

Refuge Detroit Church Confession of Faith¹

The basic doctrines within the Refuge Detroit Church Confession of Faith represent what we believe to be core elements of biblical teaching. We expect all members of Refuge to affirm these doctrines.

The theological “Distinctives” within the Refuge Church Confession of Faith reflect what distinguishes Refuge Detroit from other churches who would affirm the basic doctrines. These distinctives deeply impact how we teach, do ministry, and live together as a church body. We do not expect all members to embrace all aspects of these distinctives, but members should expect that the distinctives will be maintained in all ministries at Refuge Detroit, and members are not permitted to teach contrary to them.

What We Believe about... God’s Revelation

God has made Himself known in the universe He has made, in the Scriptures, and most fully in Jesus Christ, the God-man.

I. Creation

In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to reveal the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, by creating the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible. His creation is the first witness of His existence, nature, wisdom, and glory, which leaves people without an excuse.

Genesis 1:1-2; John 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:2; Colossians 1:15-16; Job 26:13; Romans 1:19-20; Psalm 19:1; Jeremiah 51:15

II. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

A. The Harmony of the Law and the Gospel

We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible Church.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

¹ This statement of belief is based primarily upon the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, the New Hampshire Confession of Faith and The Second London Confession of Faith. Most of the revisions come from one of these three historic confessions. Many of these revisions and syntheses were made by our brothers at The Exchange Church in Clio, MI, while others were made by the elders at Refuge. The basis of all revisions has been a desire to merely state as clearly and briefly as possible what the Scriptures teach as a whole.

III. Jesus

Jesus Christ, the Son of God is the perfect revelation of who God is. He is the "Image of the invisible God," "the exact imprint of his nature" and a perfect reflection of God the Father.

Colossians 1:5; Hebrews 1:3; John 5:19

What We Believe about... God

There is one God eternally existing as one being (essence) and three distinct Persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, each of whom is fully God, yet there is one God.

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler and just Judge of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, trust and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

I. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7 (Creator); Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4 (One); 32:6 (Creator, Father); 1 Chronicles 29:10 (Father); Psalm 19:1-3 (Creator, Intelligent); Isaiah 43:3,15 (Creator, King, Father); 64:8 (Father); Jeremiah 10:10 (True, King, Judge); 17:13 (Judge of the unrighteous and those who reject him, King, Life); Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11 (Father, Giver of Good); 23:9 (Father); 28:19 (Father); Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24 (Spiritual); 5:26 (Father, Life); 14:6-13 (Father); 17:1-8 (Father); Acts 1:7 (Providential care); Romans 8:14-15 (Father); Romans 8 (Providential and Sovereign Care); 1 Corinthians 8:6 (Creator, Sustainer); Galatians 4:6 (Father); Ephesians 4:6 (One God, Father); Colossians 1:15 (Spiritual); 1 Timothy 1:17 (King, Eternal, Spiritual, Only God); Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

II. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, fully God and fully man. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff. (the LORD appeared); Psalms 2:7ff. (Father speaking to the Son); 110:1ff. (the LORD speaking to the Lord); Isaiah 7:14 (Immanuel); 53 (the suffering servant who died for our sins, made many righteous, and lives, vindicated by God); Matthew 1:18-23 (conceived by the Holy Spirit to a virgin; God with us); 3:17 (beloved Son of God); 8:29 (Son of God); 11:27 (relationship between the Father and the Son); 14:33 (Son of God, worthy of worship); 16:16,27 (Christ; Son of God; Son of Man; Judge); 17:5 (Son; Authority; God is pleased with him); 27 (Betrayal and crucifixion); 28:1-6,19 (Resurrection and Great Commission); Mark 1:1

(Son of God); 3:11 (Son of God); Luke 1:35 (conceived by the Holy Spirit; Holy; Son of God); 4:41 (Son of God; authority over demons; Christ); 22:70 (Son of God); 24:46 (Christ; death, burial, resurrection); John 1:1-18 (Word, Flesh, God), 29 (takes away sin); 10:30,38 (one with the Father); 11:25-27 (Life; Son of God; Christ); 12:44-50 (Light; salvation; Eternal Life; Sent by the Father); 14:7-11 (one with the Father); 16:15-16,28 (with the Father); 17:1-5, 21-22 (glorifies the Father; authority over all flesh; giver of eternal life; preexistent; one with the Father); 20:1-20,28 (resurrection; Jesus is God); Acts 1:9 (ascension); 2:22-24 (loosed the pangs of death); 7:55-56 (Son of Man; at the right hand of God); 9:4-5,20 (one with His church; Son of God); Romans 1:3-4 (Son of God); 3:23-26 (object of faith for salvation); 5:6-21 (substitution); 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

III. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of unrighteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

What We Believe About... People

Every human has been created in the image of God and also corrupted by the rebellion and consequences of sin. Therefore all possess God-given dignity and worth and also guilt, shame, and brokenness that each is powerless to change.

I. God's Design

Humankind is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin. God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man, born anatomically male, and one woman, born anatomically female, in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church, not domineering, but graciously and sacrificially giving himself for her. A wife is to voluntarily submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

II. The Human Condition Today

Voluntarily man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment captive to and inclined toward sin. Therefore, from conception they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11. Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

DISTINCTIVE: COMPLEMENTARIANISM

We are deeply committed to the spiritual & moral equality of male & female and to men as responsible servant-leaders in both home and church.

Both men and women are together created in the divine image and are therefore equal before God as persons, possessing the same moral dignity and value, and have equal access to God through faith in Christ. Men and women are together the recipients of spiritual gifts designed to empower them for ministry in the local church and beyond. Therefore, women are to be encouraged, equipped, and empowered to utilize their gifting in ministry, in service to the body of Christ, and through teaching in ways that are consistent with the Word of God.

Both husbands and wives are responsible to God for spiritual nurture and vitality in the home, but God has given to the man primary responsibility to lead his wife and family in accordance with the servant-leadership and sacrificial love characterized by Jesus Christ. This principle of male headship should not be confused with, nor give any hint of, domineering control. Rather, it is to be the loving, tender and nurturing care of a godly man who is himself under the kind and gentle authority of Jesus Christ.

The Elders/Pastors of each local church have been granted authority under the headship of Jesus Christ to provide oversight and to teach/preach the Word of God in corporate assembly for the building up of the body. Men and women are both expected to lead, however the office of Elder/Pastor is restricted to qualified men.

Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18; Acts 18:24-26; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; 3:1-7; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Peter 3:1-7

What We Believe About... Sin and Salvation

Human rebellion has left people rightly condemned and the whole created order cursed, broken and in need of rescue. A person can only be rescued from the condemnation and curse by God's free gift of grace received through faith in Christ alone.

I. Sin

Through the temptation of Satan, humanity transgressed the command of God and fell from their original holiness and righteousness. Now the entire human race inherits a corrupt nature that is opposed to God and His law. Therefore, all humans are under condemnation. This depravity is radical and pervasive. It extends to the mind, will, body and affections. Unregenerate humanity lives under the dominion of sin and Satan. He is at enmity with God, hostile toward and hateful of God. The entire creation is subject to decay because of human sin and waits for God's restoring action when His plan of salvation is completed.

Gen. 3; Rom. 3:9-10; Eph 2:1-3; Romans 8

II. Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is completely of grace, through the mediatorial offices of Jesus. Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who believe the gospel and repent of their sins, following Jesus Christ as Lord, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. The immediate duty of all is to believe the gospel by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith, and nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel, which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification.

- A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby a person becomes new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the belief and trust in Jesus Christ's work on the cross and in his resurrection and ascension and a commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.
- B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who believe in and repent toward Christ; it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.
- C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace will continue throughout the regenerate person's life.
- D. All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

E. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5. Matthew 24:22, 24, 31; 25:34; John 1:12-14; 3:16-18; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:1-2, 2:19; 3:2.

DISTINCTIVE: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN SALVATION

We enthusiastically embrace the sovereignty of God's grace in saving sinners.

God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, not on the basis of foreseen faith but unconditionally, according to his sovereign good pleasure and will. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, God will draw the elect to faith in his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, graciously and effectually overcoming their stubborn resistance to the gospel so that they will most assuredly and willingly believe. The elect of God whom he gave to the Son, will persevere in belief and godly behavior and be kept secure in their salvation by grace through faith. God's sovereignty in this salvation neither diminishes the responsibility of people to believe in Christ nor marginalizes the necessity and power of prayer and evangelism, but rather reinforces and establishes them as the ordained means by which God accomplishes his ordained ends.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

What We Believe About... The Church

The universal church is made up of every Christian that ever lived or will live. A local church is a group of Christians who commit to honor Jesus together, under the Word, through the ordinances, and through obeying God's commands to the church, discipling each other and the world and representing the eternal church in a particular time and place.

I. The Local Congregation

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local congregation of baptized believers who gather regularly, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by his laws, and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are elders and deacons. See *Distinctive: Complementarianism*

II. The Universal Church

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the generations, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

III. The Two Ordinances of the Church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Baptism and the Lords Supper are the two ordinances of a New Testament church, appointed by the Lord Jesus the only Law-giver, to be continued in his Church to the end of the world.

These holy appointments are to be administered only by believers and only to believers.

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership.

The Lord's Supper is an act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and wine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His return. Worthy receivers outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this ordinance do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, spiritually receive and feed upon Christ crucified and all the benefits of his death.

Neither baptism or the Lord's Supper bring about salvation. See *What We Believe About... Sin and Salvation*

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23, 27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3; Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

What We Believe About... Worship

God and God alone rightly deserves and demands the authentic worship of every person, not according to our emotions, imaginations or traditions, but through Jesus Christ, and according to the instruction of Scripture.

Nature reveals that there is a God who has lordship and sovereignty over all; he is just, good, and does good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart and all the soul and with all the might. God has instituted the acceptable way of worship through his own revealed will so that he may not be worshiped according to the imaginations and devices of humans, the suggestions of Satan, any visible representations, or any other way, not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.

True worship is to be given to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and to him alone; not to angels, saints, or any other creatures; and since the fall, not without the Mediator, Jesus Christ alone.

Prayer with thanksgiving, is one special part of worship, required by God of all men. But that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of the Spirit, according to the Father's will for it to be accepted. Prayers should be offered with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and when with others, in a known tongue. It is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of people who are still living, or who will live hereafter; but not for the dead.

The reading of the Scriptures, preaching and hearing the word of God, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord are all parts of true worship. So also are the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper are all parts of religious worship of God to be performed in obedience to him with understanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear. True worship also includes solemn humiliation with fasting and thanksgiving and feasting before God upon special occasions.

No form of worship is made more acceptable by any location or building or by facing any certain direction or building. Rather, God is to be worshiped everywhere in Spirit and in truth; in private families daily, in secret each one by himself, and in the public assemblies. None of these places or forms of worship should be carelessly or willfully neglected or forsaken, because God, by his word and through his providence, has called us to them.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

What We Believe About... The Kingdom of God

Jesus is King over everything. We should live like it, while we wait for the day of his return to set up his visible, perfect, unending kingdom.

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe, His particular sovereignty over each individual person, and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; 10:15; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

What We Believe About... The Last Things

We don't know every detail, but Jesus is coming back to end the world and set up his kingdom; if you welcome Him as King now, that's good news and if not, that's terrifying news.

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. 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 men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell with the Lord forever.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

What We Believe About ... Evangelism and Mission

Every disciple is a disciple-maker and missionary, called and equipped to reach neighbors and nations with the gospel message.

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the

preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

What We Believe About... Stewardship

Because everything we have belongs to God and is from God, everything we have should be generously used for God's kingdom and purposes in and beyond the local church.

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.