can take anything God created and use it for our own self-worship and idolatry. Sex is no exception; God created something beautiful to be enjoyed between one man and one woman for one lifetime, and we have found countless ways of distorting it by having sex apart from marriage, apart from love, and apart from the way God crafted us as male and female. Sexual desire is not to be killed, but rather directed toward one-man, one-woman marriage.