

## STATEMENT OF FAITH

### A. Beliefs on Doctrine

While we accept areas of doctrinal teaching that are considered orthodox in nature, we remain aware that there are nuances within that orthodoxy that differ from what is presented here. While we desire unity in doctrine, we understand that this does not necessarily mean unanimity. Because of this, we will teach the following, but will allow for freedom of conviction on interpretational nuances, provided that any interpretation is based on the Bible alone and that no interpretation becomes an issue that hinders the Church in its mission and vision. The Elder Team will have the responsibility and authority to determine whether an interpretation is based on the Bible or has become an issue that hinders the Church in its purpose, mission, and vision.

#### 1. Scripture

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16,17

#### 2. Theology Proper

Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the Lord, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.<sup>1</sup>

We believe that God is, and that He is Who He says He is. His attributes are perfect and maximal. He cannot be fully contained in the mind of man or even in the pages of the Bible so any effort for the finite to exhaust the infinite will fall pitifully short of capturing His essence. It is best to allow God to define Himself, as He does in Exodus 3.

Then Moses said to God, If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, What is his name? what shall I say to them? God said to Moses, I am who I am. And he said, Say this to the people of Israel: I am has sent me to you. God also said to Moses, Say this to the people of Israel: The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 4:39 <sup>2</sup> Exodus 3:13–15

#### 3. Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ ever existed with the Father and Holy Spirit, and that in His incarnation was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and is true God and true man. (John 1:1-19; 1 Timothy 3:16)

We believe that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, as a representative and a substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are saved on the basis of His shed blood. We believe that He arose bodily from the dead on the third day in the same body in which He suffered and died. We also believe that our Lord ascended into Heaven; that He is now seated at the right hand of the Father and is our High Priest and Divine Advocate with the Father. We believe that, by His finished work of the Cross and His unceasing ministry of intercession in

Glory, Jesus Christ has procured for every believer Eternal Redemption, Eternal Salvation, and Everlasting Life. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 5:8; John 3:16, 20:27; Mark 16:19; Hebrews 5:9, 7:25, 8:1, 9:12; 1 John 2:1)

#### 4. Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person; that He convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; that He regenerates the sinner by the Word of God; that He permanently indwells the Church and each believer; that He seals, enlightens, instructs, and guides every born-again person; and that He is the sufficient power for Godly living, Christian service, and spiritual worship. (John 3:5-7, 14:16-17, 26, 16:7-15; 1 Peter 1:23; Ephesians 4:30)

#### 5. The Trinity

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)

#### 6. Creation and Fall of Man

God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."<sup>1</sup> Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created.<sup>2</sup>

When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.<sup>3</sup> This death was far more than physical, as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment.<sup>4</sup>

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.<sup>5</sup> As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;<sup>6</sup> for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:26a <sup>2</sup> Genesis 5:2 <sup>3</sup> Romans 5:12 <sup>4</sup> Hebrews 9:27

<sup>5</sup> Psalm 51:5 <sup>6</sup> Romans 3:10 <sup>7</sup> Romans 3:23

#### 7. Salvation

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!<sup>2</sup>

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.<sup>3</sup> He is so rich in kindness and grace that He purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave our sins.<sup>4</sup>

So, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.<sup>5</sup> And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.<sup>6</sup>

To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God,<sup>7</sup> children who live knowing that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:57 <sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17 <sup>3</sup> John 3:16 <sup>4</sup> Ephesians 1:7

<sup>5</sup> Romans 10:9 <sup>6</sup> Ephesians 2:8-9 <sup>7</sup> John 1:12 <sup>8</sup> Romans 8:1

## 8. The Church

We believe that the Church of Jesus Christ was begun at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended from Heaven; that it is composed solely of born-again people who have been called out from among the Jews and Gentiles to become the Body and Bride of our Lord. Christ, glorified in Heaven, is its Head and the Holy Spirit on earth is the active agent of the God-Head, who ever seeks to bring about within its ranks conformity and obedience to the Word of God and the Will of God. The one body unites believers to each other, and all to Christ; and its chief ministry is to proclaim the gospel to the world. (Acts 2, 15:14; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 5:23-24; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8)

## 9. The Ordinances

We believe that Christians are commanded to observe two ordinances: Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper. While recognizing that Water Baptism has no saving merit, it is our conviction that after one is saved, Baptism is the next step in order to portray to the world the believer's union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. It is our conviction that the scriptural method of Water Baptism is immersion. We believe that Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper to commemorate His death until He returns. We further believe that Water Baptism by immersion is observed but once, and is a sign of identification and a testimony to newness of life; but the Lord's Supper is commemorative and is to be observed often as a memorial of the Broken Body and the Shed Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Matthew 3:13-17, 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-33; Acts 8:31-38)

## 10. The Return of Jesus Christ

We believe in the future, imminent, physical, visible, and glorious return of Jesus Christ to rule and reign forever. (John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 9:28; Revelation 1:7; 21:1-5) The return of Christ, known as our blessed hope, at a time known only to God, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service, and energetic mission. (Titus 2:13; 1 John 3:2-3)

## 11. Eternity

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust (John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-18) We believe in Heaven and Hell: Heaven, the place of eternal conscious joy for all who receive Jesus Christ as their personal Savior (Psalm 16:11; John 14:1-6; Philippians 1:21-23; Revelation 21:22); Hell, the place of conscious punishment for all who reject Jesus Christ and those dying in their sin, until the final judgment, at which time death and Hell are cast into the Lake of Fire, which is the place of eternal conscious punishment. (Psalm 9:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:10-15)

## B. Beliefs on Cultural Issues

We do not pretend to know all of the answers to these difficult issues, but we do believe that we know the way to approach them. The ultimate display of our respect for the Word of God is that we are willing to make hard, prayer-informed decisions about these topics while maintaining a spirit of humility as we teach and apply them to real-life situations.

Activities permitted or performed in any facilities owned, rented, or leased by this Church, decisions of the administration of this Church, and lifestyle choices of the membership of this Church will not conflict with the following beliefs (2.02.B.1 thru 2.02.B.8):

## 1. Marriage and Sexuality

- a. We believe that marriage, as first described in Genesis and later affirmed by Jesus, is a holy institution established by God. It is the union between one man and one woman in a covenant relationship for a lifetime and symbolizes Christ's relationship with His church. (Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:22-33)
  - i. Marriage ceremonies performed in any facility owned, leased, or rented by this church, or by those licensed by this church, will be only those ceremonies joining one man with one woman as their genders were determined at birth.
- b. We believe that God clearly teaches that sexual intimacy must occur only within this biblical covenant of marriage between a man and a woman. Therefore, we believe that any form of sexual behavior outside the context of a monogamous, one-man and one-woman marriage relationship is sinful in the eyes of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4)
- c. We believe God wonderfully creates each person as male or female reflecting the image and nature of God, their sex being determined not by their self-perception but by biology at birth. (Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 139:13-16)
  - i. Participation in any program or activity that is limited to individuals of one sex is exclusively limited to individuals who are persons of that sex as determined at birth.
  - ii. Access to facilities that are designated for use by only one sex is exclusively limited to individuals who are persons of that sex as determined at birth.

## 2. Family Relationships

- a. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God, but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the Church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (Pastors and Elders) of the Church. (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12)
- b. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the Church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the Church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a wonderful gift and heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values through consistent lifestyle examples and appropriate training and discipline. (Genesis 1:26-28; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 127:3-5; Proverbs 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mark 10:6-12; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Peter 3:1-7)

## 3. Divorce and Remarriage

We believe that divorce was never part of God's design for marriage and is always harmful to the divorcing parties. However, God does allow for divorce, as in the case of sexual unfaithfulness, as seen in Matthew 19. But even in those cases where divorce may be permitted, it is not mandated and reconciliation through biblical counsel should be the ultimate goal. (Genesis 2:18-24; Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12, Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16; 1 Timothy

3:2, 12; Titus 1:6) We affirm that remarriage is permitted, but only when the divorce was on biblical grounds.

#### 4. Sanctity of Life

- a. We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion is murder and constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of human life. (Job 3:16; Psalm 51:5; 139:13-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:36, 44)
- b. We believe that an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, facilitates premature death, is assuming a decision that is to be reserved for God. We do not believe that discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary is wrong. (Exodus 20:13; 23:7; Matthew 5:21; Acts 17:28)

#### 5. Racism

We believe that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). We believe that racism, like all sin, can be confronted and overcome only through prayer and by actively seeking to be obedient to Scripture. Therefore, we are committed to reaching beyond any racial differences to demonstrate the power of biblical unity. We also believe that it is the responsibility of all people to recognize the effects of the history of racism and to seek racial reconciliation.

#### 6. Love

We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We believe that every person should be treated with compassion, love, kindness, gentleness, and dignity, no matter what views they hold. (Mark 12:28-31; John 13:34-35; Colossians 3:12)

#### 7. Lawsuits within the Church

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits within the Church. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian’s insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31-32)

#### 8. Protection of Children

We believe that children are from the Lord and must be absolutely protected within the Church from any form of abuse. The Church has zero tolerance for any person, whether paid staff, volunteer, member, or visitor, who abuses a child. (Psalm 127:3- 5; Matthew 18:6; Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:14)