

Article II: Additional Statements of Religious Beliefs and Doctrine

Section 1: The Bible

We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God. God so superintended the human authors that while retaining their own individual personalities and writing styles they chose the very words that God intended. Their original writings were free from error. The Bible is the believer's only infallible rule for faith and practice (Psalm 19:7-9; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

Section 2: The Godhead

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three are identical in essence and equal in power and glory; they possess the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and are worthy of the same worship, confidence, and obedience (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

Section 3: The Person and Work of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He came to reveal God to mankind and to redeem our sinful race by giving Himself as a sinless substitutionary sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, satisfying God's righteous judgments against sin. He then arose bodily from the dead and ascended to the Father's right hand where He intercedes on the believer's behalf. He will personally and bodily return in glory to judge the living and the dead and to consummate his everlasting kingdom. All the Scriptures, from first to last, testify of Him (Luke 1:34-35; 24:27; John 1:1-2, 14, 18; Romans 3:24-26; 8:34; Matthew 25:31-45, Acts 1:11, Titus 2:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, 2 Thessalonians 1:5-8).

Section 4: The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Divine Person who convicts the world of sin, gives eternal life to those who place their trust in Christ, unites all believers to Christ in one body by His baptizing ministry, indwells them permanently, seals them unto the day of redemption, fills (controls) those who are yielding to Him, and empowers them for service. He seeks to direct their attention not to themselves nor to their experience, but to Christ (John 3:5-8; 14:16-17; 16:7-11; 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18).

Section 5: The Condition of Humanity

We believe that Adam was originally created in the image and after the likeness of God, free from sin. He subsequently fell into sin by a voluntary act of personal disobedience to the revealed will of God, lost his spiritual life, and became dead in sins and corrupt in nature. These effects of sin have been transmitted to the entire human race, Jesus Christ excepted, and thus every person born into the world is alienated from the life of God and incapable of remedying his lost and depraved condition apart from divine grace (Genesis 1:26; 3:1-24; 6:5; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-18; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3).

Section 6: The Means of Salvation

We believe that salvation from the guilt and condemnation of sin is possible only as the gift of God's grace. It cannot be gained by good resolutions, sincere efforts, nor submission to the rules, regulations, or ordinances of any church, but is freely bestowed on all who put their faith in Christ and trust in the work which Christ accomplished on the cross of Calvary. All who so trust the Savior pass from death unto life, are forgiven of their sins, accepted by the Father, and born into His family by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God (John 5:24; Ephesians 1:6-7; 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23).

Section 7: The Believer's Assurance and Responsibility

We believe that all who have been born again by God's transforming grace are secure in Christ forever. It is their privilege to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation, not on the basis of their own worthiness, but on the basis of God's faithfulness and the testimony of His Word. However, this assurance must not become an occasion for sin. The reality of their faith in Christ is demonstrated by subjecting their fleshly natures to the power of the Holy Spirit and by doing the good works for which He saved them, especially by demonstrating a Christlike love for one another (Matthew 7:20; John 10:27-29; 13:34-35; Romans 6:13; 8:28-39; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 2:10; 1 John 3:14,23; 5:13).

Section 8: The Church

We believe that all who have placed their faith in Christ are united by the Holy Spirit into one spiritual body, the Church, of which Christ is the Head. This body was formed on the day of Pentecost and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own. The members of this one spiritual body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies for instruction, worship, prayer, fellowship, service, and the administration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are likewise to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:3).

Section 9: The Gifts of the Spirit

We believe that enabling gifts for service are bestowed according to God's own will upon all believers by the Spirit of God to be exercised for the edification of the Church and for the glory of the Lord. These gifts are sovereignly bestowed by God in order to fulfill specific purposes in His program. We believe that, as a sign to unbelievers, the Biblical gift of speaking in tongues was speaking in existing languages which the speaker had never learned and that it was never the common nor necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Spirit. We further believe that while God may choose to heal supernaturally, the healing of the temporal body is not assured by Christ's atoning work on the cross; the complete deliverance of the body from sickness awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection (Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 27-31; 13:8-10; 14:21-22; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Ephesians 4:7-13; Hebrews 2:3-4; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 2 Timothy 4:20).

Section 10: The Resurrection of the Body and the Eternal State

We believe that at death the souls of believers pass immediately into the presence of Jesus Christ. At death the souls of unbelievers pass immediately into torment. When Christ returns the souls of believers and unbelievers will be reunited with their bodies in resurrection. Believers in Christ will be resurrected unto eternal conscious joy and life with God. Unbelievers will be resurrected unto eternal conscious torment under the judgment of God (2 Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 1:23, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12, John 5:28-29, Revelation 21:1-3).

Section 11: Sanctity of Life / Education and Training

We believe that life begins at conception. (Psalm 139:13-16) We believe that all human life is sacred and is created by God in His image (Genesis 1:27), and is therefore of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other state or condition from conception through natural death.

We believe that every person is created by God for a purpose (Jeremiah 1:4-5; Galatians 1:15), and is a gift from God (Psalm 127:3).

We believe that God gives the primary responsibility of training children to the child's parent(s). We believe the parent(s) is charged with giving discipline and instruction of God according to biblical principles (Ephesians 6:4). We believe that as a Church we are to be deeply committed to providing biblical resources, teaching, training, and encouragement to assist the parent, and every person, to grow to be like Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

Section 12: Gender / Gender Identification

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. (Genesis 1:27; Deuteronomy 22:5) We believe these two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Genesis 1:26-27) We believe that being man or being woman is a reality which is good and is willed by God, and comes to each from God, reflecting God's wisdom and design. (Psalm 139:13-16; Genesis 1:27) We believe that an individual's gender as a man or a woman, with some extremely rare exceptions, is based solely on that person's biological sex as determined at conception and as revealed at birth by that person's anatomy. (Psalm 139:13-16; Genesis 1:27) We believe that the rejection of, or any conduct with the intent to adopt a different gender or change one's gender or biological/anatomical sex, is a rejection of the image of God and His design within that person and is sinful and offensive to God (Genesis 1:27; Deuteronomy 22:5).

All gender related references in this Constitution, including but not limited to male, man, female, or woman, is specifically limited to Gender as defined in this Section.

Section 13: Marriage

We believe that God designed and limited the expression of sexual intimacy to be the exclusive boundaries of a one man and one woman marriage covenant (Genesis 2:24-25; 1 Corinthians 7:3-5). We believe that God designed marriage to reflect the beauty and permanence of Christ's loving relationship with his bride, the Church (Ephesians 5:22-23; Revelation 19:7). We believe God established marriage to be a sacred, lifelong, exclusive relationship between one man and one woman (Matthew 19:4-6). We believe the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in the Bible (Genesis 2:18-25). Because God has defined and ordained marriage as the covenant relationship between one man and one woman, we only recognize, honor, permit, or conduct marriages between one man and one woman.

Section 14: Sexual Purity

We believe that God commands that each individual abstain from any form of sexual impurity (Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 7:2; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9-10; 7:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4). We believe that any form of sexual immorality including but not limited to: adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and the use of pornography is sinful and offensive to God. (Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 7:2; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9-10; 7:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).

Section 15: Counseling

We believe and understand that every person, including Christians, struggle living biblically pure lives. We also believe and understand that every person also struggles with the negative effect his or her failure to live a biblically pure life has on his or her life and relationships. We believe that God understands this struggle and calls believers to seek assistance from other believers and especially from church leaders. We believe that our pastoral and lay church leaders have the responsibility of providing Bible-based counseling and oversight (Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:10; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Hebrews 13:17; James 5:16). We believe that the Bible is God's manual providing wisdom, guidance, and instruction for faith and for life for every person (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Therefore, we are deeply committed to encouraging and enabling individuals to live life according to God's will as revealed in the Bible. Our counseling and spiritual

guidance shall be based on our religious beliefs and doctrines. We recognize that in some instances our religious beliefs and doctrines may differ from secular principles, in which instances our counseling and spiritual guidance shall follow and comply with our religious beliefs and doctrines.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness solely through Jesus Christ (John 3: 16-18; Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). We believe that every person should be treated with compassion, love, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.)