

# What We Believe

## **The Bible**

The sole basis of our belief is the Bible, composed of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament. We believe that Scripture originated entirely from God and that it was given through writers inspired by God. Scripture speaks with the authority of God, and yet at the same time, reflects the backgrounds, styles and vocabularies of the human authors. The Scriptures are presented exactly as God intended and without error in the original manuscripts. They are the unique, full, and final authority on all matters of faith and practice and there are no other writings similarly given by God. (Ps 19:7-11; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:20-21; Rev 22:18-19)

## **God**

We believe that there is only one true, holy God, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—each of whom possesses equally all the attributes of deity and the characteristics of personality. In the beginning, God created the world and all things therein out of nothing, thus manifesting the glory of His power, wisdom, and goodness. By His sovereign power He continues to sustain His creation. By His providence—His loving and caring guidance—God operates throughout time to fulfill His redemptive purposes. (Gen 1-2; 45:4-8; 50:19-20; Deut 6:4; 1 Chron 29:10-12; John 1:1-3; 10:30; Acts 5:3-4; Rom 8:28; Col 1:15-20)

## **Salvation**

The central purpose of God's plan in history is to break people from Satan's grasp and call them into fellowship with Him. The human race was originally created to have fellowship with God but through Adam and Eve, humanity defied God, choosing to be independent, and was thus alienated from Him. The consequence of this rebellion from God is the corruption of human nature, so that people are not acceptable to Him. Such separation from God produces people who are self-centered, without purpose and who ultimately will be separated from Him for eternity. This separation and its consequences impact all individuals and means all are in need of the saving grace of God. The salvation of any person is wholly a work of God's free grace. Salvation is never the result, in whole or in part, of human works or goodness. Salvation is personally realized when one repents from sin and accepts, through faith alone, Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. When God begins a saving work in the heart of any person, He gives assurance in His Word that He will continue performing it until the day of its full consummation. (Gen 3:1-24; Luke 24:25-27; John 6:37, 39, 44, 65; 10:27-29; 11:25-26; Acts 2:38; 13:48; Rom 1:18-32; 3:10-18, 22-24, 28; 26:23; 8:28-30; 10:9-10; Eph 1:4-5, 11; 2:1-10; Phil 1:6; 2:13; Heb 13:5-6; James 1:18; 1 Pet 1:3-5)

## **Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is the eternal second person of the Godhead—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He was united with a true human nature by a miraculous conception and virgin birth. He lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father and voluntarily made amends for the sins of people, making possible a right relationship with God. He died on the cross as a substitute for sinful mankind,

thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him alone. Jesus rose from the dead in the same body, now glorified, in which He lived and died. He ascended into heaven, where He, as mediator, continually intercedes with God the Father for His own—those who have received salvation. Because Jesus is alive believers are able to have a personal, interactive relationship with him at any moment. Jesus shall come again to earth, personally and visibly, to bring history and the eternal plan of God to completion. (Matt 1:18-25; 24:30-31; 28:20; John 1:1-18; 3:16; 8:57-58; 14:6; 20:26-27; Acts 1:9-11; Rom 5:8; 1 Cor 15:14, 20; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 4:4-5; Phil 2:5-11; 1 Thes 4:14, 16-17; 1 Tim 2:5-6; Titus 2:13-15; Heb 1:3; 7:24-25; 8:1; 10:5-10; Rev 19:11-16)

### **Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is an equal of God the Father and Jesus the Son (an equal part of the Trinity). The Holy Spirit works in the world to make all people understand their need for Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Jesus Christ and that He is our abiding Helper, Teacher, and Guide. We believe in the filling or empowering of the Holy Spirit, often a conscious experience, for ministry today. We believe in the present ministry of the Spirit and in the exercise of all of the biblical gifts of the Spirit. We practice the laying on of hands for the empowering of the Spirit, for healing, and for recognition and empowering of those whom God has ordained to lead and serve the Church. (John 3:5-8; 14:16-17; 16:8-11, 13-15; Acts 1:8; Rom 5:5; 8:9-11; 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12; 2 Cor 1:21-22; 3:18; Eph 1:13; 4:4-6, 11-13, 30; Gal 5:16-22; 1 John 3:22-24; Titus 3:5-7)

### **Destiny**

After death, or when Jesus returns, all people will experience a resurrection of the body and a judgment that will determine their fate. All who have personally accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior will be received into eternal communion with God. He will establish a New Heaven and New Earth where believers will be with God forever. All who have rejected Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior will be separated from God in hell. (Matt 10:28; Matt 25:31-46; John 6:40; Rom 8:1-3; 1 Cor. 15; Phil 3:20-21; Heb 9:27; 2 Pet 2:4-9; Rev 20:11-15; Rev 21-22)

### **Church**

The result of union with Jesus Christ is that all believers become members of His body, the church. The one true church is composed of all those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Wherever God's people meet regularly, there is the local expression of the church. Under the watchful care of elders, pastors and other supportive leadership, its members are to work together in love and unity, intent on the ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ and spreading His Kingdom. The Scripture commands believers to gather in order to worship, pray, fellowship, teach, give, observe baptism and communion, serve within the body, and to reach out to the world through social justice, cultural impact and evangelism. (Matt 16:16-19; 25:14-30; 31-46; 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; John 13:34-35; 17:20-21; Acts 1:8; 2:42-47; 20:28; 1 Cor 11:23-28; 12:4-6, 12-13; Col 1:18-20; Eph 4:11-13; Phil 2:1-4; 1 Pet 2:4-10; 5:1-4; Heb 10:23-25; Rev 7:9-12)

## **Faith & Practice**

Scripture is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. The church recognizes that it cannot bind the conscience of individual members in an area where Scripture is silent. Rather, in these areas each believer should seek the wise counsel of others in the church and then be led by the Lord, to whom he or she is ultimately responsible. (Rom 8:1-4; Gal 5:1; Phil 2:12)

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Moran Park Church

97 W. 22nd Street

Holland, MI

616.796.0218

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