

STATEMENT OF FAITH



The Bible

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were written by men, divinely inspired, and are God's revelation of Himself to humanity.

We believe "all Scripture" - the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments - "is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIV). We hold that the Holy Scriptures are the final authority for faith and life to all people of all generations (2 Peter 1:20-21; Matthew 5:18; Matthew 24:35). Finally, we hold the Holy Scriptures to be inerrant, that is, it is perfect with respect to purpose.

One God

We believe that there is one true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal being; Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Sovereign Ruler of the universe. God is infinitely holy and perfect. We owe Him our highest love, reverence, and obedience. God eternally exists as three persons: The Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each of whom have equal power and deity, and each with distinct personal attributes (2 Corinthians 13:14).

The Father

God the Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and human history according to the purpose of His grace. He is all-powerful, all-loving, and all-wise. He is fatherly in His attitude towards all people (Gen. 1,2:7; Exodus 3:14; John 1:1-5).

The Son

We believe Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, fully human and fully God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary (John 1:1-2,14; Luke 1:35). Jesus perfectly revealed and carried out the will of God on earth, taking upon Himself the demands and necessities of human nature and identifying Himself completely with people. Yet Jesus never sinned. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and His death on the cross and subsequent resurrection redeemed people from sin and inaugurated the coming of His Kingdom. He was physically raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples and many other witnesses (Romans 3:24; 1 Cor 15:1-8; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 2:24). He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of the Father, where He is the One Mediator, reconciling God and humanity. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to fulfill His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the

living and ever-present Lord (John 5:39; John 8:31-32; Acts 1:9-10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:24; Romans 8:34; 1 Cor 15:12-28; 1 John 2:1-2; 1 Peter 4:5; Romans 14:9; 2 Timothy 4:1).

The Holy Spirit

God the Holy Spirit lives in the hearts of those who acknowledge and follow Christ. He inspired people of old to write the Scriptures. He enables people to understand truth. He exalts Christ and convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls people to the Savior and initiates spiritual re-birth. He guides daily, cultivates Christ-like character, comforts believers, and bestows spiritual gifts (John 14; John 16:8-11; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 5:18).

The Gospel

Creation

We believe that God created all things, and that His creation was good (Genesis 1:1-25). He created people in His image and likeness, to love, to worship, and to be in fellowship with Him, to care for one another, and to be stewards of His good creation (Psalm 86: 9-13, Genesis 2:18-24, Genesis 2:15).

Fall

In spite of God's love, care, and providence, Adam and Eve sinned, rebelling against God. Through that sin, the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God (Genesis 3). Since then, our relationships with God, with one another, and with His creation have been damaged beyond our ability to repair, and we have continued in and perpetuated our rebellion against God (Genesis 3:16-19; Genesis 4-11). Nevertheless, God has continued to sustain His creation and in doing so provided testimony of Himself to all (Acts 14:15-17). He also put into motion His plan to redeem His people and His creation through the calling of Noah, Abraham, and the nation of Israel. Through the Law and the prophets, God proclaimed what life in His Kingdom is like, and promised restoration through the coming Messiah. In spite of this, God's people continued to sin and rebel against Him, and failed in their mission to be a blessing to the world.

Rescue

While we were caught in our sin, Jesus came into our world, and lived among us. He proclaimed the coming of His Kingdom, invited us into a new way of life, and died for our sins to reconcile us to Himself. Through that, we can also be reconciled to one another, to creation, and are freed to enter into the life He offers. We believe salvation is an act of God's grace involving the redemption of the whole person. Salvation is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood, obtained eternal redemption for the believer. Salvation includes spiritual rebirth, including repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ; sanctification, meaning growth and maturity in Christ throughout one's life; and glorification, the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed (John 3:16; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-10; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Only the grace of God can bring a person back into His holy fellowship and enable them to fulfill the creative purpose of God.

Mission

God calls those who believe in Him and have received His salvation to join in His Kingdom work. First, we are called to be His body, the church. The church is made up of all people who have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and Jesus is the head of the church. The local church is an autonomous assembly of believers and it should seek to know and carry out the will of Christ. It is the church's mission to live out the Gospel in word and deed, to make disciples of all peoples, and to participate with other churches in the advancement of the Gospel throughout the world. We recognize believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion, the Eucharist) as scriptural means of testimony for the church (Matthew 16:17-18; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 5:25-27; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Acts 14:27; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:41-42; Acts 18:8; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Living out the Gospel in word and deed includes bringing hope and healing to the world. We believe that the sacredness of humanity is evident in that Christ died for people; therefore, every person possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and love. We therefore reject any abuse of people, including racism, sexism, and religious persecution, and we should work against any such abuse. We also believe that Christ followers should work to end the suffering of people from poverty, tyranny, and injustice (Genesis 1:26-27; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 3:22-23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-10,12-13).

Completion

God, in His own time and in His own way will bring the world to its appropriate end and will create a new heaven and new earth. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth. The dead will be raised, and Christ will judge all people in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting separation from God. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever with the Lord (Matt. 16:27; 18:8-9, 19:28; Rev. 21-22).

Lasting Traditions

Baptism

We believe Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior. It symbolizes the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, being raised to walk in a new way of life, and the resurrection of the dead (Matt. 3:13-17; 28:19-20; Rom. 6:2-5).

Lord's Supper

We believe the Lord's Supper (Communion, the Eucharist) is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church through partaking of bread and wine memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His Second Coming. It is also a reminder of the binding relationship we share with our brothers and sisters in Christ: we must love one another and bear one another's burdens during this celebration (Matt. 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Luke 22:19-20).