

## STATEMENT OF FAITH

### The Scriptures

**Origin:** The Bible is the written revelation of God made up of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible does not just *contain* the words of God but rather *is* the very Word of God proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ ordained since before the foundation of the world [Luke 24:44-49; John 5:39-40; 1 Peter 1:18-21].

**Infallibility:** The Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice given to mankind; it is God's mind concerning everything He wants man to know about Himself and His relationship with His creation [Matthew 5:18; John 10:35; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:3-13; Hebrews 4:12]. The Bible is God's word preserved without error for every generation [Psalm 12:6-7; Isaiah 5:18, 40:8]. It is complete in its presentation and not to be taken away from nor added to [Revelation 22:18-19]. God's word has the power to reveal and discern the thoughts and intents of the hearts of men [Hebrews 4:12].

**Inspiration:** God gave His written word through a process of dual authorship in which the Holy Spirit inspired the human authors. Through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, God's word was given to mankind without error in whole or in part [Isaiah 30:8; Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 3:15-16].

**Interpretation:** While there may be several applications to any given passage of Scripture, there is but one interpretation. A correct interpretation begins with a proper understanding of the context of any given passage and is to be guided by the ministry of the Holy Spirit of God [1 Corinthians 2:7-15], and through the ministry of God's gift to His Body of pastors and teachers [Ephesians 4:11-16]. This interpretation is to be found by searching the scriptures [Acts 17:11], and by rightly dividing the word through study [2 Timothy 2:15].

### God

There is only one living and true God [Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4] Who is an infinite, intelligent Spirit [John 4:24], perfect in all His attributes, one in essence. He has chosen to reveal Himself to His creation as a Trinity, eternally existing in three persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and revealed as the Godhead. [Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9] He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things [Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 4:35; John 1:1-4; 10:30-31].

**God the Father:** As the first person of the Trinity, the Father possesses all the divine attributes. His Fatherhood denotes a spiritual relationship within the Trinity. He has life in Himself [John 5:26]. He orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace, [Psalm 145:8-9] ordained in Christ before the foundation of the world [John 17:24; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 1:3-12; 1 Peter 1:18-21]. As a Father, He "*loveth the Son and hath given all things into his hand*" [John 3:35].

**God the Son:** As the second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ possesses all the divine attributes and is co-equal with the Father [John 1:1-4, 14; 10:27-39; 14:9]. He is the "*Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*" [Revelation 13:8; John 1:29-36]. He was God manifested in the flesh and presents to man all the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form [Exodus 3:14; John 8:58; Colossians 2:9; 1 Timothy 3:16]. He was virgin born [Matthew 1:23], and perfectly sinless [Hebrews 4:15]. As a man He made Himself of no reputation and became a servant to the full purposes of the Godhead to the glory of the Father [Philippians 2:5-11]. He died for the sin of all mankind and is man's only pathway to God [John 14:6; 2

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Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 2:9]. Through His death He became the propitiation (totally sufficient atoning sacrifice) for the sins of the whole world [1 John 2:2]. Through His resurrection He was “*declared to be the Son of God with power*, [Romans 1:1-4] confirming the sufficiency of His sacrifice for sin and man's hope of eternal life [1 Corinthians 15:12-17]. As the resurrected Christ, He now has an unchangeable priesthood and is therefore able to save all that come unto God by Him [Hebrews 7:25]. He continues to remain at the right hand of God making intercession for us [Romans 8:34]. He will one day return [Acts 1:11] to fulfill all God's promises to the nation of Israel and His church [Romans 9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:1-10; 2 Peter 2:9; Revelation 19:11-16]. After the purposes of the Godhead are fulfilled in the creation through Him, He Himself will be subject unto the Father, that God may be all in all [1 Corinthians 15:28].

God the Holy Spirit: As the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit possesses all the divine attributes and is co-equal with both the Father and the Son [Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:35]. His present ministry is to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment [John 16:8]. His presence today is found in all believers to enlighten them to the glories of Christ through an understanding of the written Word of God. He edifies, convicts, empowers and comforts the believer. He indwells and seals all believers to God upon their belief in the gospel [Ephesians 1:13-14]. Evidence of His indwelling is confirmed in the Christian through an internal witness and fruitfulness [Romans 8:16; Galatians 5:22-23].

NOTE: God, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip believers in the church for the work of the ministry [Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28; Ephesians 4:7-12]. We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary gifts particularly for the benefit of unbelieving Israel [Acts 2:8-11; 1 Corinthians 1:22, 13:8, 14:22]. Speaking in tongues is not a necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit. The ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection [Romans 8:23]. The healing of physical infirmities today in the individual believer is a direct result of the grace and mercy of God through His sovereign will and the prayers of intercession [Philippians 2:27; James 5:14-15].

### Satan

Satan is a created being and because of man's disobedience, and according to the purposes of God, holds the position of the [g]od of this world, “*blinding the minds of them which believe not the gospel*” [Genesis 3:1-14; 2 Corinthians 4:4]. He is the author of sin in the creation [1 John 3:8], and both the father of lies and the father of all who have not received the truth concerning the person of Jesus Christ [John 8:31-59; 10:30-33]. His desire has always been to displace God as the final authority in the creation. His work will always challenge the authority of God, particularly concerning the word of God and will include this thought: “*yea hath God said?*” [Genesis 3:1]. His temporal authority will be crushed at the return of the Christ [Genesis 3:15; Romans 16:20].

### Man

Man is a direct creation of God. He was made in God's image [Genesis 1:26-27], but lost that image through disobedience, bringing the penalty of death upon the human race. Man is now born in the image of Adam [Genesis 5:3], and as a natural man having a sinful nature [1 Corinthians 2:14], must be born again to see and enter the kingdom of God [John 3:3-7]. Man, in his natural state, is ungodly and the enemy of God and totally without strength to

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reconcile his relationship to God without the provision of the gospel of Christ [Romans 1:16-17; 3:10-18; 5:6-10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21].

### **Marriage, Sexuality, and Gender Identity**

Marriage is sanctioned by God and joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union as defined in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married [Genesis 2:24]. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage [1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; Hebrews 13:4].

God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. [Genesis 1:26-27] Rejection of one's biological gender is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

### **Sanctity of Human Life**

All human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. [Ps 139]

**NOTE:** Every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. [Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31] Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the Lake Country Baptist Church. God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. [Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11]

### **Salvation**

Biblical salvation means to be eternally delivered from the wrath of God and the judgment of sin [John 3:36; 1 Timothy 1:15]. God's power unto salvation is found in the gospel of Christ alone [Romans 1:16]. Jesus, the Christ, came to seek and save the lost and to take away sin [Luke 19:10; 1 John 3:5]. He paid for the sins of the world through His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. His precious and perfect blood was sufficient to provide the needed redemption of man, and to pay for the penalty of sin and its consequences of eternal death and ultimate separation from God in Hell [1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 20:13-15]. God has provided, by His grace, this gift of salvation [Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9] to all who will, by simple faith, confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in their heart that God has raised Him from the dead [Romans 10:9-10]. We believe that the word of God is clear concerning the security of this salvation once received [John 3:16-18; 10:27-30; 1 John 5:11-13]. The born again child of God has been sealed to God for all time through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit [Ephesians 1:13-14; Philippians 1:6].

### **Heaven and Hell**

Physical death is not the end of our existence. We believe heaven and hell are real places. They are not a state of mind. The saved go to heaven to live eternally in the presence of God. The lost are doomed to hell and ultimately the lake of fire, eternally separated from God [Luke 16:22-24; Revelation 20:14-15].

### **The Church**

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We believe that all believers are part of the Body of Christ [1 Corinthians 12:13]. This body presents itself visibly today through local congregations [Galatians 1:2] as they assemble and work together [Hebrews 10:24-25] for the testimony of the gospel of Christ in the world as His ambassadors [Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:20]. Each local congregation is autonomous [free from any external authority or control of man] with the right of self governance, and through its elders' interpretation and application of Scripture, determines matters of membership, policy, discipline and benevolence. We believe the Scriptures recognize two offices in leadership, that of elder and deacon [Acts 20: 17-28; Philippians 1:1].

### **Baptism**

We believe that baptism is our identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and is primarily spiritual in its presentation [Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 12:13]. We teach and practice baptism by immersion in water as an outward expression and testimony of the inward spiritual change which occurs in the believer's life when they accept and embrace the gospel as the only hope for salvation [Acts 8:36-38]. This baptism is symbolic of the fact that we are buried with Christ in death and have risen with Him in life [Romans 5:10]. Water baptism is not a provision for salvation, but rather a depiction of the Christian's identification with Christ and His gospel [Matthew 28:19; 10:47; Romans 6:11].

### **The Lord's Supper**

We believe the Lord's Supper is to be practiced in the local church and demonstrates the unity among believers as the body of Christ. It is to be considered as a remembrance of the death, burial, resurrection, and imminent return of Jesus Christ. The elements of the Lord's Supper are symbolic of the broken body and the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Partaking of the elements together leads us towards a greater unity in our relationships one with another as we examine our lives in light of the sacrifice of Christ for our sin [1 Corinthians 11:23-26].

### **Final Events**

Our understanding of final events [eschatology] finds its foundation on the literal promise of the return of the resurrected Christ [Acts 1:9-11]. We believe that His return will be two-fold in its presentation according to God's promises to the nation of Israel and to His church.

We are both pre-tribulation and pre-millennial in our understanding of the Scriptures and the return of the resurrected Christ. A basic timeline of events might be understood accordingly:

- The Rapture of the Church [1 Thessalonians 4:16]
- The Tribulation Period [Jeremiah 30:7; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12]
- The Millennial Kingdom [Isaiah 11:1-11; Revelation 20:1-7]
- The Final Judgment [Revelation 20:11-15]
- The New Heaven and New Earth [Revelation 21-22]

**NOTE:** Knowing that God has given particular gifts to His church to bring unity of the faith and increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love [Ephesians 4:11-16], we choose to enjoy a spirited dialogue concerning the subject of eschatology as we wait for the fulfillment of God's purposes in these final events. We also believe that we can agree to disagree as to the final timing and unveiling of these events.