

ARTICLE 2

STATEMENT OF FAITH

SECTION 2.01 – STATEMENT OF FAITH

Williams Creek Baptist Church is a confessional church in that we embrace the essential truths of Christianity as these were defined [in the New Testament], upheld by the great councils of the church and continued in the heritage of historical evangelicalism birthed in the Reformation. We acknowledge that the law of Christ is the standard by which we love and serve one another [John 13:34-35]. [Throughout history, the church has upheld these biblical foundations in the midst of great cultural and societal shifts and has done so, even at times with great sacrifice, embracing the Word of God and establishing a clear witness to the Truths therein.] The New Hampshire Confession of Faith [1833], which is a summary of the more exhaustive London Confession of 1689 and The Baptist Faith & Message [1925, 1963, & 2000] articulate the legacy of our spiritual forefathers who contended for the faith once delivered to the saints [Jude 1:3]. Historic evangelicalism was confessional in that it embraced the essential truths of Christianity as these were defined by the great councils of the church. We are committed to the inerrancy, infallibility, sufficiency, and authority of the Scripture.

(A) The Holy Scriptures. We believe the Old and New Testament are the verbally and plerarily inspired Word of God. Being fully persuaded that the Holy Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed and are therefore the final authority for all faith and life and are the ultimate constitution for His church. The sixty six books of the Old and New Testament are the complete and divine revelation of God to Man. The Scriptures are interpreted literally by consistently applying the rules of grammar, literature, history, and culture in order to unlock and understand the author's meaning. This method of interpretation recognizes the fact that the authors of the Scriptures were divinely inspired. We, the members of Williams Creek Baptist Church, joyfully pursue the exaltation of Christ in the life of the church through the constitution set forth in these pages. (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:20-21; Heb. 4:12)

We also believe that the Scripture interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined decrees or rules of life that define mans' responsibilities before a Holy God and are absolute and applicable to all people, in all places, and in all ages (past, present, and future). The Scripture not only reveal the way of salvation, but they are divinely ordered through which God directs man according to His purpose and are presented therewith in: The Law, the Prophets, Wisdom literature, the Gospels, Epistles, and Revelation. (Deut. 4:1-2, 44-45; Deut 30:1-20; Ezra 9:5-11; Ps 11:10; Prov 1:1-7; Prov 3:1-26; Mark 1:1; Matt 24:14; Mark 16:15; Luke 16:16; John 20:30-31; Luke 24:25-27; 1 Pet 1:10-13; 2 Pet 1:16-21; Gal 3:22-24; Eph 3:1-13; 1 Tim 3:16; Rev 1:1-3; Rev 22:10-21)

(B) The Godhead. We believe in one triune God, eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. Each functions differently in respect to God's dealings with man. (Deut. 6:4; Eph 4:4-6).

- 1) **The Father.** The first Person of the Trinity orders and directs all things according to His own purpose, pleasure and grace. He has decreed all things that come to pass are for His own glory. He graciously involves Himself in the affairs of men, hears and answers prayer, and saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (Matt. 6:9; John 5:19-24; Eph. 1:3-6).
- 2) **The Son.** Jesus Christ is both the eternal Son of God and virgin-born Son of man. Fully God and fully man, He surrendered nothing of His deity during His earthly life. Having led a sinless life, He satisfied the Father's justice concerning sin by His death. We believe in His bodily resurrection, His physical ascension, and His visible return to this earth to establish His earthly kingdom. (1 Cor. 15; Heb. 2:17-18; Rom. 3:24-26; Col. 2:9; John 1:14-18; Rev. 20:11-15).
- 3) **The Holy Spirit.** The third Person of the Trinity executes the will of God in the world of men. The Holy Spirit applies the salvation Jesus Christ secured through His death on the cross and convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. The Holy Spirit empowers the church to live a lifestyle that is pleasing to God, endowing it with special gifts which equip believers to accomplish distinct ministries which were planned beforehand by God the Father. (1 Cor. 12; Eph. 2:10; John 3:1-8; John 16:4-15; Eph. 1:13-14, 2:8-10; John 15:16; Gal. 5:16-25).

(C) The Person and Work of Christ

- 1) We humbly submit to Him who is the only head of His body and the only lawgiver for His church that in all things Christ might have first place and final say. (Eph 1:22-23; Jas 4:12; Col 1:18)
- 2) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man. (Isa 7:14; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14; Cor 5:19-21; Gal 4:4-5; Phil 2:5-8).
- 3) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice, and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (Acts 2:18-36; Rom. 3:24-25; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:3-5)
- 4) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Acts 1:9-10; Rom. 8:34, Heb 9:24, 7:25; 1 John 2:1-2).

(D) The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

- 1) We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing

- them unto the day of redemption. (John 116:8-11; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14)
- 2) We believe that He is the divine Teacher who assists believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit. (Eph. 1:17-18, 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27).
 - 3) We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the church to do the work of the ministry. (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:7-12).
 - 5) We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, (i.e. speaking in tongues, miraculous signs and wonders) served to authenticate the Apostles of Jesus Christ, whom He called, endowed with His power and authority, and appointed as the foundation of His church, and therefore were specific to the first century apostolic age. Ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, although God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing. (1 Cor. 1:22, 13:8, 14:21,-22)

(E) The Nature of Man

- 1) We believe that man was directly created in the image and likeness of God to enjoy His fellowship and to fulfill God's will on this earth. Man fell into sin by a voluntary act of personal disobedience to the will of God; consequently, all men are spiritually dead, alienated from God, and subject to the certainty of both physical and spiritual death apart from Jesus Christ. The fall of man was a once-for-all historical fact. Its spiritually deadening effect spread to all men, each of whom is born with a sinful nature and sins habitually in thought, word and deed. (Gen. 1:26-27; Gen. 2:7; Gen. 3:3-4; Rom. 1:18-32; Rom. 3:10-23; Eph. 2:1-3, 4:17-19).

(F) Salvation and Assurance of Believers

- 1) We believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins as the only sufficient sacrifice. All who believe in Him are declared justified by the Father on the grounds of Jesus' death and resurrection. All who repent and receive the Lord Jesus Christ by grace through faith have been regenerated by and baptized in the Holy Spirit. They are thereby the children of God forever and members in the one true church, the Body of Christ. This salvation results in righteous living and good works as the believer submits his life to the Word of God and the direction of the Holy Spirit. (John 14:6; Titus 3:4-7; Acts 4:12; John 1:12; Rom. 3:21-26; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 1:7, 2:8-9; Heb. 10:10-12; 1 John 5:11-13; Gal. 3:26; John 1:12, 3:16, 5:24).

(G) The Church

- 1) We believe that all who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit belong to the one true church and are directed by the Scriptures to associate themselves in local, visible churches. The local church is the only visible representation of Christ's invisible church and consists only of regenerated, born-again believers. The two-fold purpose of the church is to lead men to Christ and mature them in the faith. (Heb. 10:24-25;

- Acts 2:41-47, 4:1-16; 1 Cor. 12-14; Matt. 16:13-28, 28:18-20; Eph. 2:19-22, 24; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; John 14:1-3; Matt. 24-25; Acts 2:9-11).
- 2) We believe the local church is autonomous in its relationship, free of any external authority or controls. Any affiliations, societies, organizations, associations or agencies this church affiliates with to further the objective stated in the Purpose Statements are not authoritative in matters of church practice or belief. (Acts 13:1-4, 15:19-31, 20:28; Rom. 16:1, 4:1; 1 Cor. 3:9,16; 1 Cor. 5:4-7, 13; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).
 - 3) We believe the local church to be autonomous in the election of its own members to the biblical offices of elder and deacon. (1 Tim 3, 5:17-25).

(H) Separation

- 1) We believe that believers should maintain a godly testimony and live in such a way that their lives do not bring reproach upon their Savior. God commands His people to separate from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations, and to refrain from all immodest and immoderate philosophies that seek to destroy or undermine the truth of Biblical Christianity. (Lev. 19:28; Rom. 12:1-2, 14:13; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Eph 5:1-5; 2 Tim. 3:15; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

(I) The Second Coming of Christ

- 1) We believe in that *blessed hope*, the personal imminent return of Christ, Who will rapture His church prior to the seven-year tribulation period. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will personally and visibly return with His saints, to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom, which was promised to the nation of Israel. (Ps. 89:3-4; Dan 2:31-45; Zech. 14:4-11; 1 Thess. 1:10, 4:13-18; Titus 2:13, Rev. 3:10, 10:11-16, 20:1-6).

(J) The Eternal State

- 1) We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. (Matt. 25:46; Jn 5:28-29, 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-13).
- 2) We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23, 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:4-6).
- 3) We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when with the soul and body reunited, they shall appear at the Great White Throne of Judgment and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment and torment. (Matt 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15).

(K) The Personality of Satan

- 1) We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the Fall of Man; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (Jb 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11, 25:41, Rev, 20:10).

(L) Creation

- 1) We believe that the Genesis account of creation is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of God's creation of the universe in six literal, 24-hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and the Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin. (Gen. 1-2; Ex 20:11).

(M) Baptism

- 1) We believe that baptism is an essential first step for a believer who seeks to become a disciple of Jesus Christ who commissioned His church to go into the world, make disciples, and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19).
- 2) We uphold the act of baptism as a sacred, uncompromisable injunction of the Scriptures. Every believer, serious in his or her faith, will follow Christ in obedience to His command to be baptized. Baptism declares a variety of scriptural truths:
 - It proclaims Christ's death and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-4)
 - It serves public notice to the world of one's new life in Christ (Matt.10:32).
 - It pictures a believer's death to sin and his resurrection to a spiritual life and lifestyle through the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:3-7, 10-11).
- 3) Our method of baptism is immersion. We feel strongly that this mode is the one presented in the New Testament for the following reasons:
 - The Greek word for baptism means: "to submerge, plunge, drench, saturate, dip." (Arndt and Gingrich, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 131).
 - Immersion followed the Jewish proselyte practice.
 - The practice of the early church was immersion.
 - The command of the Scriptures is "be baptized." By it, we both please the Lord and declare His reality in our lives and to the world.

(N) The Lords' Supper

- 1) We believe the Lord's Supper is summed up in the command of Christ, "*Do this in remembrance of Me.*" It is first and foremost a memorial of Christ and His redemptive death, and secondly an expression of our fellowship with one another. We believe the Lord's Supper is open to all who meet the prerequisites outlined in the Scripture... that one personally know Jesus Christ as Savior and that they have a cleansed life. We corporately share the Lord's Supper accordingly to the Scriptural

guidelines, “*as often as you do this, do this remembrance of Me*”. (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24-25; Ps. 24:3-4; 1 Cor. 11:17-34).

(O) Civil Government

- 1) We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home, 2) the church, and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. We believe that we must obey the state unless it requires us to act contrary to our faith at which time we must obey God rather than the state. (Matt. 22:15-33; Acts 5:29; Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Titus 3:1-2; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:13-14).

(P) Human Sexuality

- 1) We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Marriage is the uniting of one man born a man and one woman born a woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. It is therefore not lawful for any man to have more than one wife, or for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time. It is the duty of Christians to marry in the Lord. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between one man and one woman who are married to each other and that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. Therefore, any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexual conduct, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, any use of pornography, or any attempt to alter (i.e. identifying or expressing a gender identity that does not match a person's physical/genetic sex) or change one's physical/genetic sex, is against the design of God and is therefore sin. We are all broken in our sin and are in great need of acceptance by God through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. We are all guilty sinners who have rebelled against a holy God and who desperately need to respond to Christ in repentant faith. It is the awareness of our sin that reveals our need for redemption in Christ. Self-acceptance must not replace repentance and the liberating love of Christ that delivers us from bondage to our sins. Faith, sin and repentance are Christ-directed. By God's grace, love, and the provision of His Son's death upon the cross, all who will, can receive salvation and forgiveness of sin. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exod. 20:12; Leviticus 20:10-24; Deut.6:4-9; Josh. 24:15; 1 Sam. 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Prov. 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22;

12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Eccl. 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matt. 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:1-12; 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; 1 Tim. 5:8,14; 2 Tim. 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Heb. 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7; Rev. 21:5-8).

(Q) Family Relationships

- 1) We believe the husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.
- 2) We believe children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Leviticus 20:10-24; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:1-12; 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7; Revelation 21:5-8).

(R) Divorce and Remarriage

- 1) We believe that God disapproves of and forbids divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery except on the grounds of fornication or abandonment of the unbelieving spouse. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold position of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they must meet the God-given biblical qualifications to be considered for the offices of elder or deacon. (Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).

(S) Abortion

- 1) We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or physical or

mental well-being of the mother are acceptable. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1,5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).

(T) Euthanasia

- 1) We believe that the direct taking of an innocent human life is a moral evil regardless of the intention. Life is a gift of God and must be respected from conception until natural death. Thus we believe that an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder contrary to the will of God. (Ex. 20:13, 23:7; Matt 5:21; Acts 17:28).

(U) Love

- 1) 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 are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions. (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10; 17-21; 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 John 3:17-18).

(V) Lawsuits Between Believers

- 1) We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. 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 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32; Matt 18:15-17).

(W) Missions

- 1) We believe that it is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. Our new life in Christ will inspire us to share His great love with others. We have been commissioned by Christ our Lord to go into the world, preaching the gospel, making disciples and baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This will be accomplished, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, through a concerted effort to personally engage our world for Christ, as well as the sending and supporting of missionaries both locally and around the world. (Gen. 12:1-3; Ex. 19:5-6; Isa. 6:1-8, Matt. 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18, 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Rom. 10:13-15; Eph. 3:1-11; 1 Thess. 1:8; 2 Tim. 4:5; Heb. 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Pet. 2:4-10; Rev. 22:17).

(X) Giving

- 1) We believe that God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have been entrusted with the message the gospel and thereto, the stewardship of their resources. They are therefore under obligation to serve the Lord with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth. (Gen. 14:20; Lev. 27:30-32; Deut. 8:18; Mal. 3:8-12; Matt. 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42, 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47, 5:1-11, 17:24-25, 20:35; Rom. 6:6-22, 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 4:1-2, 6:19-20, 12, 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8-9, 12:15; Phil. 4:10-19; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).