

Welcome
to



**MERIDIAN
CHURCH**

Our mission as given by our Lord:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of
the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
teaching them to observe all that I have
commanded you.*

*And behold, I am with you always,
to the end of the age.”*

–Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

Welcome to Meridian Church

We're just one of His churches.

That statement isn't meant to be sad or slim, but humble and joyous. We are a church of the Lord Jesus Christ—part of the people He has purchased unto Himself by His blood for His glory, covenanting to be faithful to our Savior together. We are a people knit together by the cross for the glory of the crucified One. It really is that simple, and yet, glorious.

But what kind of church are we? We are a catholic, protestant-evangelical, reformed, baptist church.

We are a catholic church. We are not *Roman Catholic*. We are *catholic*, meaning we are part of the church *universal*—the church across geographical and chronological boundaries. We believe what the church has always believed concerning the Trinity and the person of Christ as expressed in the *Ecumenical Creeds* (belonging to the whole church). Those creeds are the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and the Chalcedonian Definition.

Catholic
=
Creeds

We are a protestant-evangelical church. We believe in the *five solas* of the Reformation: *sola Scriptura*, *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, *solus Christus*, and *solus Deo gloria*. Scripture alone is our ultimate authority and salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone to the glory of God

sola Scriptura
sola gratia
sola fide
solus Christus
solus Deo gloria

alone. As protestants it is the *sola*, the “alone,” that separates us from Rome. Rome teaches Scripture as an authority and salvation by grace through faith in Christ to the glory of God. It is the “alone” that makes the difference. We regularly use the term “evangelical” in the older historic sense that is basically

synonymous with “protestant.” As evangelicals we believe that the Bible is our only supreme authority and that the gospel is our only hope.

We are a reformed church. Perhaps the simplest way of explaining what this means is to say we are *Calvinistic* and *Covenantal*. As Calvinists we believe in the five points of what are called “the doctrines of grace,” often encapsulated in the acronym TULIP: Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible Grace, and the Perseverance of the saints.

Calvinistic
&
Covenantal

But more robustly, to be Reformed means we are *covenantal*. God’s plan to redeem a people to Himself is covenantal. A series of covenants unfolds throughout Scripture, revealing progressively God’s single plan of salvation for His people in Christ.

We are a baptist church. That we are baptists speaks to our view of church government and baptism. We believe that local churches are to be autonomous self-governing entities. They are congregational in that the ultimate authority resides with the

Congregational
Credobaptist

church, but they are also to be led by a plurality of elders. Also, as baptists we believe that the ordinance of baptism is only to be ministered to those making a credible profession of faith (credobaptism). It is for believers only and not for infants (paedobaptism). The sign is to be given only to those who have demonstrated that they have died with Christ and risen to newness of life.

As a catholic, protestant-evangelical, reformed, baptist church we belong to a long stream of confessional churches, as seen in those who have held to the First London Baptist Confession (1644), the Second London Baptist Confession (1689), and the New Hampshire Confession (1853).

We Believe

The most important thing about a church is not what she *does* (i.e. programs, ministries, musical style), but what she *believes* (doctrine). What we believe about who God is and what Jesus has done is far more significant than anything we have to offer. Further, what we believe determines what we do and why we do it. Creeds determine deeds.

*Creeds
determine
deeds.*

We don't gather to *do*. We gather to celebrate what Christ has done. We don't gather to celebrate our efforts. We gather to hear of the work of Christ and worship Him. Our fellowship gathers for the simple purpose to hear the word, pray the word, sing the word, and see the word in the

*Hear the Word
Pray the Word
Sing the Word
See the Word*

sacraments. Having feasted on Christ, we then scatter to serve our neighbors and tell other poor beggars where there is bread. Having been served by Christ, we serve in His power. Having heard of Christ, we speak of Him to others.

Creeds and confessions serve then as a summary of what a church believes to be the Bible's teaching concerning who God is and what He has done. Below you will find our *Congregational Affirmation of Faith*. These are not simply statements we hold to; these are truths we love.

Congregational Affirmation of Faith

I. The Scriptures:

We believe that the Bible is God's Holy Word; verbally inspired, without error in the original manuscripts, infallible, and sufficient for life and doctrine.

(2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31-32; Acts 20:32)

II. The Trinity:

We believe that there is one God, eternally existing as three equally divine persons that know, love, and glorify each other. We believe that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; yet The Father is neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit, the Son is neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son.

(Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-3)

III. The Father:

We believe that God the Father is an infinite personal spirit. We believe that He is eternal, all-present, all-powerful, and all-knowing. We believe He sovereignly works all things according to His plan. We believe He mercifully sent His Son to ransom sinners from every people group.

(John 4:24; Psalm 90:2; Psalm 193:7-10; Jeremiah 32:17; 1 John 3:20; Isaiah 46:9-10; John 3:16)

IV. Jesus Christ:

We believe that the Son remaining what He was (God), became what He was not (man). We believe that He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, and performed miracles. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, His bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension and session at the right hand of the Father, His intercession for His people as great High Priest, and His future return.

(Romans 9:5; John 1:1-2, 14; Matthew 1:18-25; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; Acts 1:11; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25, 9:28)

V. The Holy Spirit:

We believe that the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. We believe He regenerates sinners and unites them to Christ. We believe He indwells believers, sanctifies them, and seals them to the day of redemption.

(John 14:15-16, 26; 16:8-15; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 1:13-14)

VI. The Fall:

We believe that in Adam, man who was created in the image of God, fell, and now inherits both Adam's guilt and corruption and is therefore now hostile towards God, dead in his sins, in bondage to sin, and unable to save himself.

(Genesis 1:26-27, Romans 5:12; Romans 3:9-20, 23; Colossians 1:21; John 8:34; Ephesians 2:1-3)

VII. The Gospel and Salvation:

We believe that the gospel is the good news of what God has done for us in His Son Jesus Christ. We believe that Jesus lived a perfect life of obedience for us and died a penal substitutionary death for our sins. We believe salvation is a gift that comes only by God's grace, and that all who trust in Jesus Christ alone are justified, and are eternally secure, unable to lose their salvation.

(1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 2:8-20)

VIII. The Church, Her Ordinances, and Her Leadership:

We believe that the church is the body of Christ, comprised of all regenerate persons. We believe the local church is to consist of persons baptized upon credible profession of faith covenanting together to be faithful to their Lord Jesus Christ. We believe the Lord gave two ordinances to His church, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the baptism of believers by immersion. We believe a church is to be elder led and deacon served. We believe the office of elder is limited to qualified men.

(Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:25-27; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Hebrews 10:23-25; Matthew 28:19; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Corinthians 14:33-35, 1 Timothy 2:11-12)

IX. Manhood, Womanhood, and Marriage

We believe that God created human beings, male and female, in His own image with equal dignity and worth but differing gospel-communicating roles, whether single or married. We believe that marriage is the covenant union of one man and one woman before God. We believe that in obedience to the Lord husbands are to reflect Christ by loving leadership and wives are to reflect the church by respectful submission in the Lord.

(Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18-25; Matthew 19:3-12; Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; Hebrews 13:4)

Elder Confession of Faith

In addition to this affirmation we have our *Meridian Church Elder Confession of Faith*. This isn't a confession that our elders hold independently and over the church, but one that the church holds its elders accountable to.

Our congregational affirmation of faith is minimalistic because we believe the saints are to grow up *in* the church, not *into* the church. While our Affirmation is sufficient for members as such, it is inadequate concerning what is expected of elders. The elder confession of faith is a fuller statement of the doctrine to be taught by the church.

The confession is based on the Belgic Confession of Faith written in 1561. We chose this confession for a few reasons. First, its devotional warmth. Second, its historical rootedness; it is one of the earliest reformed confessions. Third, it isn't as detailed as later confessions, allowing room for disagreement on issues that we don't believe are so vital or essential to the health and unity of the church.

You can find this fuller confession on our website or request a physical copy.

We Covenant

We serve a covenant making God (Genesis 9:17; 15:8, Exodus 34:27; Psalm 89:3; Luke 22:20). The way God relates to His people is without exception covenantal. Even fallen men relate to God as those who have broken God's covenant in Adam (Romans 5).

This means we also relate to one another covenantally. As God's covenant with Israel meant that they had covenant obligations to one another, so too in the church. A church covenant is simply a way to communicate the Biblical obligations we have towards one another because of our covenant union with God.

Whereas a church's confession clarifies what they *believe*, a church's covenant clarifies how they are to *relate* to one another.

Meridian Church Covenant

Having, as we trust, been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other.
(John 6:63; 16:7-11; 1:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Acts 2:41; 8:38; Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Acts 2:42)

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
(Ephesians 4:1-3)

We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian Church, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.

(Romans 12:10, 16:17-18; Galatians 6:1-2; Matthew 18:15-17; James 5:19-20; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 3:12-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; 1 Corinthians 5)

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others.

(Hebrews 10:23-25; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 25)

We will endeavor to bring up such as may at any time be under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.

(Deuteronomy 6:1-12; 11:18-20; Matthew 6:6; Ephesians 6:4; Mark 5:19; Luke 5:19; Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 5:15)

We will rejoice at each others' happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.
(Romans 12:15; Galatians 6:2)

We will seek, by Divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation now to lead a new and holy life.
(Ephesians 5:15; Titus 2:12; Roman 6:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; 1 Peter 1:13-25)

We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.
(Ephesians 2:21-22; Hebrews 10:25; Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:24-34; Romans 16:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 5; Acts 2:42; 2 John 1:9-11; Matthew 10:10; Galatians 6:6; Malachi 3:8-10; Acts 11:29; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8)

We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.
(Acts 18:27-28; Romans 16:1-2; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Colossians 3:23; Hebrews 10:24-25)

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.
(2 Corinthians 13:14)

Values

To further clarify who we are, our church speaks of five values that we hold dear. With these values we are not trying to be creative and unique. We are striving to be clear and faithful. We believe these are values which every church should have, yet, we take them up as values to communicate more clearly who we are.

Gospel-centered: One researcher captured the belief of many contemporary churches with the phrase, “moralistic, therapeutic deism.” Many teeter-totter between moralistic legalism on one hand, and feel-good therapy/self-help on the other. The gospel is good news, not good advice. It’s the good news about what Jesus has done, not good advice about what we should do. Further, the gospel is not something we graduate from but only advance into.

The gospel is good news, not good advice.

It takes the whole Bible to make whole Christians. **Expository preaching:** We believe the normal diet of the sheep should be that of digesting whole books of the Bible verse by verse. Just as one cannot watch disconnected pieces of a movie and understand it well, neither can we with the Bible. God gave us His Word, not as a fragmentary collection of pithy sayings, but as whole books, letters, and collections of psalms and proverbs. They are meant to be read,

interpreted, and preached as such. It takes the whole Bible to make whole Christians.

Biblical leadership: God's plan is for a plurality of spiritually qualified men to lead the church. They're called by three interchangeable names in Scripture: elders, overseers (or bishops), and pastors (or shepherds). Sound leadership structures and an understanding of the task of elders are essential to the health of a church.

*Elders
Overseers
Pastors*

*Parents
are to be
the chief
disciplers
of their
children.*

Family focused: Parents are to be the chief disciplers of their children, and fathers are to be the lead disciplers. Rather than dividing families and sending them in different directions and creating generational divisions, we want to see families unified and worshipping together. Because this is foreign to many we encourage you to read our

booklet *Worshipping Together: Why Do We Want Our Children in the Worship Gathering.*

Discipleship: We believe that disciples make disciples, not programs. Programs may help, but they will only help *disciples*. Disciples are disciplined and make disciples; any other idea of being a Christian is nonsensical. We value both corporate and one on one discipleship and deep relationships in life groups.

*Disciples
make
disciples,
not
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Membership

“I’m a Christian, how do I become a member of Meridian Church?”

1. Let an elder know that you are interested in joining.
2. Read through this booklet.
 - This will give you an opportunity to read and study the *Congregational Affirmation of Faith* and the *Church Covenant*.
 - Make note of any questions you might have.
3. Read *What is a Healthy Church?* by Mark Dever.
4. Attend the Meridian 101 Course or schedule a meeting with an elder to go over the course material.
5. Write a *one page* testimony of faith.
 - Communicate how you have seen God’s grace in your life to bring you to a saving knowledge of Him, what the gospel is, and testify to your faith in Him.
6. Schedule a membership interview with an elder.
 - These are typically done in your home.
 - During your interview we will discuss any questions you have about the church and her confessional documents.
 - The elders will want to hear your testimony of faith.
7. The interviewing elder will then present you before all the elders.
8. If a credible profession of faith has been made, the elders will recommend you to the church body at the next members meeting.
 - These meetings are held quarterly on the first Sunday of the months of March, June, September, and December.
 - Your written testimonies will have already been presented in a letter to the church prior to the meeting.
9. At the meeting, covenant vows will be exchanged between the church and the new members.
10. If you are joining by baptism, the baptism will be scheduled to follow as soon as possible after the members meeting.

Membership Vows

To the Candidate:

If you agree, please respond with “Amen.”

1. Do you trust in Jesus and Jesus alone for the forgiveness of your sins and the salvation of your soul?
2. Do you agree with the church’s *Congregational Affirmation of Faith*?
3. In faithfulness to Christ do you desire to covenant with this church and obey the Biblical commands expressed in our church covenant?

To the Church:

If you agree, please respond with “Amen.”

1. Will you receive _____ into this family as a covenant member?
2. Will you love _____ and commit yourself to obeying the Biblical commands expressed in our church covenant?

Other Ministries

Resource Center: The Resource Center is loaded with free materials ranging from church information like our constitution to free books, evangelistic tracts, and issues of TableTalk magazine.

Book Nook: The Book Nook is curated by our elders and provides recommended books and Bibles that are available to anyone for a suggested donation. Please feel free to visit both the Resource Center and the Book Nook.

Life Groups: These small groups meet regularly throughout the year to build relationships and care for one another. If you would like to join a life group please ask one of the elders about groups that are currently meeting.

Fellowship Meals: The first Sunday of each month we gather for a fellowship meal. All are invited to join us.

Prayer Gathering: A monthly meeting where we pray through the psalms and texts that we are currently studying

Women in the Word: A monthly gathering for women to discuss their yearly Bible Reading plan.

Women's Book Club: Meets throughout the year to discuss a book over dinner.

Women's Retreat: A yearly retreat where the ladies enjoy a time of Bible study, prayer, and fellowship.

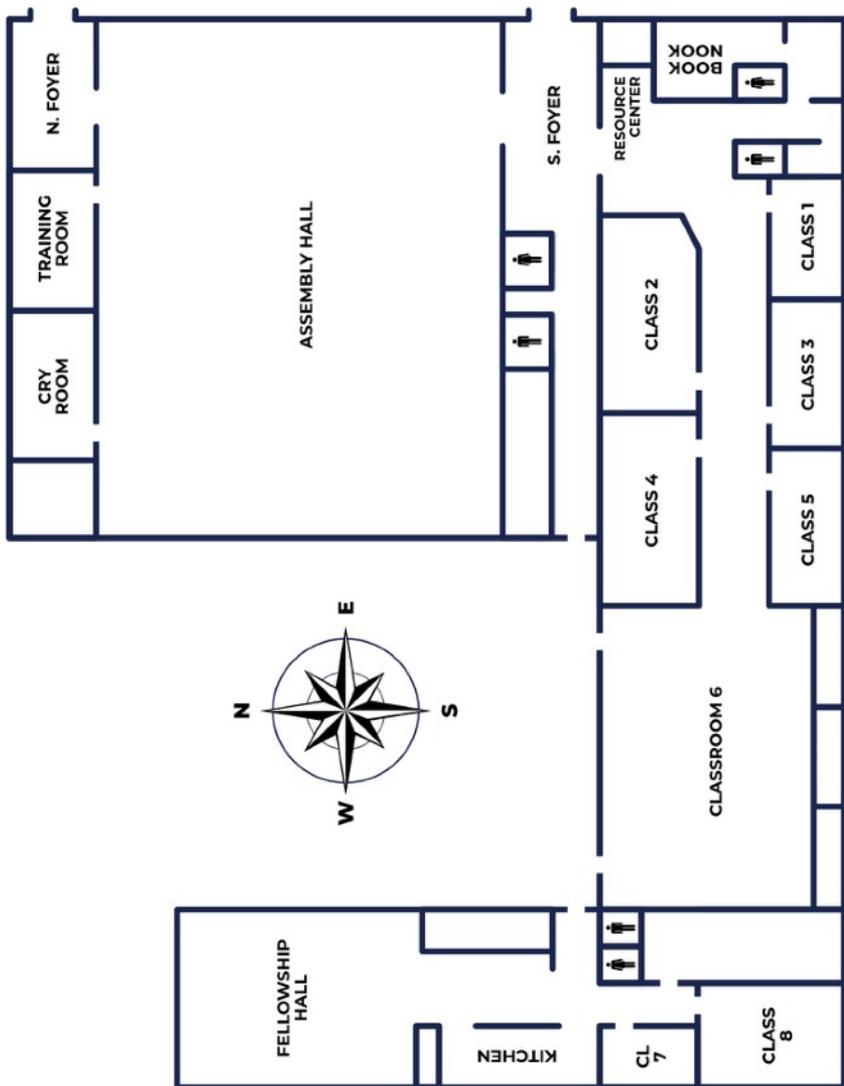
Theology Club: A monthly gathering for men to discuss confessions, theology, and books.

Core Courses: A rotating curriculum of courses meant to instruct believers in the essentials of the Christian faith.

Meridian Kids: Is for ages 3-12 and meets on Sunday mornings. Currently we have a three year rotation. One year is spent memorizing and studying the New City Catechism. The next two years take students from Genesis to Revelation.

*For dates and meeting times please ask for
the most recent copy of our church calendar.*

Campus Map



Now to him who is able
to do far more abundantly
than all that we ask or think,
according to the power at work within us,
to him be glory
in the church
and in Christ Jesus
throughout all generations,
forever and ever.
Amen.

—Ephesians 3:21–21



For more information
about Meridian Church
visit meridianchurch.com