

Statement of Faith

Garden Park Christian Church - Monclova, Ohio
Unanimously affirmed 9/5/2015 by the church elders

The following statements are a summation of the core teachings and truths of Scripture that form the foundation for the existence and life of Garden Park Christian Church.

The Bible

We believe the 66 books of the Bible, in both Old and New Testaments, are given by God's inspiration and that in the original writings they are without error. We believe all Scripture originated with God and speaks with His authority while reflecting the backgrounds, cultures, styles, and vocabularies of the human authors. The Bible is the final authority on all matters of Christian faith and practice.

The Person of God

We believe in one true God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is a person. He has a personality along with the desire to relate with people created in His image.

Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is fully God and, in His incarnation, was also fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born to a virgin, Mary. He lived a sinless life and died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, according to the Scripture. He was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, and now acts as the only mediator between God and people.

The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is fully God, and as the third person of the Trinity, He works to apply the saving work of Christ. He does this by bringing conviction of need for the forgiveness of Christ. He regenerates the human heart upon conversion and lives in and through the life of every Christian. His ongoing work is to guide, lead, and empower believers for godly living and service.

The Sinful Condition of All People

We believe that people were originally created in the perfect image of God for a loving relationship with Him in His eternal kingdom. However, beginning with the first man & woman (Adam and Eve), we have all rebelled against God and chosen to go our own independent way. All people are thereby alienated from God and now suffer the corruption of our nature because of our sin. The effects of this condition can only be reversed through faith in Jesus Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit, and life in God's eternal kingdom.

The Forgiveness of God

We believe that the love of God goes beyond the justice of God, in that Jesus Christ died on the cross to save us from the eternal penalty of our sin – hell and eternal separation from God. No amount of good works or human effort can restore us from our state of eternal alienation from God. Only because of God's great love and by His grace can sinners become saints and be rescued from this state of alienation. This inner grace is expressed by a change of heart, when we yield to God's authority in our lives by trusting in Jesus Christ to forgive our sins.

Assurance of Salvation

We believe that following conversion, people still have free will by which they may choose to reject Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. We maintain that it is only God who truly knows the condition of any person's heart. We will teach and uphold the importance of salvation by grace through faith as we express love and concern to all who seem to be faltering in the faith.

The Church

We believe that there is only one true church made up of all people who have been saved through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. It is reflected by a diversity of believers working and serving together, using their gifts to share Christ and to grow in Christ. Scripture commands believers to gather together in local congregations for scriptural teaching, fellowship, accountability, prayer, mutual encouragement, worship of God, and disciple-making. The church is not a building. Wherever God's people meet there is the local expression of the church. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the church, and that every local church has the obligation under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs in submission to the will of God, the Word of God, and the Spirit of God.

Headship and Ministry in the Church

God has empowered and equipped every Christian for service in the body of Christ, which is the church. Each Christian helps build up the church in unity and love. In this congregation, ministry happens under the headship of our elders. The Bible is the source for this model of leadership. Our elders are men called by God to serve as the primary servant-leaders, teachers, and pastors of the church. Under their oversight, all men and women minister in multiple ways.

Baptism

We believe that baptism by immersion, as taught and practiced in Scripture, is how a person surrenders his or her heart to God, becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ. Scripture emphasizes that God examines and knows the condition and attitude of every heart. God is not bound to baptism, but we are. So, while we affirm that Scripture binds us to uphold this biblical teaching of baptism, we also acknowledge that God is sovereign and saves people as He sees fit. Before one may become a member of this local church family, a person must be an immersed believer.

Communion

We take communion every week, because it provides us a reminder of the foundational teachings of our faith related to the death, resurrection, ascension, and promised heavenly hope of communing one future day with Jesus in Heaven. We do not believe that one must take communion every week – it is our choice.

Discipleship - The Christian Life

We believe that God made us for relationships, with Himself and with our fellow human beings. We emphasize the two greatest commandments, which are to love God with all of one's heart, mind, soul, and strength; and to love others as we love ourselves. Our Christ-like love for others, especially other Christians, is the clearest demonstration that we are true disciples. God's love for us and His Spirit living in us enable us to love others as He loves us.

We believe that the distinguishing characteristic of a Christian is Christ-likeness. Discipleship is the foundational ministry of this local church, facilitating the development of such people. Love for others displayed in ministering to the poor, reaching out to people who are spiritually lost, serving others, practicing forgiveness, and the like are all signs of the presence of God's kingdom and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Those with genuine faith are known by the fruit of their lives and their pattern of faithfulness to Jesus and His commandments. This local church strives to be a counter-culture community, whose members live Christ-centered lives.

Marriage and Sexuality

We believe that marriage is a lifelong commitment, intended only for one man and one woman. It is to be a monogamous union. Marriage is to follow the Biblical ideal of uniting one man and one woman, an earthly illustration of the relationship between Christ and His church. Marriage is primarily a spiritual covenant between a man and a woman and God. Sexual union, living together outside of marriage, or any other sexual activity that goes against the teaching of Scripture, including same sex relations, is a sin causing grave harm to the Christian and his or her witness.

Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that human life and personhood begin at conception and that all human life is sacred, from conception to death.

Spiritual Gifts

We believe every Christian is gifted by God with spiritual gifts that equip him or her to serve Jesus Christ according to His will for their lives. The elders and staff are committed to helping every member to discover at least one area of gift related ministry with which they can serve this church family. All spiritual gifts must be used to edify Christ and His church, not the individual members.

End Times

We believe that Jesus Christ will return one day to judge the living and the dead. All people will either exist eternally separated from God because of their personal sin, or eternally with God because of their personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence. Beyond our acceptance of this key biblical message of hope and truth, any discussion of the "end times" is not considered a salvation issue and should in no way hinder the Lord's work in and through His church.