

Statement of Belief

The Nature of God

We believe that there is one God, the Creator of all things, eternally existing in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three persons have precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfection, and are worthy of our worship and obedience.

(Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4; Acts 5:3-4 and 17:24-25; II Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 3:1-3; I John 5:7; Revelation 1:4-6)

We believe God is Spirit and is limitless, eternal, self-existent, unchangeable, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, sovereign, holy, just, righteous, loving, good, compassionate, merciful, truthful, and faithful.

(Exodus 3:14; Deuteronomy 32:4; I Kings 8:27; Psalm 90:2, Psalm 100, Psalm 139:7-11, Psalm 147:5; Malachi 3:6; John 4:24, 14:6, and 17:25; Acts 17:28; Romans 8:28; Ephesians 1:11; I Peter 1:15-16; I John 4:8; Revelation 19:6)

“Before the mountains were born or You brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God.” (Ps. 90:2)

God the Father

We believe that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders, arranges, and controls all things according to His own sovereign purposes and for His glory. He does not approve of sin and holds every individual accountable to Him for their personal actions and attitudes.

(Isaiah 43:7 and 48:11; Habakkuk 1:13; Luke 13:3; John 3:16; Ephesians 1:3-11; Romans 8:28 and 11:36; James 1:13; I Peter 1:17)

The Fatherhood of God involves both His designation within the divine Trinity and His relationship with the human beings He has created. As Creator, He is Father to all people, but He is a spiritual Father only to believers in Jesus Christ. He saves from sin all who are spiritually reborn into the family of God and share in the full responsibilities and privileges as sons and daughters of God. The Father lovingly cares for believers and nurtures and disciplines them as a Father cares for His own children.

(John 1:12; Acts 17:29; Romans 8:14-15; II Corinthians 6:18; Galatians 3:26 and 4:6; Ephesians 1:5 and 4:6; Hebrews 12:5-9)

“I will be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.” (II Cor. 6:18)

Statement of Belief Continued

Jesus Christ the Son

We believe that Jesus Christ exists as God eternally, that nothing has been created or made without the presence and work of Jesus Christ.

(John 1:1-4, 3:16, and 5:18; Colossians 1:15-18)

We believe that Jesus Christ came to earth in human form, was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, in order to redeem us from our sins. He became fully human when He was conceived in the womb by the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit. He lived a sinless life and died a sinless death, sacrificing Himself as a substitutionary atonement for the sins of the entire world.

(Romans 5:8; II Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 2:9; I Peter 2:24; I John 2:2)

His personal, literal, and historical resurrection from the dead conquered sin and death forever and attests to God the Father's acceptance of Jesus Christ's finished work of redemption. He ascended to heaven and now sits at the right hand of God. He will ultimately judge all creation.

(Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 11:1-4; Matthew 1:21-23, 11:27-29, 25:31-46, 28:1-6; Mark 2:10, 14:61-62; John 10:11, 20:27-28; Acts 26:22-23; Romans 1:4, 8:34; I Corinthians 15:4; Galatians 4:4-5; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 2:9, 3:1; II Timothy 4:1)

“But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (John 5:8)

The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the divine Trinity, eternally present and active throughout the Old and New Testaments. The Holy Spirit lives within each believer, convicting us of sin and making us children of God by baptizing us into the body of Christ.

(Numbers 11:17,29; I Samuel 10:6; Joel 2:28-29; Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:35; John 3:5-8; Acts 1:5; Romans 8:9,13; Galatians 4:6)

The Holy Spirit is our eternally abiding Comforter and Helper and is always with us, pointing us to Jesus Christ and leading us into a knowledge of the truth. It is the power of the Holy Spirit within us that enables us to live the Christian life.

(John 7:38-39, 14:16-17, 15:26, and 16:7-15; Acts 1:8, and 2:1-4; Romans 8:1-9; I Corinthians 2:10-14, 6:19, 12:13; Philippians 3:3)

“...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Statement of Belief Continued

The Bible

We believe that the Bible, made up of 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is God-breathed, meaning that the Holy Spirit gave the very words to holy men of old. We believe that these words were and are fully inspired by the Spirit of God in all parts of the Bible - the historical, poetic, doctrinal, and prophetic books and passages, as God gave it in the original manuscripts. The Bible is the complete, infallible, and unalterable special revelation of God Himself to all human beings and is inerrant in all that it teaches. It is the standard of Truth for the church.

(Deuteronomy 5:22 and 6:1-3; Psalm 19:7-11; Mark 12:26; Acts 1:16; I Corinthians 2:13; II Timothy 3:15-16; II Peter 1:20-21)

We believe that the Bible, from the beginning to the end, centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ, including both His first and second comings to earth. Every chapter of both the Old and New Testaments, properly read and understood, points and leads to Jesus Christ.

(Luke 24:27,44; John 5:39; Acts 17:2-3, 18:28, and 28:23; Revelation 1:1-3)

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (II Tim.3:16)

The Fall of the Human Race: Sin

We believe that human beings, originally created in the image of God, fell from their innocent and sinless condition by disobeying God in the Garden of Eden. As a consequence of this disobedience, sin and the due penalty of death entered into human history, alienating and separating us from God. All creation came under the curse of sin and death and is unable to save itself. ALL persons have sinned, are spiritually dead, and come short of the glory of God.

(Genesis 1:26-27, 2:16-17, 3:6, and 6:5; Psalm 14:1-3 and 51:1-5; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Jeremiah 17:9; John 3:6, 19, and 8:6-7; Romans 3:10,23, 5:12, 7:18, and 8:5-22; Ephesians 2:1-2; I Timothy 5:6; I Peter 2:22; I John 1:8 and 3:8)

“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23)

The Necessity of the New Birth

We believe that because of sin no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless that person is born again by the Spirit of God through Jesus Christ, and has received a new spiritual nature. No degree of reformation, however great, no attainment in morality, however useful, no baptism or other ordinance, however administered, can help the sinner take even one step toward heaven that would merit God justifying them for their actions.

(Isaiah 64:6; John 3:5,18 and 5:40; Galatians 6:15; Philippians 3:4-9; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; I Peter 1:23)

**“For you have been born again...through the living and enduring word of God.”
(I Peter 1:23)**

Statement of Belief Continued

Salvation

We believe that our salvation has been accomplished solely by the blood of Jesus Christ when He died on the cross of Calvary, taking all of our sins upon Himself. We believe that no repentance, feeling, faith, good resolution, sincere efforts, or submission to the rules and regulations of any church can add in any way to the value of the precious blood of Jesus, or to the merit of the work that He finished for us. Only Jesus Christ, united in His person, in true and proper divinity, and with perfect sinless humanity, could and can save us.

(Leviticus 17:11; Matthew 26:28; Romans 5:6-9; II Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 2:9-10; I Peter 1:18-19)

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” (II Cor. 5:21)

Eternal Security

We believe that all who are born again by the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus are assured of their salvation the very day they receive Jesus Christ as their Savior. This assurance of salvation is not based on a sudden discovery of personal worth but on the testimony of God Himself in His written Word, the Bible, where He tells us that He loves us, has saved us from our sins, and will keep us with Him throughout all eternity.

(Luke 10:20; John 6:47; Romans 8:33-39; II Corinthians 5:6-8; II Timothy 1:12; I John 5:13)

“I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life.” (Jn. 6:47)

The Believer's Position Before God

We believe that the moment we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior and we put our trust in Him for eternal life, we pass out of death and into everlasting life. We believe that Jesus Christ has completely taken away our sins before God, and as God looks at us He sees Jesus as our substitute. As the Father loves the Son, He loves us and accepts us because we are linked with Jesus by faith forever.

(John 5:24 and 17:23; Acts 13:39; Romans 5:1; Ephesians 4:6,13; I John 4:17 and 5:11-12)

“Through Him everyone who believes is justified...” (Acts 13:39a)

The Life of the Believer

We believe that as Christians we are called to live a holy life, such that our spirits and our bodies are subject to the control of the Holy Spirit and not the control of the lusts of our flesh. We know that as long as we are alive on this earth we will struggle with the desires of our flesh, and we will need to submit ourselves to God on a daily basis, putting on all the armor of God and trusting that He who began a good work in us will bring it to completion. If not, our old sinful nature will be our basis of life and will bring dishonor to the name of Christ.

(John 15:1-5; Romans 6:12-14, 7:14-25, 8:12-13, and 13:14; Galatians 2:20 and 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24, 6:10-18; Philippians 1:6; Colossians 3:1-10; I Peter 1:14-16; I John 3:5-9)

Statement of Belief Continued

The Church

We believe that the Church is a spiritual organism and is made up of all authentic believers in Jesus Christ from all across the face of the earth. We believe that we are all baptized and united into one body by the Holy Spirit, both Jews or Gentiles. We are responsible to keep the unity of the Spirit, to act in peace towards each other, and to rise above our prejudices and bigotry in dealing with each other. As members of Christ's body, we are to love one another purely and fervently through the grace of God. The local assembly called the church is an autonomous group observing the sacraments (or ordinances) of Baptism and the Lord's Supper (also called Communion) in obedience to the commands and institutions of Christ.

(Matthew 16:16-18, 28:19; Acts 2:32-47; Romans 12:5; I Corinthians 12:12-17; II Corinthians 11:2; Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 1:20-23, 2:11-22 and 4:3-10; Colossians 3:14-15)

“...so in Christ we who are many form one body...” (Rom. 12:5a)

The Sacraments

We believe that two sacraments or ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion) *(Acts 2:38-42)*:

Christian baptism is a sign and seal of God's promise that “whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” Christian baptism with water is also a public testimony of the believer's personal faith in Jesus Christ and illustrates the believer's death to the old life and resurrection to a new life in Christ. Baptism is also a sign of the believer's identification with Christ's body, the Church. Baptism is also administered to infant children, upon a parent's request, as a public testimony to the grace of God and the promise of salvation given through His everlasting covenant, established first with Abraham but continuing in and fulfilled perfectly by Jesus Christ. It is acknowledged that baptism alone does not regenerate from sin, and that children baptized in infancy must come to a sure and certain personal faith, expressed through their individual repentance and confession of Jesus as Savior at an age of understanding, and reflected in an ongoing testimony to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in their life.

NOTE: This church recognizes the validity of all forms of water baptism used to signify this life commitment, including sprinkling, dipping, full immersion, or similar forms, ie, the amount of water used and where it is applied does not invalidate the efficacy of the sacrament. The church also recognizes that individuals can be saved by God without having been baptized, but that we are to follow the example and command of Christ to be baptized.

(Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:21-22, 22:40-43; Acts 2:37-39, 41-42 and 8:36-39; Romans 6:1-11, 10:13; I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:4-6; Colossians 2:11-12;)

We believe that the Lord's Supper proclaims the continual commemoration of the death of Christ until He comes again, and, to be worthy partakers, should always be preceded by worshipful self-examination and confession of sin. We believe that the elements of communion are symbolic of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, but that Christ is truly present in the celebration of this meal by His Holy Spirit. The Lord's Supper is a time to remember that Christ's body was the sacrifice for our sins and that Christ's shed blood ushered in the new covenant, whereby we personally come before God apart from any system of priests or sacrifices.

Statement of Belief Continued

Spiritual Gifts

We believe that the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to every believer for service to the Body of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom on the earth. These gifts are to be exercised for the glory of Christ, the Head of the Church, and the building up of His Body.

(Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians 12:4-11; I Peter 4:10-11)

We believe We believe that the church age was initiated through the ministry of the apostles following the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and that God granted certain “sign-gifts,” including speaking in “tongues” (languages previously unknown to the speaker), the interpretation of tongues, miracles and healing.

We believe these gifts were given to the apostles and were displayed by them and, in the case of speaking in tongues, by some who believed, to confirm the message of the Gospel and the power of the Gospel to bring new life. As the Scriptures below confirm, these gifts are given by the Holy Spirit for His purposes, as He wills. All the gifts of the Spirit are not normative for all believers at all times. Many misunderstandings have arisen and much division within the Body has been caused by a misinterpretation of certain “sign-gifts” and their misapplication. Nevertheless, we believe God’s wisdom is greater than ours and we acknowledge God’s sovereignty over the gifts the Spirit bestows upon His children. Because God is a God of order all things should be done in accordance with His revealed will in His Word and under the oversight of the Elders whom He has appointed, for the building up of the Body of Christ and for the glory of God and the furtherance of His kingdom.

(I Corinthians 12:1-11, 28-31, 13:3-10; 12:12; Hebrews 2:2-4)

We believe God hears and answers prayer in accordance with His own perfect will for the healing of the sick and afflicted, whether physically, psychologically or spiritually, and that the Church is called to lay hands upon the sick, trusting God to give them peace, strength, endurance and, when He desires, even physical healing, according to what He knows is best and will bring Him the greatest glory.

(James 5:13-16; I John 5:14-15; I Corinthians 10:13)

NOTE: A new teaching has arisen in our day that declares that there are new “apostles” who speak forth the Word of God in new revelations said to be from the Spirit. We reject this as a false teaching that is leading people away from the authority of God’s Word as it is revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

(II Corinthians 11:12-15)

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.” (I Cor. 12:4)

Statement of Belief Continued

Life After Death

We believe that, at death, the souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation pass into His presence immediately, and remain there in conscious bliss until the resurrection of their bodies at His Second Coming. Then the soul and body, reunited, will be in communion with Him forever. At death, the souls of unbelievers remain in conscious misery with everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord. This will last until the final judgment of the Great White Throne at the close of the Millennium, when soul and body, reunited, will be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated but to be punished with everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord.

(Luke 16:19-26 and 23:43; II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15)

Eschatology: The Doctrine of "Last Things"

We believe that the world will not improve by human effort and that many will continue in their unbelief until Jesus returns. We further believe that as God's judgment approaches, the professing body of Christians will experience among its members a fearful defection from the faith. We believe that in the future a great time of tribulation will occur on earth, and that at some time, known only to the Father, Jesus Christ will return to earth and establish and rule an earthly Millennial Age, when Israel will be restored to her own land and the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord. We believe that at some time in the future, before God pours out His wrath upon the earth, the Lord Jesus will come in person to rapture or "carry away" His Church to meet Him in the air. This personal, visible, and glorious return of Christ for His Church is the blessed hope set forth in the Gospels.

(Matthew 24:15-31; Luke 12:35-40 and 17:26-30; Acts 15:14-17; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; II Thessalonians 2:3-8; II Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 2:11-15; II Peter 3:9)

NOTE: We realize that many "options" or viewpoints are available when speaking pre-, mid-, and post-tribulation positions, and pre-, post-, and a-millennial positions. We believe the Bible teaches that there is a rapture of the Church and that, in relation to that, there will be a time of great tribulation on the earth, and a thousand-year personal, physical reign of Jesus Christ over the whole world. While there are variations as to the exact timing of the rapture of the Church, the Church's involvement or lack of involvement in the tribulation, and some of the details regarding the millennial Kingdom, it must be agreed that these events will take place.

“Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book.” (Rev.22:12)

“The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life...He who testifies to these things says, **‘Yes I am coming soon’**. Amen. Come, LORD Jesus!

(Rev. 22:17, 20)





Abbreviated Statement On Baptism

Our understanding of God's Covenant of Grace with believers, revealed in Genesis 15:6; Acts 2:38-39; Romans 4:1-16; Galatians 3:17-29 and other passages of Scripture leads us to make the following statement concerning the sacrament of baptism within Christ's body:

We believe that baptism with water is intended by God to be a sign and seal of His promise to exist eternally in a relationship of love with those who by faith confess Jesus Christ as Savior and LORD, and to consider them as righteous in His sight and heirs of His eternal kingdom.

We do NOT believe that baptism is effective in producing regeneration or as a "guarantee" of eternal life. Because God lives in a covenant relationship with His people, we claim God's promise that *"all who call on the name of the LORD will be saved"* (Romans 10:13; Acts 2:39) for infants and children born within the covenant family; and we claim that same promise for those brought into God's family through the work of His Spirit, moving them to believe His promise and to confess their faith in Christ Jesus. In both cases, in the baptism of infants and in the baptism of adults, baptism is a sign and seal of God's promise.

In the case of children born within God's covenant community, God calls parents and the Church to instruct their children in the truth revealed in His Word, believing that the Holy Spirit must produce within them true regeneration, the new birth, which will result in their confessing Jesus Christ as Savior and LORD. A child who thus grows up within the covenant community is called to confess their faith in Jesus Christ, looking back on their baptism as the beginning of God's gracious work to bring them to know Him, to love Him and to serve Him. To God be the glory!!

In the case of those born outside of God's covenant community, to whom God reveals Himself by various means through His Word and in whom God works by His Spirit to produce regeneration, resulting in true repentance and faith, we joyfully celebrate God's grace with them in the sacrament of baptism, pointing them to God's grace and to His promise. To God be the glory.

We believe the point of baptism is to reveal our helplessness to save ourselves, and our desperate need to be washed by the blood of Christ and born again by the power of His Spirit. It is GOD's work, from beginning to end. *"To all who received Him (Jesus), to those who believed in His name (faith), He gave the right to become children of God – children born NOT of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God"* (John 1:12-13).

May the Spirit of God unite our hearts in giving thanks for God's grace in Christ Jesus, for His promise of salvation to all who call upon His name, and for His presence with His people, who seek Him with all their heart.

(An extended statement with further explanation is available to those who desire it, and we are available to answer questions that may arise concerning this or other statements concerning baptism or other doctrinal issues.)