



## Mission

Our mission is to fully utilize the resources God has granted, inspiring each individual to leave Bonita Park more Christlike-ready to make a difference in their own life, home, and community.

## Statement of Faith

### **A. The Bible**

We Affirm that the **Bible**, which we understand to be the sixty-six books known as the Old and New Testament (also known as the Christian Scriptures), when read as a whole and understood through the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, is one of the primary ways in which God reveals His will, nature, and His work in and on behalf of the world, our human purpose, condition, and potential. The Bible also reveals God's design for humanity and the world in which we live. We understand that God is revealed through His Creation and by His activity in the world and in His people. Since God's self-revelation encompasses all He has made, we look to the Bible as read through the work of Christ and as understood through the historic Christian Creeds as the normative confessions of faith for Christian understanding.

### **B. God**

We Affirm that the Bible reveals **God**, who is a singular person in the universe, without rival or equal. God exists as essential unity while being eternally expressed as triune in nature. Scripture assigns these aspects of God's nature to be understood as "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit." All three exist in essential unity, co-eternal, fully divine, One, yet distinct.

### **C. God The Creator**

We Affirm that the Bible reveals God as **Creator** of all that exists out of nothing but the power of His will. Specifically, the Bible reveals that God created the Earth as habitation of humanity to be a place of goodness, blessing, and purpose under the stewardship of the humans that He created. Scripture reveals that God's nature consists of all characteristics of goodness and holiness. There exists in God, no evil, animosity, ill-will, or capacity that is contrary to love, holiness, and goodness.

#### D. **Jesus**

We Affirm that the Bible reveals **Jesus** as God incarnate, fully God, and fully human. He was sent by God to complete God's redemptive mission on behalf of humanity. Jesus reveals the nature and character of God, the purpose and potential of humanity. He accomplished the mission of God to provide a means by which each and every person can be restored into a right relationship with God through forgiveness of sin and the transformation of their inner being into a reflection of their created design through His sacrificial death on the cross and His victorious resurrection.

#### E. **The Holy Spirit**

We Affirm that the Bible reveals the **Holy Spirit** to be the third person of the Triune God who works within the world and within the human heart to reveal and to accomplish the purposes of God. The activities of the Holy Spirit are multitude. We believe that no person lives without the influence of the Holy Spirit who draws that person to God. The Holy Spirit is the active agent of God convincing an individual of their need for God, guilt of sin, activity of salvation, cleansing them of sin, and forming them into a new creation.

#### F. **Humanity**

We Affirm that the Bible reveals that **Humanity** was designed by God to reflect His image into the world that God created. It was God's intent in the creation of humanity that we would reflect His nature and character as caretakers of the world that God created. We were designed to live in harmonious fellowship with God and with one another as expressions of the unity that exists within the very nature of God.

#### G. **Sin: Original and Personal**

We Affirm that the Bible reveals that God's design for humanity and the world has been corrupted. That corruption was caused by human disobedience to the command of God in the Garden, which was expressed in a decision to serve the desires of the self, the flesh, and the body, over above the desire to love and to serve God. This decision has been referred to as "**original sin**" and has corrupted every person born since with a depravity that is expressed in rebellion toward God and neighbor, and selfishness. When this flawed character is expressed in conflict toward God or others, that conflict or rebellion is defined as "**personal sin**"—a choice to offend God or neighbor in order to please oneself.

#### H. **Guilt**

We Affirm that the Bible reveals that intentional sinful acts committed by a morally responsible person creates a barrier of **Guilt** between a Holy God and a sinful person. This personal guilt must be resolved in order for the fellowship with God to be restored. Absent this resolution, an individual will suffer temporal and eternal separation from God.

#### I. **Atonement**

We Affirm that the Bible reveals its central narrative to be about God's determination to restore humanity and the earth to its created state. This activity is known as **Atonement**. It is initiated by the gracious activity of God, who works with and within history and with and within humanity to redeem us from the separation caused by sin. Redemption restores us both to right fellowship with Him and to right relationships with ourselves, others, and the earth. The full and final source of God's redemptive activity in the world is Jesus of Nazareth, called, The Christ. Through his life and teachings, He revealed the Father's heart, will, and purpose for humanity. He also revealed the design of God for human life. Finally, through His sacrificial death, resurrection, and ascension, He reveals the offer of atoning grace for all humanity—sufficient both to forgive sin and to restore us to New Creations.

#### J. **Prevenient Grace**

We Affirm that the Bible reveals that the Holy Spirit is an active agent of God working in the life of each individual in the world. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, each person has an awareness of God, an awareness of right and wrong, and the restoration of free moral agency. Without the aid of the Holy Spirit, each person would be held captive to the sin nature with which they are born. Through the Holy Spirit, each person is being drawn to God; each person is being made aware of their spiritual need; and each person is being convinced of their need of a Savior. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, we are brought to faith in the atoning work of Christ, given the capacity to recognize our sinful condition, and urged to turn to Jesus in faith for salvation. These works of the Holy Spirit are active in our lives prior to our coming into the relationship of saving grace. This activity is known as **Prevenient Grace**.

#### K. **Repentance**

We Affirm that the Bible reveals that atonement (reconciliation with God) is available to every person through the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross. That atonement is provided on the basis of **Faith** in the work of Jesus alone. Such faith calls us to come to God confessing our sinfulness and our sins (our offenses to him and our neighbors), **Repent** of those sins (choose to renounce them, turning away from them), and trust in Jesus as our sufficient Savior, who offers to us God's forgiveness and restoration of a right relationship with Him.

#### L. **Justification, Adoption, and Regeneration**

We Affirm that the Bible reveals that the activity of Atonement through Jesus results in our instantaneous **Justification** before God through the merits of Jesus' sacrifice, our **Adoption** into the family of the redeemed by the blood of Jesus, and the beginning of the transformation or **Regeneration** of our lives, being restored into the persons that God created us to be through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

## **M. Entire Sanctification/ Christian Perfection**

We Affirm that the Bible reveals that our original sinful nature still clings to our hearts even though we have been justified through Christ. While maturing in our relationship with God through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, this conflict of the will becomes more and more apparent as we struggle with the issue of lordship over our lives. As we seek to grow in Christlikeness, we become aware that we need a deep inner healing of our rebellious human nature (original sin). Scripture calls us toward a full surrender of our lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, so that through the cleansing of the Holy Spirit, this sinful nature can be cleansed from our inner being. This second definite moment in the activity of grace in the life of a believer can be referred to as **Entire Sanctification, Christian Perfection**, or similar terms that suggest the full surrender of a person's life to the authority and control of God so that a thorough cleansing of their heart from the nature of sin can be accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

We Affirm that this work is a work of grace that is accomplished on the basis of faith. The fruit of this work should be love and obedience to the will of God. While this work can be labeled as "perfection" biblically, we recognize that there will always be growth and maturation in the Christian life, and we become more reflective of the character of God as revealed in Jesus. However, through the activity of the Holy Spirit, the Christian living in this state of grace finds themselves more empowered to live according to the will and purposes of God without resistance and more inclined to love God and neighbor without reservation. This life should be evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit as outlined by Paul in Galatians 5.

## **N. The Church**

We Affirm that the Bible reveals the **Church** was called into being through Christ and the Holy Spirit to continue to the activity of Jesus in the world. The Church consists of all those who believe in Jesus as Savior. Corporately, these believers comprise the Body of Christ, deployed by Christ, to accomplish the mission of Christ, bringing hope, healing, restoration, and salvation to the world.

The Bible further affirms that God has designed for the church to exist as local congregations, fulfilling God's specific mission to peoples and cultures around the world in fulfillment of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. We affirm the wide variety of the expressions of the church as expressions of the enormity of God's self-expression and revelation and seek, as Jesus prayed, unity in the body of diverse expression. Wherever the church expresses faith in the Lordship of Jesus as expressed in the historic Christian creeds, there we find fraternity.

Having our historic roots in the Church of the Nazarene, we specifically identify with the call and mission expressed in the Church of the Nazarene, having its roots in the Wesleyan Revival of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and the American Holiness Movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Our mission will be shaped by our identity with the mission and values of the Church of the Nazarene. Scripture calls the church to express its life in worship, sacrament, service, and mission.

**O. Sacraments**

We Affirm that the Bible reveals the **Sacraments** of the Body of Christ to be Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We acknowledge these sacraments to be symbolic acts of faith in which the Christian is invited to participate, by faith, in the historic activity of Christ and the Church. While participation in these sacraments gain no merit for the participant (salvation is by faith alone), Scripture commands us to be baptized and to receive the Lord's Supper (aka, Communion, Eucharist) as outward expressions of the inward work of grace.

We acknowledge all historic forms of Baptism, performed in the name of the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). We also do not prescribe a form in which the Lord's Supper must be taken, nor a frequency. However, we advise that unleavened bread be used in the sacrament and non-fermented grape juice be drunk.

**P. Divine Healing**

We Affirm that the Bible reveals God to be a God of **Healing**. Scripture calls believers to pray for divine healing for the sick. We believe that God often chooses to intervene for the sick and infirm through direct means to provide miraculous healing. Therefore, we call our people to pray fervently for healing. We also believe that God uses the healing gifts of science, medication, and trained medical professionals, and encourage people to seek these means of healing, prayerfully, as part of God's healing activity in their lives.

**Q. The Second Coming**

We Affirm that the Bible reveals that Jesus will physically return to earth in His **Second Coming**. While we do not subscribe to a specific theory or theology of that glorious day. We wait and work with anticipation for the fulfillment of His promised return.

**R. Resurrection, Judgement, and Destiny**

We Affirm that the Bible reveals that every person will be raised from the dead to face a **Final Judgment**. God has designed humanity to live eternally in Heaven in fellowship with Him. That gift is available for all who repent of their sins and acknowledge Jesus as Savior. Those who reject God's free grace will be forever separated from Him in a place prepared for Satan—Hell.