

## STATEMENT OF FAITH

**Who we are:** More than who WE are, the description of our church must be centered on who GOD is. We are a church who believes that our own personal stories and experiences as individuals and as a community make sense only when we see ourselves in light of God's story. This is a story that begins with creation, is complicated by the rebellion of humanity, and culminates with Jesus Christ the God-man who died that we might be initiated into the reality of what it really means to be human. It is a story of freedom and the creation of a new community – a community reconciled to God and to one another. And the hero of the story is God!

Who is God? Perhaps the better question is: "Who is God and what do we have to do with Him?" We believe that the God of the Bible can be known because He has revealed Himself both historically and relationally. In fact, it is the Bible that allows us to know who God is. Biblical, Christ-centered teaching is one of our passions.

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### On the Scriptures

We believe in the infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible and that it is God's perfect and trustworthy revelation of his character and will to mankind. It was written by the hand of men under the perfect inspiration of the Holy Spirit and is ultimately a testimony of Christ.

### On the One True God

We believe there is only one living and true God who is the infinite and intelligent Creator and Ruler of everything which exists and has chosen to reveal himself in the Trinitarian understanding of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. He alone is worthy of all honor and praise from mankind.

God as Father is all wise and providentially cares for his universe. He is fatherly toward all people but is Father in truth only to those who become his children through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

God as Son is Jesus Christ who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He was fully God and fully human. He took upon himself the form of humanity yet without sin. After living a perfect life, he died a substitutionary death on the cross to provide redemption. After his bodily resurrection, he appeared to people for forty days and then ascended into heaven to serve as the Mediator and Intercessor for his people. At the Father's initiation, the Son will return to earth to judge the world and bring to consummation his redemptive mission to all of creation.

God as the Holy Spirit is the divine Spirit of God that was active in creation. He was the person of the Trinity responsible for inspiring men to write the Bible. He now works to convict people of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He illuminates truth in order to call the elect to salvation and then effects regeneration within them. At the moment of salvation, he baptizes believers into the Body of Christ, indwells them, and seals them in salvation as a down payment of the future fullness of their relationship with God. His presence in a Christian enables them to grow in their faith and understanding of the work and will of God.

### On the Nature of People

We believe that people are the special creation of God, made in God's own image in a state of innocence with moral responsibility. Adam's choice to sin has brought sin into the human race and marred the image of God in us. All people are born in sin and now stand under the wrath of God's punishment.

### **On Salvation**

We believe that salvation is only by the grace of God and is necessary for every person since we are all affected by sin. Salvation comes only by Jesus Christ who freely took upon the form of man, yet without sin; lived a perfect life; and became the sacrifice for man's sin by his death. After having been risen from the dead, he ascended to his throne in heaven. Once a person is regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit, they can repent and place their faith in Christ and be transformed by God's saving power. Then a person is freed from the guilt of sin, released from darkness into life, placed into a friendship with Christ, made a new creation, indwelt and baptized by the Holy Spirit, renewed in the image of Christ, and given the gift of eternal life.

### **On God's Purposes of Grace**

We believe that election is the gracious purpose of God, by which He effectually calls, regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies his people. It is consistent with the free agency of man. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. Though people may neglect their salvation by sinful actions and impair the graces of God toward them, all the redeemed will endure to the end because they are kept by the power of God in salvation throughout eternity.

### **On the Church**

We believe that the church is local group of baptized believers who join their lives together by a covenant of belief and practice with Christ as their Lord. They observe the two ordinances of Christ, which are baptism and the Lord's Supper. The church is governed by the Scriptures and shares the Gospel with the world. Each local church is to operate under the Lordship of Christ with pastors/elders guiding the people toward faithfulness to Christ. The office of pastor/elder is limited to men as qualified by the Scriptures. The church is to implement discipline among its membership as outlined in the Scriptures with the hope of repentance on the part of believers who have given in to sinful actions.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all ages and all nations. Ultimately, the church is God's missionary to the world.

### **On Mission**

We believe it is the gracious gift of God that He assigns every follower of Christ the duty to share the message of salvation and make disciples of all nations. In order for that work to be done, all Christians are to mature in their understanding of God and practice of their beliefs through spiritual growth and formation. It is the work of Christ to save people from their sin and that work continues through transforming the redeemed into his image. Christ expressly commanded that the church and its members are to serve as a witness in their life and words as to the grace of Christ offered by His sacrificial death for sin. This work is to be done in a culturally relevant fashion by imaginative pioneering methods with the Scriptures as the guide for its content and method. A further element of missional living is the willingness on the part of believers to give of their finances in a cheerful and generous fashion to finance the work of the church in its ministries locally and globally.

### **On the Gifts of the Spirit**

The Holy Spirit chooses how to gift all believers in a supernatural manner to enable them to edify the church and evangelize those yet to be saved in such a way that believers remain in control of their faculties and operate within the bounds of scriptural mandates. All gifts are available today and are to be used in an orderly fashion and under the guidance of the Spirit and the leaders of the church.

### **On Last Things**

We believe that the end of the world will occur at a time known only to God. According to his promise, Jesus Christ will return bodily to the earth to raise the dead and judge all men by His righteous standard. There will be an eternal separation of those without Christ to hell, the place of real and eternal punishment, and the saved to endless joy in a perfect place of fellowship with God. The Bible teaches that believers are to live as if the time of Christ's return could be at any moment.

### **On the Family**

God has chosen the family as the foundation of culture and as a portrait of His relationship to the church. Marriage is defined by God as a lifetime covenant between one man and one woman in which there is mutual submission to one another. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and the wife is to lovingly submit to the leadership of the husband as the church does to Christ. Parents are to nurture their children by teaching them the truths of the Bible and modeling a loving relationship with their Lord and one another.