

2 STATEMENT OF FAITH

While the Bible itself is the sole and final source of all we believe, all teaching and instructional materials used in this Church shall also be consistent with this Statement of Faith.

Foundations of our Belief

- 2.1 God.** We believe in one (Deut 6:4, Isa 45:5-6) eternal (1Tim 1:17), knowable (Jn 17:3), sovereign God (Dan 4:34-35). He knows all things (Ps 139:1-4), and providentially oversees all things (Mat 10:29-31). He is merciful (Ex 34:6) and just (Act 17:31), loving (1 Jn 4:8) and holy (Rev 4:8), great in power (Ps 147:5) and good in purpose (Rom 8:28). His glory is our chief concern (1Cor 10:31).
- 2.2 Trinity.** We believe in one God who exists in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mat 28:19). All three are uncreated, coeternal, and equal in power, glory, and honor. They are rightly worshiped as the one true God—three in one, and one in three (Rev 22:13, Ac 5:3-4).
- 2.3 Scripture.** We believe that while God has revealed himself in his creation (Ps 19:1-6, Rom 1:18-20), He has spoken to us most clearly in His written Word (Jn 14:25-26, Deut 6:6-7). The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are breathed out by God, holy, complete, and entirely without error in the original writings. (Mat 5:17-18, 2Tim 3:16, 2Pet 1:20-21). The Bible is our final authority in life, doctrine, and godliness (Mt. 4:4, 2 Pet. 1:3-4).
- 2.4 Origins.** We believe God created the entire universe out of nothing in six days (Gen 1, Heb 11:3). Man and woman were the crown of God's good creation, created in God's own image to worship Him and reflect Him in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness (Gen 1:26-27, Eph 4:22-24, Col 3:9-10). *(see also Item 2.16)*
- 2.5 Satan.** We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the fall. He is the open and declared enemy of God and man, and shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire. (Gen 3:1-5, Isa 14:12-17, Ezek 28:11-19, 1Pet 5:8-9, Rev 12:9, 20:1-3)
- 2.6 Fall of Man.** We believe that Adam and Eve, our first parents, rebelled against God and plunged themselves, creation, and all their offspring into ruin and physical death (Gen 3:1-19). Because of Adam's sin, we are all born sinners (Rom 5:12-21). We come into the world with entirely corrupt natures (Ps 51:5), and we are spiritually dead until God makes us alive in Christ (Jn 6:44, Rom 3:10-18, Eph 2:1-5).
- 2.7 Person of Jesus Christ.** We believe Jesus of Nazareth was and is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One. We believe He is the Son of the Living God (Mat 16:16). He is fully man and fully God (1Tim 2:5, Tit 2:13). He was born of the virgin Mary, lived a perfect life, taught the way of God's kingdom, worked miracles, suffered, died, and bodily rose again (1Cor 15:1-8).

- 2.8 Work of Jesus Christ.** We believe Jesus Christ lived a perfect life and died a shameful death that we might be counted righteous and forgiven of our sins (2Cor 5:21). He was our sacrificial substitute (1Pet 3:18). He defeated the devil (Heb 2:14), removed our guilt (Is 53:4-6), and became a curse for us (Gal 3:13), bearing the weight of God’s wrath against sin (1Jn 2:1-2).
- 2.9 Salvation.** We believe that we are justified—declared righteous before God—by grace through faith in the shed blood of Christ alone (John 14:6, Gal. 2:16). Specifically, we are forgiven of our sin and reconciled to God the Father through repentance—abandoning any trust in ourselves or our own moral resources—and we trust in the perfect life, substitutionary death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (Rom 4:22-25, 1Cor 15:1-4, Eph 2:8-9)
- 2.10 Holy Spirit.** We believe the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Triune God who, working through the Word, supernaturally regenerates the hearts of God’s people by making alive what was spiritually dead (Tit 3:5, 1Pet 1:23). The Spirit convicts us of sin (Jn 16:8-11), leads us to repentance (Eze 36:26-27), causes us to grow in holiness (2Cor 3:18), seals us for the day of redemption as the assurance of our salvation (Eph 1:13-14), and equips us with spiritual gifts for the building up of the body of Christ (1Cor 12:7). Through the power of the Holy Spirit the new nature can overcome the old; but the old will never be eradicated in this life. (Rom 8:13-16, Gal 5:16-17)
- 2.11 Church.** We believe the body of believers referred to in the Holy Scriptures as His “church” is the universal assembly of God’s people drawn from every tribe, language, people, and nation (Eph 2:11-13, Rev 5:9-10). This invisible body, of which Christ Jesus is the head, exists locally and imperfectly as the visible church. Jesus Christ has given his church two ordinances: Baptism by immersion and the Lord’s Supper (Mat 28:19-20, 1Cor 11:23-26).
- 2.12 Characteristics and Mission.** We believe God’s people should be characterized by Christlikeness (Eph 5:1-2), prayerfulness (Rom 12:12), joyful obedience (Jn 14:15), love of God and love of neighbor (Mat 22:37-40). They should live apart from the world and unto Christ, in the world but not of it (1Jn 2:15-17). We believe the mission of the church is to make disciples by declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit to the glory of God the Father (Mat 28:18-20). As salt and light in the world (Mat 5:13-16), believers are to seek to save the lost (1Cor 9:19-23), love others in word and deed (1Pet 4:10-11), work for righteousness and justice (Amos 5:24), and care for the hurting and needy (1Jn 3:16-18).
- 2.13 Eternal State.** We believe that the souls of believers are at death absent from the body and present with the Lord, awaiting the resurrection when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever (1Cor 15:35-57; 2Cor 5:6-8). We believe that the souls of unbelievers are at death absent from the body and in conscious torment, awaiting the resurrection and eternal conscious punishment separated from God (Mt 10:28; Lk 16:22-26; Rev 20:12-15).

2.14 Return of Christ. We believe that Jesus Christ will return to earth personally, visibly, and bodily to rapture his church and subsequently to establish his Kingdom. (Act 1:11, Titus 2:13) At his appearing the dead shall be raised and the living and the dead will be judged (1Cor 15:20-28). The unbelieving will be consigned to eternal punishment (Mat 25:41, Rev 20:11-15). Those belonging to Jesus will have eternal life in the new heavens and the new earth and live in ever-increasing joy to the glory of God (Ps 16:11, Mat 25:21)

Distinctions of our Belief

2.15 Bible Translations. We teach that it is the privilege and duty of believers to read God’s Word for themselves. In any language, Bible translations should be chosen which most nearly reflect the original texts. *(see also Section 2.3)*

2.16 Creation. We teach that the Genesis account records historical events, particularly that God created the universe including living beings and mankind in six literal days. *(see also Item 2.4)*

2.17 Gifts of the Spirit. We teach that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are a manifestation of the Spirit’s presence in the local assembly and that they will always benefit the unity and edification of everyone present. We teach that the “sign” gifts of the Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, had a special purpose in the early church but are not normative in this age. Ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, though God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing. (Rom 12:3-8, 1Cor 12:4-11, Eph 4:11-16) *(see also Section 2.10)*

2.18 Future Times. We teach the personal, imminent, pre-tribulational return of Christ to rapture His church (Tit 2:13, 1Th 4:16-18), and the pre-millennial return of Christ to earth to establish His Messianic kingdom (Rev 21-22). *(see also Sections 2.13 & 2.14)*

2.19 Stewardship. We teach that God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual, and that all that we have and are we owe to Him. We are therefore under obligation to serve Him with our time, talents and material possessions, and should recognize all these as entrusted to us to use for the glory of God and the good of others. He instructs all Believers to give cheerfully, voluntarily and proportionately to provide for the needs of the church and its ministers, for the poor, and for the proclamation of the Gospel at home and abroad.

2.20 Civil Government. We teach that God has ordained all authority consisting of three basic institutions—the home, the church, and the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all are answerable to God.

2.21 Sanctity of Life. We teach that human life begins at conception, and that the unborn child is a living human being. We teach that the direct taking of an innocent human life at any age is murder—a moral evil and sin.

2.22 Personal Relationships

- 2.22.1 We teach that the Holy Scriptures give a single meaning of “marriage” as sanctioned by God—the joining of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union (Gen 2:18–24.) We hold to this teaching on marriage regardless of any contrary definition of marriage by any person, any society (“the world” as referred to in the Scriptures), or any other legally recognized jurisdiction or government whether based upon statute or regulation, common law or court decision.
- 2.22.2 We teach that the marriages of believers are to illustrate the loving relationship of Christ and His Church, with the husband loving his wife as Christ loves His Church and the wife responding to her husband’s loving leadership as His Church responds to Christ (Eph 5:18–33). Therefore, believers should choose to marry those who share their faith and regenerate life (2Cor 6:14).
- 2.22.3 We teach that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. Therefore *any* form of sexual immorality—such as sex before or outside of marriage, homosexuality, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, pedophilia, pornography, any attempt to change one’s sex or disagreement with one’s biological sex—is sinful and offensive to God (Lev 18:1–30; Mat 5:27-28; Rom 1:18–29; 1Cor 5:1, 6:9-11; 1Thes 4:1–8).
- 2.22.4 We teach that marriage is a lifetime commitment, and that divorce breaks God’s original design which was to picture Christ’s sacrificial, everlasting, faithful love for the Church (Mal 2:14-16; Eph 5:22-33). There are cases in which divorce is permitted but not required. (Mat 19:3-9, 1 Cor 7:12-15)
- 2.22.5 We teach that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual or group are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture or the doctrines of the Church. We teach that the faithful proclamation of the Scripture—including the call to repentance and the full declaration of all God’s truth—does not constitute hate speech, or hateful and harassing behavior, but is instead a fundamental part of the Church’s loving mission to the world (Mat 28:16–20; 2Cor 5:11–20; 1Tim 1:5; 2Tim 4:1–2).
- 2.22.6 We teach that God offers total and complete forgiveness to all who confess and forsake their sin (Ps 103:11–12, 130:3–4; Is 43:25, 44:22; Jn 5:24; Col 2:13–14), and that anyone who has received that forgiveness is a “new creation” and not bound by old habits or heritage (2Cor 5:17). *(see also Sections 2.8 and 2.9)*