

Grace Community Church

Articles of Faith

A. The Scriptures

We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as verbally inspired by God and inerrant in the original writings, embracing all matters which the Biblical authors address, and believers that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life.

1. The Bible is inspired of God. II Timothy 3:16.
“Inspired” means “breathed out.” Thus, “the Bible says” and “God says” are the same.
2. The Bible is inerrant. John 10:35; John 17:17.
The Bible is true, without error in all that it affirms and teaches.
3. Plenary inspiration means that all parts of the Bible are equally inspired of God.
4. Verbal inspiration means that the words, and not just the concepts, are inspired of God.
5. God guided divinely prepared men by the ministry of the Holy Spirit to write the words of Scripture, adding nothing and subtracting nothing from His revelation. II Peter 1:20-21.

B. The Godhead

We believe in one God - eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, existing as three Persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one in nature, attributes, power, and glory.

1. God is one in being (monotheism), but three in persons (trinitarianism).
Mark 12:29-30; Matthew 28:18-20.
2. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.
Acts 5:3-4; I Corinthians 8:6; Hebrews 1:8
3. The Three Persons are coequally divine (ontological trinity). John 10:30.
4. There is a functional order to carry out the divine purpose of the trinitarian God (economic trinity)
 - a. The Father sent the Son. John 13:16; 14:28
 - b. The Father and the Son sent the Spirit. John 14:26; 15:26

C. Angels, Fallen and Unfallen

We believe that angels are created beings, neither human or divine and that Satan, the Devil; was created by God as an angel but through pride and

rebellion became the enemy of his Creator; that he became the unholy god of this age and the ruler of all the powers of darkness and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire.

1. Angels are created spirit beings, neither human nor divine.
2. Some angels, including Lucifer, rebelled in pride against God. Isaiah 14:12-17
3. Lucifer thus became Satan, the enemy of God and His people.

D. Man Created and Fallen

We believe that all mankind was created perfect in the image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death but also that spiritual and eternal death which is separation from God, and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and we are sinners in thought, word, and deed, but all humans still possess dignity and value because they are created in God's image.

1. God created man, both male and female, in His own image. Man, thus, is a spirit personality functioning through a physical body. Genesis 1:26.
2. Adam and Eve were real, historical people.
3. When Adam and Eve sinned, they introduced the effects of sin into their lives and into their posterity - corruptibility, mortality, and spiritual deadness.
4. All humans, born since Adam, are born with a sin nature – a disposition or tendency toward rebellion against God.
5. All humans, however, still possess dignity and value because they are made in the image of God. Genesis 9:16.
6. All humans need to be redeemed from both physical and spiritual death.

E. Dispensations

We believe that God has administered His purpose in different ways in different ages called dispensations and that in all ages men have to be saved by faith alone through calling upon God to save them and that the basis for salvation for all ages has been through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1. God has administered His purpose in different ways in different ages. Ephesians 3:1-6.
2. There are three major dispensations (law, church, and kingdom) although there may be others. John 1:17; Matthew 6:10; 16:18; Ephesians 3:1-6.
3. In all ages, men have been saved in the same way -- by faith alone through calling upon God to save them. Hebrews 11:6; Romans 4
3. The basis of salvation for all ages has been the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through these events, Christ satisfied the righteous demands of God for sin.

F. The First Advent

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and that He is both true God and true man and that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice and rose again physically in a real, material body for our justification.

1. God the Son took to Himself a sinless human nature through the virgin conception and birth. Luke 1:31-35; John 1:1,14,18
2. Jesus Christ is the divine-human person -- one person with two natures.
3. Jesus Christ is very God of very God and very man of very man.
4. Jesus Christ died on the cross to bear the sin of the entire world. John 1:29
5. Jesus Christ, was buried and rose again in a real, material body.
I Corinthians 15:3-4

G. Salvation Only Through Christ

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice and rose again for our justification; and that all who believe in Him are justified on the grounds of His shed blood and are saved by grace through faith wholly apart from human merit and works so that the death of Christ exclusively provided, redemption, propitiation, and reconciliation.

1. Men today are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.
Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8-9
2. In Biblical terms, the death of Christ exclusively provided redemption, propitiation, and reconciliation. Romans 3:21-25;
II Corinthians 5:14-21; I John 2:2

H. The Extent of Salvation

We believe that all who receive by faith, wholly apart from human merit and works, the Lord Jesus are born again by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God and thereby become the children of God forever and possess all of the spiritual blessings contained with that new position and are eternally secure.

1. At the moment of personal saving faith in Christ, the believer possesses all of the spiritual blessings contained within his new position in Christ. Eph. 1:3
2. The believer needs to become aware of his new position before God.

I. Sanctification

We believe that every believer, at the moment of salvation, is positionally sanctified by God and every believer needs to become holy, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, and to be yielded to the Holy Spirit through prayer, the Word of God, daily control by the Spirit, and fellowship with God's people.

1. Every believer, at the moment of salvation, is positionally sanctified by God. I Corinthians 1:2. To sanctify means to set apart. Believers, thus, are saints, set apart ones.
2. In progressive sanctification, every believer needs to become holy, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, and to be daily yielded to the Holy Spirit who now lives within the believer. Gal 5:16; I Peter 1:16
3. The means of growing into Christlikeness are:
 - a. Prayer ... I Thessalonians 5:17
 - b. Word of God ... John 17:17
 - c. Daily control by the Holy Spirit ... Ephesians 5:18
 - d. Fellowship with God's people ... Acts 2:42
4. At the coming of Christ, the believer will be permanently set apart from the effects of sin.

J. Eternal Security

We believe that all believers are kept by God in their position of acceptance before Him for eternity and that believers do sin and that God will lovingly chastise His children for disobedience.

1. All believers are kept by God in their position of acceptance before Him for all time and eternity. John 5:24; John 10:28.
2. Believers do sin, and God will lovingly chastise His children for their disobedience. Hebrews 12:5-6.
3. The sin of believers does not change their spiritual position or standing before God.

K. Assurance

We believe that believers can know from the testimony of God's Word that they are saved and that this assurance should not be based upon feelings or experiences.

1. Believers can know from the testimony of God's word that they are saved. I John 5:13
2. Assurance should not be based upon one's feelings or experiences.

L. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, equal with God the Father and God the Son; that He was active in creation; that He convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment; that He is the Agent in the new birth; that He baptizes all believers into the body of Christ at conversion; that He indwells, seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, and helps the believer.

1. Every believer is permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit. I Cor 6:19-20
2. Every believer has been baptized in the Holy Spirit into spiritual union with Christ and with other believers. I Corinthians 12:13

M. The Ordinances

We believe that the Scriptural ordinances of the local church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper; that Baptism, by immersion, should be administered to believers only, as an identifying symbol of their belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and our death to sin and resurrection to a new walk in life, and that it is a prerequisite to local church membership; that the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of His death and should be preceded by believer's baptism & solemn self-examination.

1. Every believer should be baptized by immersion in water to show his identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Matthew 28:18-20
2. Every believer should partake of the elements of the Lord's Supper to show his fellowship with Christ and other believers. Luke 22:19-20

N. The Christian's Walk

We believe that believers possess two natures - a sinful disposition and a disposition toward God through the Holy Spirit and that every believer can have victory over sin by obedience to the Word of God through yieldedness to the Holy Spirit.

1. Every believer possesses two natures - a sinful disposition and a disposition toward God through the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:16-17
2. Every believer can have victory over sin by obedience to the Word of God through yieldedness to the Holy Spirit. Gal 5:16-17; Gal 5:22-26

O. The Christian's Service

We believe that God has given to every believer a spiritual gift which is an ability to function within the church family for the benefit of others, that there is a distinction between a spiritual gift and a spiritual office, and that Christ will give rewards to believers who faithfully serve Him.

1. God has given to every believer a spiritual gift - an ability to function within the church family for the benefit of others. Romans 12:3-8; I Cor 12:4-11
2. There is a distinction between spiritual gift and spiritual offices.
Ephesians 4:11-16; I Timothy 3:1-13
3. Christ will give rewards to believers who faithfully serve Him. II Cor 5:10

P. The Great Commission

We believe that it is a privilege and responsibility of every believer to be a personal soul winner and to do his utmost to give the gospel of Christ to the whole world.

1. Every believer should be a witness for Christ in his life and testimony.
Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; II Corinthians 5:18-20
2. Every believer should seek to evangelize the unsaved. Romans 10:8-17

Q. The Blessed Hope

We believe that every believer should look for the imminent "Blessed Hope" - the Rapture of the church when Christ shall descend from heaven, the dead in Christ shall rise, living believers will be translated, all believers shall meet Christ in the air, we will then live with Christ forever, and that this should cause believers to live holy lives.

1. Every believer should look for the return of Christ in his own lifetime.
Titus 2:11-14
2. The blessed hope, the rapture of the church, includes, these events (I Thessalonians 4:13-18):
 - a. Descent of Christ from heaven
 - b. Resurrection of the dead in Christ
 - c. Translation of living believers
 - d. Rapture of all believers into the air to meet Christ
 - e. Eternal presence with Christ
3. The blessed hope should cause believers to live holy lives.
I John 2:28- 3:3

R. The Tribulation

We believe that a seven-year period called the Tribulation, will follow the Rapture of the Church, will be marked by a covenant between the Antichrist and Israel, will be a period marked by satanic hostility, divine judgments, salvation for both Jews and Gentiles, and will prepare Israel for the coming of her Messiah.

1. The tribulation is a period of seven years which follows the rapture of church believers. It is marked by a covenant between the Antichrist and Israel. Daniel 9:24-27; Revelation 4-19.
2. The tribulation is a period marked by satanic hostility, divine judgments, salvation for both Jews and Gentiles, and the preparation of Israel for the coming of her Messiah.

S. The Second Coming of Christ

We believe that Christ will return physically to the earth after the Tribulation, He will destroy the unsaved armies at Armageddon, He will restore redeemed Israel to her land, and He will reign on earth from Jerusalem for a literal thousand years.

1. Jesus Christ will return physically to the earth after the Tribulation. Revelation 19:11-16
2. Christ will destroy the unsaved armies at Armageddon and restore redeemed Israel to her land. Revelation 19:17-21
3. Christ will then reign on earth from Jerusalem for a literal 1000 years. Revelation 20:1-6

T. The Eternal State

We believe that at death the believer goes to be with Christ in heaven, that the unbeliever goes to hades, that at the return of Christ the believer will receive a new body based on his old body, and that the unbeliever will receive a new body in which he will experience eternal separation from God and torment in the lake of fire.

1. At physical death, the believer goes to be with Christ in heaven. II Cor 5:1-8
2. At physical death, the unbeliever goes to Hades. Luke 16:19-31
3. At the return of Christ, the believer will receive a new body based upon his old body. I Thessalonians 4:13-18
4. At the second resurrection, the unbeliever will receive a new body in which he will experience eternal separation from God and torment in the lake of fire. Revelation 20:11-15.