

## **Statement of Faith**

### **The Bible**

The sole basis of our belief is the Bible, comprised of the 66 books of the Old and New Testament. We believe that Scripture in its entirety was given through the instrumentality of chosen men. Scripture thus at the same time speaks with the authority of God and reflects the backgrounds, styles and vocabulary of the human authors. We believe that the Scriptures are infallible and without error in the original manuscripts. They are the unique, full and final authority on all matters of faith and practice and there are no other writings similarly inspired by God.

### **God**

We believe that there is one true, holy God, eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - each of whom possesses equally all the attributes of deity and the characteristics of personality. In the beginning, God created out of nothing the world and all the things in it, thus showing the glory of his power, wisdom and goodness. By his sovereign power, he continues to sustain his creation. By his providence, he is operating throughout history to fulfill his redemptive purposes. He is all-loving, all-powerful and all-wise. God is Father to those who become his children through Jesus Christ.

### **Son**

Jesus Christ is the eternal second person of the Trinity who was united forever with a true human nature by a miraculous conception and virgin birth. He lived a life perfectly obedient to the Father and voluntarily atoned for the sins of all by dying on the cross as their substitute, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in him alone. He rose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which he lived and died. He ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God the Father where he, the only mediator between God and man, continually makes intercession for his own. He shall come again to earth, personally and visibly, to consummate history and the eternal plan of life.

### **Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He was sent to the world by the Father, at the request of the Son to apply to mankind the saving work of Jesus. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and coming judgment. He enlightens the minds of sinners, awakens in them the need of a Savior and regenerates them spiritually when they decide to follow Jesus Christ. At the point of salvation, he permanently indwells every believer to become the source of assurance, strength and wisdom and uniquely endows each believer with gifts, regardless of gender, for building up the church. The Holy Spirit guides believers in understanding and applying the Scripture. His power and control are appropriated by faith, making it possible for the believer to lead a life of Christ-like character and bear fruit to the glory of God the Father.

### **Salvation**

The central purpose of God's revelation in Scripture is to call all people into relationship with himself. Originally created to be in relationship with God, man and woman defied God choosing to go their own way, and thus were alienated from God and suffered the corruption of their nature, rendering them unable to please God. The "fall" took place at the beginning of human history, and all individuals since have suffered these consequences and are thus in need of the saving grace of God.

Salvation of mankind is then, wholly the work of God's free grace, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, not the result, in whole or part, of human works or goodness, and must be personally appropriated by repentance and faith. When God has begun a saving work in the heart of any person, he gives assurance in his Word that he will continue it until its consummation. In its broadest sense, salvation includes spiritual rebirth, being set apart for God's purposes, and glorification (heaven) at the end of life.

## **The Church**

All believers in Jesus Christ are members of His body, the church. There is one true Church universal, comprised of all those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The Scripture commands believers to gather together to devote themselves to loving one another, discipleship, teaching all that Jesus commanded, and baptism.

The church does not exist as an end to itself. Simply put the church is shaped by participating in God's mission, which is to set things right in a broken, sinful world, to redeem it, and to restore it to what God has always intended for the world. The church should always see itself not so much sending, but as being sent. God's mission should permeate everything that His church does – from worship to witness to training members for discipleship/apprenticeship. There is no gap between outreach and church life, since, in our life together, the church is to embody God's mission.

## **Baptism**

The observance of baptism by immersion serves a two-fold purpose:

1. To be obedient to the commands of Jesus Christ; baptism is intended to be the first act of obedience after a person believes in Jesus Christ.
2. To identify with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baptism is a picture of this event. When a person is laid under the water it is a picture of the death and burial of the "old life." When they are brought up out of the water, it is a picture of resurrection, the "new life."

## **Communion**

Communion, also referred to as the Lord's Supper, is a symbolic act of obedience and remembrance. Through eating the bread and drinking the wine (or grape juice), we are remembering the life and death of Jesus Christ. On the night he was crucified he took the bread and broke it and said to his disciples, saying, "...this is my body which is given to you. Take and eat it and as often as you do this, do it in remembrance of me." He then took the wine and

said, "...this is the blood of the new covenant which is shed for you, as often as you drink it, remember me."