

Statement of Faith

Section 1. Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct

This statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Trinity Baptist Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, the elders of Trinity Baptist Church are the final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application within the parameters of this Statement of Faith.

Section 2. Creedal Affirmation

Together with Christ's church across the centuries and around the world (Ephesians 4:4-6), we affirm the Nicene Creed as an accurate summary of orthodox biblical faith.

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God,
begotten of the Father before all worlds;
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God;
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made.
Who, for us men and for our salvation,
came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary,
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried;
and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures;
and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father;
and he shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life;
who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;
who spoke by the prophets.
And we believe in one holy catholic [universal] and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;
and we look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Section 3. The Holy Scriptures

We believe that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the sixty-six books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit establish the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-14; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We believe that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Timothy 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, God-breathed, and eternally enduring (Isaiah 40:8).

We believe that the authority and sufficiency of Scripture extends to the entire Bible, and therefore that the Bible is our final and sole authority for doctrine and practice (Psalm 119:89; Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13;

17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Colossians 2:16-19).

We believe that God “breathed out” His written Word by a process of dual authorship. The Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God’s Word to man (2 Peter 1:20-21; 3:15-16).

We believe that the meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the illumination of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20). It is the responsibility of believers to ascertain carefully the true intent and meaning of Scripture, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations (2 Timothy 2:15). Yet the truth of Scripture stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it (Hebrews 4:12).

Section 4. God

We believe that there is one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4) an infinite, all-knowing Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14) – each equally deserving worship and obedience (John 20:28; cf. John 17:5 with Isaiah 42:8; Revelation 1:17 with Isaiah 42:8).

4.1 God the Father

We believe that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and arranges all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psalm 145:8-9; 1 Corinthians 8:6). He is the creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:36). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men (Ephesians 4:6; Acts 17:28-29), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Romans 8:14; 2 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Timothy 4:10). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11). He continually directs and governs all creatures and events (1 Chronicles 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38-47), nor does He do away with the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Peter 1:17; Romans 1:20; Romans 2:15). He has graciously chosen from eternity past men and women to be His very own (Ephesians 1:4-6); He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all those who come to Him (John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Hebrews 12:5-9).

4.2 God the Son

4.2.1 His Person

We believe that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine perfections, and in these He is coequal and coeternal with the Father (John 10:30; 14:9, 10).

We believe that God the Father created all things according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence and in operation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2).

We believe that in the incarnation (God becoming man) Christ surrendered only the privileges of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. In His incarnation, the eternally existing second person of the Trinity accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-man (Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9).

We believe that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Micah 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9-10; Colossians 2:9).

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23,25; Luke 1:26-35); that He was God incarnate (John 1:1, 14); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God’s kingdom (Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:29; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 7:25-26; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

4.2.2 His Work

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood in His sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious (acting in place of another), substitutionary, propitiatory (appeased God's wrath), and redemptive (John 10:15; Romans 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24).

We believe that on the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin; and that the sinner is declared righteous, given eternal life, and placed into the family of God (Romans 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18).

We believe that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High Priest (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Romans 4:25; 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).

We believe that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that God has accepted the sacrificial work of Christ on the cross. Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers (John 5:26-29; 14:19; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10; 1 Corinthians 15:20,23).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one who will judge all mankind (John 5:22-23):

- a. Believers (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10)
- b. Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matthew 25:31-46)
- c. Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15)

As the mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5), the head of His body the church (Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18), and the coming universal King who will reign on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31-33), He is the final judge of all who refuse to repent and trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Matthew 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31).

4.3 God the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, eternal, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity including intellect (1 Corinthians 2:10-13), emotions (Ephesians 4:30), will (1 Corinthians 12:11), eternity (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscience (Isaiah 40:13-14), omnipotence (Romans 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is coequal with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; and Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 10:15-17).

We believe that the work of the Holy Spirit is seen in His sovereign activity in creation (Genesis 1:2), the incarnation (Matthew 1:18), the written revelation (2 Peter 1:20-21), the work of salvation (John 3:5-7) and the resurrection (Romans 1:4; 8:11).

We believe that a unique work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16-17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the body of Christ, which is His church (1 Corinthians 12:13). The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming believers into the image of Christ (John 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22).

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13).

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the divine teacher who guided the apostles and prophets into all truth as they committed to writing God's revelation, the Bible. Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation, and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to submit to and be controlled by the Spirit (John 16:13; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 5:18; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 1 John 2:20,27; Galatians 5:16).

We believe that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

We teach, in this respect, that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the perfecting of the saints today and that the working of sign miracles (i.e. tongues, faith-healing, etc.) in the beginning days of the church were for the purpose of pointing to and authenticating the apostles as revealers of divine truth, and are not intended to be characteristic of the lives of believers today (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:1-4). We do believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the weak, sick, suffering, and afflicted (James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15).

Section 5. Angels

5.1 Holy Angels

We believe that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshipped. Although presently they are a higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve God and to worship Him (Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:6-7, 14; 2:6-7; Revelation 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9; 1 Corinthians 6:3).

5.2 Fallen Angels

We believe that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race through the temptation and fall of man (Genesis 3:1-15).

We believe that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isaiah 14:13-14; Matthew 4:1-11; Revelation 12:9-10), the prince of this world who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20) and that he will be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

Section 6. Man

6.1 Creation and Fall

We believe that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Genesis 2:7, James 3:9).

We believe that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live his life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11).

We believe that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence; earned the penalty of spiritual and physical death; became subject to the wrath of God; and became innately corrupt without ability to save himself. Man is hopelessly lost and his salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).

We believe that because all people are in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all people of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All people are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).

We believe that God created humanity distinctly as man and woman (Genesis 1:26-28).

6.2 Marriage

We believe marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime (Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12). It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race (Genesis 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Proverbs 5:15-20; 18:22; Ecclesiastes 9:9; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16).

We believe the husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image (Genesis 1:27). The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people (Ephesians 5:21-33). A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church (Colossians 3:19; Ephesians 5:25). He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family (Proverbs 17:6; 1 Timothy 5:8). A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ (Colossians 3:18; Ephesians 5:22-24). She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation (Proverbs 12:4; 14:1; 31:10-31; 1 Timothy 5:14; 2 Titus 2:3-5; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

6.3 Children and Family

We believe children, from the moment of conception (Psalm 139:13-16; Psalm 51:4), are a blessing and heritage from the Lord (Psalm 127). Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage (Hebrews 13:4). Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values, leading them through consistent lifestyle-example and loving discipline to make choices based on biblical truth (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 78:1-8; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21; Proverbs 1:8; 13:24; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 29:15,17). Children are to honor and obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3; Proverbs 6:20-22; Colossians 3:20).

We believe God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Section 7. Salvation

We believe that salvation is God's rescue of sinners to the praise of His glory (Ephesians 3:1-10). Its *offer* extends to all who repent and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Isaiah 45:22; 55:6-7; Revelation 22:17); its *source* is wholly the grace of God, exclusive of human works (Ephesians 2:8-10); its *basis* is the atoning redemption of the shed blood of Jesus on the cross (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19); and its *means* is repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21; Romans 3:21-26; 10:9-13).

In its broadest sense, salvation includes God's election, regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification of sinful man.

7.1 Election

We believe that election is the sovereign act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously saves (Romans 8:28-39; 9:6-29; 11:5-7, 26-36; Ephesians 1:3-14; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 2:9-10). This sovereign election neither contradicts nor negates the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Isaiah 55:6-7; Ezekiel 18:23, 32; Luke 13:3; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 9:22-23; 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:5; 7:10; 33:11; Philippians 2:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17).

We believe that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely the glorious display of His sovereign grace and mercy. It excludes boasting and promotes humility (Deuteronomy 7:6-8; Ephesians 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:1-2; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31).

We believe that election does not minimize a believer's responsibility to evangelize, but intensifies that privilege (Romans 10:14).

7.2 Regeneration

We believe that regeneration, or the new birth, is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus receiving both divine nature and life (Ezekiel 36:26-27; John 1:11-13; 3:3-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:1-10; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:3). This work is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God (John 5:24, James 1:18) resulting in the sinner's repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a radical turning from sin toward God resulting in righteous attitudes and conduct (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Galatians 5:22-24; Ephesians 5:17-21; 2 Peter 1:4-10). Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the sole substitute for personal sin, and the commitment of the whole person to Him as Lord and Savior for the entire life (Mark 1:15; Acts 3:19; 10:43; 26:20; Romans 3:21-28; 10:4-13; Galatians 2:19-21; Ephesians 2:8-9).

7.3 Justification

We believe that justification is the judicial act of God (Romans 8:33) whereby He declares man righteous. This gracious acquittal of man's sins and credit of Christ's righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20; 4:6). It involves the substitutionary imputation (credit to one's account) of our sins to Christ (Galatians 3:11-13; Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21). As a result, believers are brought into a relationship of peace and favor with God (Romans 3:21-5:21; 8:30-34; Galatians 3:23-26).

7.4 Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is the experience, beginning at regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling within him (John 17:17; Romans 5:1-5; 6:1-23; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 10:14; 13:12). The timing and duration of this spiritual experience is best understood in terms of *positional* (or initial) and *progressive* sanctification.

We believe *positional sanctification* instantaneously sets the believer apart as belonging to God and thereby places the believer in the family of God as God's child with his sins (past, present, and future) forgiven. This blessed position describes the believer's eternal standing, not necessarily his present walk or condition (1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11; Hebrews 3:1; 10:10; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 3:1).

We believe *progressive sanctification* is the process by which the believer becomes practically holy on a day-by-day basis (or brought closer to his positional standing). The believer progresses in this holiness as he yields with joyful obedience to the Holy Spirit's control. This process is carried on in the life of each believer by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit through the study of the Word of God, self-examination, watchfulness, and prayer (Proverbs 4:18; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 5:8; 6:18; Philippians 2:12-13; 1 John 2:29; 3:7-10). Throughout this process, the believer is commanded to "put off" the old lifestyle and with a renewed mind, "put on" the new lifestyle (John 17:19; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:22-24). In this respect, every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the selfish desires of the flesh (self)—but the Spirit makes adequate provision for victory. The struggle however remains with the believer throughout this earthly life. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural (Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9-10; James 1:14-15; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 1:9).

We believe that all Christians should live set apart unto the Lord Jesus Christ so that by His grace they might showcase the fruit of His character before a watching world, to the praise of His glory (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; Hebrews 12:1-2; 1 John 3:1-10).

7.5 Glorification

We believe that glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final, blessed, and abiding state of the redeemed (John 14:1-6; Romans 8:18-30; 1 Corinthians 15:12-58; 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:5; Revelation 21:1-22:5). All true

believers endure to the end (James 1:12; Jude 24-25). Believers, may for a time, fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the cause of Christ, and produce temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto their full and final salvation (2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10-13; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 13; 1 John 3:1-3).

We believe that while it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation, the Scriptures clearly forbid the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality (Romans 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

Section 8. The Church

8.1 Identity

We believe that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ become the bride of Christ and are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the church, of which Christ is the Head (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23-32; Colossians 1:18; Revelation 19:7-8).

We believe that the formation of the church began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We believe that the church is a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Ephesians 2:11-3:6). The church is a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6; 5:32), is distinct from the nation of Israel, but includes believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation (Revelation 5:9; 7:9-10).

We believe that the universal church expresses itself through the establishment of local churches (Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1), and that the members of the one spiritual body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).

8.2 Polity

We believe that the one supreme authority for the church is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18). The biblically designated offices serving under Christ and within the assembly are elders—also called pastors (shepherds) and overseers (bishops) (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11)—and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5). Under the leadership of the elders, deacons serve the physical needs of the church, freeing the elders for spiritual oversight, and ministry of the Word (Acts 6:1-4). While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the offices of elder and deacon are limited to qualified men (1 Timothy 2:12; 3:1-13).

We believe that elders lead as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17-22) and, under the authority of the Scriptures, direct the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7, 17), while everyone (including leaders) is to likewise submit to one another in the fear of God (Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5). We teach that on matters of membership (reception and dismissal) and election of officers that ultimate authority rests within the congregation (Matthew 16:18-19; 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Acts 6:1-6; 13:1-3).

We believe in the importance of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:2), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matthew 18:5-14), as well as the need for corrective discipline of unrepentant members of the congregation according to the standards of Scripture with the goal of restoration (Matthew 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16).

We believe in the autonomy of the local church (Titus 1:5). We believe it is Scriptural for Bible-believing churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the gospel (Romans 15:25-26; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; Colossians 4:15-16). We will not engage in ecclesiastical fellowship or cooperation with any religious group or movement that denies or compromises the gospel (Jude 3; Galatians 1:8-9; Romans 16:17; 2 John 9-11). Each local

church should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 13; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

8.3 Ministry and Gifts

We believe that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:10, 21) by building itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (2 Timothy 2:2, 15; 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42), and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42).

We believe all saints are called to engage in works of spiritual ministry (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; Revelation 22:12).

We believe God gives spiritual gifts to the church. He gives men chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:7-12), and He also gives spiritual abilities to each member of the body of Christ (Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

8.4 Ordinances

We believe that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: water baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42). Believer's baptism is a visual representation of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:8-15). We believe that baptism itself does not save, but is an act of obedience following conversion testifying of the believer's cleansing from sin and personal commitment to follow Christ (Acts 2:38, 41-42; 3:19; 16:30-31; 22:16; 1 Corinthians 1:17; Ephesians 2:8-9). Baptism by immersion best pictures the cleansing from sin through the work of Christ (Titus 3:5).

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28-32). Whereas the elements of communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people (1 Corinthians 10:16).

Section 9. Last Things

We believe that Jesus is coming again personally and bodily to this earth (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Acts 1:11; Matthew 24:26-27). The timing of Christ's return is limited in knowledge to the Father (Mark 13:26, 32-33). Anyone who denies the "blessed hope" of Christ's anticipated return is errant and has been deceived by false teaching (2 Peter 3:3-10).

We believe that just as Christ rose bodily from the dead, so both believers and unbelievers will experience a future bodily resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 35-49; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; John 6:39; 2 Corinthians 4:13-14; Revelation 20:11-15). Believers are raised to eternal life. Unbelievers are raised to judgment (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; John 5:28, 29).

We believe in the existence of a literal heaven as the eternal destiny of believers. God will create a new heaven and a new earth where there will be no pain, no tears, and no death. It will be a place of uncontaminated beauty, joy, security, fellowship with, and adoration of God (Revelation 21:1-7; 22:3-4). We believe in the existence of a literal hell, the Lake of Fire, which is a place of eternal punishment and is the destiny of unbelievers (Matthew 25:41-46; Luke 16:19-31).

We believe in the final triumph of Christ over all his enemies. Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled his redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father so that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

Section 10. The Social Order

We believe Christians are to pray and to labor that the kingdom of heaven may be realized on earth, while awaiting the full consummation of the kingdom at the return of Jesus Christ. Until such time, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality. Christians should: pursue justice; support God's design for marriage; provide for the orphan, the widow, and others in need; speak on behalf of the unborn; and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death (Isaiah 1:17; Genesis 1:27; Jeremiah 29:7; Micah 6:8; Matthew 6:9-10; Revelation 5:9-10).

10.1 Marriage & Sexuality

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one acceptable meaning: the covenant uniting of one biological man and one biological woman in a single, exclusive union for life, as delineated in Scripture. (Genesis 2:18-25.) We believe that God has created and ordained marriage, and intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. All such activity is to be considered sexual immorality (including but not limited to adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) and offensive to God. (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.)

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, and who seek God's mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.). We also believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Trinity Baptist Church.

Given the aforesaid definition of marriage, Trinity Baptist Church will only recognize marriages that are between one man and one woman; the pastors/elders of Trinity Baptist Church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages that are between one man and one woman; and the facilities and property of Trinity Baptist Church shall only host marriages that are between one man and woman.

10.2 Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are, therefore, called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Psalm 139).

10.3 Gender Distinction & Roles

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as a biological male or a biological female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27.) Therefore, rejection of one's biological gender is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

Since men and women are each made in the image of God, they are equal in nature, value, and status before God (Genesis 1:27; Galatians 3:27-28; 1 Peter 3:7). At the same time, God has assigned different roles to men and women. Within marriage, the husband is the 'head' or authority over his wife (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23) and must exercise his leadership in a way that reflects Christ's love for the Church (Ephesians 5:25-27; Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7). The wife must subject herself to her husband (Ephesians 5:22,24,33; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1-6). Women make a considerable contribution in church ministry (e.g., Romans 16:1; 1 Timothy 5:9-10; Titus 2:3-4). Yet within the Church, God prohibits women from the corporate teaching of Scripture to men, from exercising authority over men, and from holding the office of elder (1 Corinthians 14:33-36; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; 3:2,4-5; Titus 1:6).