

## DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Since the Word of God is foundational and absolutely essential to true spirituality, fellowship, spiritual sustenance, effectiveness in service and ministry, faith and doctrinal accuracy, we believe that the most important function of this local church, and its central thrust, is the consistent teaching and study of the Word of God (I Timothy 4:6-7).

The study of the Word of God is not an end in itself, but it is a high priority and a necessary channel for fellowship with God and thereby also of effective ministry to one another and to the world. It will not therefore, be bypassed or made secondary in the interest of social concerns, actions, or activities, but must be so promoted that the Word, and the teaching of the Word, become the pulse and heartbeat behind all church and non-church related activities or concerns (Psalm 119:1ff; 138:2; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; I Thessalonians 2:13; I Timothy 1:3-5; 4:1-16; II Timothy 3:14-17; 4:1-4).

This local church shall thus function as an independent, evangelical Bible church, committed to the fundamental, historic truths recorded in God's inerrant revelation—the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, to serve within Epsom Bible Church, all elders, deacons, deaconesses, ministry staff, ministry volunteers, and teachers must willingly submit to and teach no beliefs other than those contained in the Doctrinal Statement (Article IV) of this church.

**WE BELIEVE** in and teach the Holy Scriptures; accepting fully the writings of the Old and New Testaments as the inerrant Word of God, verbally inspired in all parts and therefore altogether sufficient as our only infallible and authoritative rule of faith and practice (Psalm 119:160; Proverbs 30:5a; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21). We teach the literal, grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Genesis 1:31; Exodus 31:17).

**WE BELIEVE** in and teach that there is only one true God Who is an intelligent, sovereign, spiritual and personal being; perfect, infinite, and eternal in His being, holiness and love, wisdom and power; absolutely separate from and above the world as its Creator, yet all things take place in His presence as the Upholder of all things. He is revealed to us as

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three distinct persons but without any division of nature, being, or essence, and each having a distinct ministry in God's relation to His creation and people (Genesis 1:1; Exodus 15:11; Psalm 83:18; 139:7-9; Matthew 28:19; John 10:30; 15:26).

**WE BELIEVE** in and teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Second Person of the Triune God, Eternal Word, and Only Begotten Son; that without any change in His Divine Person, He became man by the miracle of the Virgin Birth, thus to continue forever as both true God and true man, one person with two natures; that as a man, He was tempted as we are, yet was without sin; that as the perfect Lamb of God, He gave Himself in death upon the cross, bearing there the sin of the entire world, and suffering its full penalty of divine wrath in our stead; that He arose from the grave in a glorified body as our Great High Priest; and that He ascended into heaven, there to appear before the face of God as our Advocate and our Intercessor (Matthew 1:18-25; John 1:1, 14; 3:16; I Corinthians 15:3-8; Galatians 4:4-5; Philippians 2:6-11; Hebrews 4:14-16; I John 2:1-2).

**WE BELIEVE** in and teach that the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity, and a divine agent in nature, revelation, and redemption; that He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and that He regenerates, indwells, baptizes, seals, and anoints all who become children of God; that He empowers, guides, teaches, sanctifies and fills the believers who daily surrender to Him (John 3:5-6; 14:16-17; 16:7-15; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 12:13; II Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 1:13-14; 5:18). The Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to the church as He chooses (I Corinthians 12:4-11); that some gifts of the Holy Spirit such as speaking in tongues and miraculous healings were given to be used as signs to authenticate the message of the first century Church, and are not normative today; that speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism nor of the filling of the Spirit, and that the complete deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection (Acts 4:8, 31; Romans 8:23; I Corinthians 13:8; II Corinthians 12:12); that in accordance with the sovereign will of God, healing is available through the prayer of believers (James 5:14).

**WE BELIEVE** and teach that all men are by nature and choice sinful and eternally lost; that man was a direct creation of God, made in His image and likeness; that by personal disobedience to the revealed will of God, man became a sinful creature in both nature and

practice, thus alienated from the life and family of God, under the righteous wrath and judgment of God, and has within himself no possible means of salvation (Genesis 1:27; 3:6-7; Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:10-23; 5:12, 19; Galatians 3:10-11).

**WE BELIEVE** and teach that true saving faith encompasses both faith and repentance and that both elements of conversion are the gift of God (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 11:18; 20:20-21; Ephesians 2:8-9), and determined by His sovereign predestination (Ephesians 1:3-6). Salvation is the free gift of God, neither merited nor secured in part or in whole by any work of man, but it is received only by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in Christ that all true believers have as a present possession the gift of eternal life, a perfect righteousness, sonship in the family of God, deliverance and security from all condemnation, every spiritual resource needed for life and godliness (Romans 8:1-2; Ephesians 1:3-14; II Peter 1:3-4). True believers have the divine guarantee that they shall never perish; that this salvation effects the entire life of the believer, and that apart from the Lord Jesus Christ alone, there is no possible salvation (John 1:12-13; 3:14-18; 10:28-29; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:6; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:3-5).

**WE BELIEVE** and teach righteous living and godly works: not as a means to attain salvation in any sense, but as the proper evidence and fruits of salvation; and therefore as Christians, we should obey the Word of our Lord, seek the things that are above, walk as He walked, accept as our solemn responsibility the duty and privileges of bearing the gospel to a lost world, remembering that a victorious Christian life is possible only for those who, in gratitude for the infinite and undeserved mercies of God, have presented themselves as living sacrifices to God (Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 2:8-10; 4:22-24; Philippians 2:12-16).

**WE BELIEVE** in and teach the existence of Satan who originally was created as holy and perfect, but through pride and wicked ambition rebelled against God, thus becoming utterly depraved in character, the great adversary of God and His people, leader of all other evil angels, the deceiver and god of this world; that his powers are vast, but strictly limited to the permissive will of God who overrules all of his wicked devices for good; that he was defeated and judged at the cross, and therefore his final doom is certain; that we are able to resist and overcome him only in the armor of God, by the blood of the Lamb

and the power of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ephesians 2:1-7; 6:10-18; James 4:7; I Peter 5:8-9; I John 3:8; Revelation 12:8-11; 20:10).

**WE BELIEVE** and teach the imminent return of Christ: that He will bodily return to the clouds to rapture his Church which is the blessed hope (I Corinthians 15:51-52; I Thessalonians 4:13-17; Titus 2:13); that following the rapture there will be seven years of tribulation on the earth culminating with the Great Tribulation and His second coming to earth to establish His glorious and literal kingdom over all the nations for a thousand years, at the end of which He will hand the kingdom to the Father and we will enter the Eternal State (I Corinthians 15:24, 50-54; II Thessalonians 2:1-4; Hebrews 10:37; James 5:8; Jude 14-15; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1 – 22:7).

**WE BELIEVE** in and teach the future life, bodily resurrection, and eternal judgment: that the spirits of the saved at death go immediately to be with Christ in Heaven, that their works shall be brought before the Judgment Seat of Christ for the determination of reward, which will take place at the time when Christ will come for His own; that the spirits of the unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades where they are kept under punishment until the final day of judgment, at which time their bodies shall be raised from the grave, that they be judged and cast into the Lake of Fire, the place of final and everlasting punishment (Luke 16:19-31; I Corinthians 15:12-58; II Corinthians 5:8- 10; Revelation 20:11ff).

**WE BELIEVE** and teach the Lordship of Jesus Christ: that He alone is the Head of the Body of Christ, into which all believers are immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation; that all members of this one Spiritual Body should assemble and identify themselves in local churches (Acts 16:31; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:11-15; Philippians 2:9-11).

**WE BELIEVE** and teach the importance of the local church: that a New Testament church is a local assembly of born again believers who have undergone believer's baptism, united in organization to practice New Testament ordinances, to meet together for worship, prayer, fellowship, teaching, and a united testimony, and to engage actively in carrying out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; Ephesians 4:11-14; Hebrews

10:24-25). (13) **WE BELIEVE** and teach the independence and autonomy of the local church: that each New Testament church is free to govern itself without ecclesiastical interference and should cooperate with other New Testament local churches as the Holy Spirit leads; that it is responsible to follow the pattern of the New Testament church and is directly accountable to God (Matthew 16:18; 18:17; Acts 6:1-5; 15:22-23; I Timothy 3:14-15).

**WE BELIEVE** and teach that the two ordinances given to the Local Church are baptism and the Lord's Supper: that baptism is by immersion of believers in water, thus portraying the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; that the Lord's Supper is the partaking of the bread and cup by the believer as a continuing memorial of the body and shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 26: 26-30; 28:19-20; Acts 2:41; 8:38-39; I Corinthians 11:23-32).

**WE BELIEVE** God's plan for human sexuality is to be expressed only within the context of marriage, that God created man and woman as unique biological persons made to complete each other. God instituted monogamous marriage between male and female as the foundation of the family and the basic structure of human society. For this reason, we believe that marriage is exclusively the union of one genetic male and one genetic female. Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6; Mark 10:6-9; Romans 1:26- 27; 1 Corinthians 6:9.