

2.3 Doctrinal Statement. We are deeply convinced about and wholeheartedly committed to the following statement, which form the basis of all we do and hold to be true at the church.

- a) The Bible, the Word of God. We teach that only the 66 books of the Bible are verbally inspired by God, making Him their ultimate source in totality. Fallible human authors wrote each book from God who prepared them and oversaw every word. Because of this, the Bible is inerrant and infallible in the original manuscripts, the supreme authority as well as the sufficient guide in all matters of doctrine and conduct. The canon closed with the Book of Revelation; no writing or person has authority equivalent to or superseding the Bible, nor does the Bible receive its authority from any person, tradition, institution or experience. The Bible is propositional revelation, the mind of God adequately expressed with human language to the original authors using words and sentences, not subjective impressions or experiences. We practice the grammatical-historical method of interpretation and highlight expository preaching because we trust that with the illumination of the Holy Spirit we can arrive at the original author's intent in each passage, which is the correct interpretation. The Bible is not a collection of speculative beliefs; it is God's revelation of reality in words without which we cannot understand reality correctly. Because God is its primary author, in all areas that the Bible speaks it is true, in no way misleading or contradictory and should be believed and obeyed. There is no truth that is inconsistent with the Bible. We accept the historical record in the Bible as accurate. As a result, we reject all postmodern, reader-response, *sensus plenior*, mystical, subjective, critical interpretations that do not rely on the above controls as expressions of unbelief and disloyalty to Christ. And, we reject the idea that truth and morality are relative, subjective or socially constructed. [Pss 12:6, 19:7-9, 119:160; Jer 26:2; Matt 4:4, 5:18, 24:35; John 10:35, 16:12-15, 17:17; Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 2:7-13; 1 Thes 2:13; 2 Tim 3:15-17; Titus 1:2; 2 Pet 1:16-21; Jude 3; Rev 22:18-19].
- b) The Trinity. We teach that there is only one true and living God, who eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit. Though the Son submits to the Father, and the Spirit submits to the Father and to the Son, each Person is equal in every divine perfection and each executes a distinct, but harmonious function in the works of creation, providence, and redemption. Each divine person equally deserves worship and obedience. [There is Only One God: Deut 4:35, 6:4; Isa 43:10, 44:6, 45:5-6; Mark 12:29; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 4:6; 1 Tim 2:5; The Trinity: Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 1:3-14, 2:18, 3:14-18; 1 Pet 1:2; The Father is God: 1 Cor 15:24; Eph 5:20; Phil 2:11; Jas 1:27; The Son is God: John 1:1-3, 5:18, 20:28; Acts 20:28; Col 2:9; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:8-9; 2 Pet 1:1; The Spirit is God: Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 3:17-18; The Three Persons are not the Same Person, but are Distinct Persons: Matt 3:16-17; John 1:1-2, 14:26, 15:26, 17:24; Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 12:3-6; 1 John 2:1].
- c) God The Father. We teach that God the Father is the Lord of Heaven and earth, an eternal, infinite, unchanging, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, knowledge, wisdom, faithfulness, power, justice, patience, love and sole authority over all creation. He created all things out of nothing, visible and invisible, not because of any deficiency in Himself or incompleteness in His self-sufficiency, but for His own purpose and glory. He foreknows, ordains and controls all things, concerns Himself with and mercifully enters into the affairs of humanity, planned salvation, hears and answers prayer and adopts into His family all who come to Him through

faith in Jesus Christ. While God the Father is spirit and without gender, we reject all gender-neutral language in regards to Him as well as the idea that masculine pronouns for Him are analogical or metaphorical. “Father” is how the First Person of the Trinity revealed Himself in the Bible He inspired and it is how Jesus and the Apostles referred to Him. [Gen 1:1-31; Exod 3:14, 6:3, 15:11, 34:6-7; Deut 32:4; 1 Sam 2:6-8, 1 Chr 29:11; Job 42:2; Pss 50:9-12, 89:11, 90:2, 100:5, 103:19, 104:24, 115:2-3, 135:5-6, 145:8-9; Isa 6:3, 41:21-23, 42:8-9, 43:7, 45:18-19, 46:9-10; Ezek 18:4; Dan 4:35, 5:21; Jonah 4:2; Nah 1:7; Hab 1:13; Mal 3:6; Matt 5:48, 6:9, 11:25-27; John 1:12, 4:24, 5:17-18; Acts 17:24-25; Rom 2:4, 8:15, 9:15, 11:33-36, 16:27; 1 Cor 8:6, 10:13; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:3-6, 1:11; Phil 3:20-21; Col 1:16-17; 1 Tim 1:17; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 2:11; Heb 12:5-9, 13:5; Jas 1:13, 1:17, 4:13-16; 1 Pet 1:3, 1:15-16; 1 John 1:3, 4:8, 4:16; Rev 4:8].

- d) God The Son, The Lord Jesus Christ. We teach that the eternally divine Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, the visible image of God, through Whom God the Father created the world and currently upholds it, is not created or eternally subordinate to the Father ontologically, though He is satisfyingly subordinate to the Father relationally. He was prophetically predicted in the Old Testament, became truly human when He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in a virgin named Mary and was born Jesus of Nazareth. His divine and human natures are now and forever united in His one Person, without mixture, confusion, division or separation. At no time during His stay on earth was Jesus anything other than truly Divine though He had all the limitations that come with being human, yet without sin or a sinful nature. We consider Him our final Prophet, Great High Priest and Sovereign King. His existence, virgin conception and birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings are true and historical, as are His substitutionary, atoning, once-for-all-time death, burial, physical resurrection, ascension into heaven, present building of and perpetual intercession for His church. He will return to reign as earth’s King in the future. In light of all of this, belief in Him is the only way any person can or ever will be saved. [Gen 3:15, 49:10; Num 24:17; Deut 18:15-18; 1 Chr 17:12-14; Pss 2:6-12, 16:10, 22:1-18, 110:1-7, 118:22; Isa 7:14, 52:13-53:12; Dan 2:44-45, 9:24-25; Mic 5:2; Zech 9:9, 12:10; Matt 1:23-25, 28:18-20; Mark 1:1, 10:45; Luke 1:26-35, 2:10-11; John 1:1-3, 1:29, 5:18-23, 8:58, 10:17-18, 10:30, 14:6-10; 17:3-5, 20:28; Acts 1:9-11, 2:22-24, 4:11-12, 13:33-35, 17:30-31, 20:28; Rom 5:6; 1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:21; Eph 1:20-22; Phil 2:5-11; Col 1:15-17, 2:9; 1 Thes 4:13-17; 1 Tim 2:5, 3:16; Titus 2:11-14; Heb 1:2-12, 2:14-18, 4:14-15, 7:23-28, 9:25-28, 10:14; 1 Pet 1:18-19, 2:22, 3:18; 2 Pet 1:1; 1 John 2:1-2, 5:11-13; Rev 1:5].
- e) God The Holy Spirit. We teach that the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, is personal, meaning He thinks, feels, desires, chooses and acts. He is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent and eternal. He created and preserves the world, was actively involved in Jesus’ earthly life (e.g., His conception, empowering His ministry, at His Crucifixion and His Resurrection), was sent by the Father and the Son in fulfillment of the New Covenant as Jesus’ comforting replacement, is the Divine Author and Interpreter of Scripture, convicts of sin, restrains evil, grants new life to the spiritually dead, places all believers into Christ and the one true church, convinces them to repent and believe, indwells them permanently, empowers biblical preaching, gives Christians access to God, leads them away from and empowers them for victory over sin, transforms them into the image of Jesus, produces godly character, prays for them, gifts them for ministry, seals and protects them until He raises

them from the dead and in all things brings glory to Jesus. We teach that while God can certainly work miracles today, they were prominent only during certain periods in biblical history, being given to authenticate someone's ministry as truly speaking or working for God. The offices of apostle and prophet ended with the Apostle John. The 'gift' or ability to perform miracles was never intended to be the normal Christian life and no one is performing miraculous gifts at will today (e.g., tongues / languages, prophecy, healing, etc.). Spiritual gifts are ministries given to every Christian for the purpose of blessing and edifying others. No specific 'gift' is evidence of salvation. No 'word from the Lord,' feeling or impression will ever contradict or supersede what the Spirit has already said in the Bible He authored. [Gen 1:2; Exod 4:30-31, 7:17; Job 33:4; 1 Kgs 17:24; Pss 33:6, 51:11, 104:30, 115:3, 139:7-10; Isa 6:9-10 (comp. to Acts 28:25-27) 32:14, 44:3, 61:1, 63:10-11; Ezek 36:27, 39:29; Joel 2:28-29; Matt 3:16, 12:28-32, 28:19; Luke 1:35, 7:15-16; John 3:2-8, 6:63, 10:38, 14:11, 14:16-17, 14:26, 15:26-27, 16:7-15; Acts 1:16, 2:22, 5:3-4, 10:38, 15:28, 28:25; Rom 1:4, 8:2-27; 1 Cor 2:10-11, 3:16, 6:11, 6:19, 12:4-13, 13:8-10; 2 Cor 3:17, 12:12, 13:14; Gal 5:16-18, 5:22-23; Eph 1:13-14, 2:18, 2:22, 4:7-12, 4:30, 5:18; 2 Thes 2:6-8; Titus 3:5; Heb 9:14, 10:15-16; 1 Pet 1:10-11, 1:23-25; 2 Pet 1:21; 1 John 4:13].

- f) Creation. We teach a young earth, meaning the six days in Genesis 1 refer to days not ages, making creation thousands, not billions of years old. Genesis gives us a trustworthy paradigm for doing scientific research. There was no gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. We also teach a literal (not poetic or allegorical) interpretation of what is real history in Genesis 1-11, creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo*), the special creation of an historical Adam & Eve, an historical Noah and a worldwide flood. We are not convinced there is any evidence for species to species evolution.
- g) Human Beings. We teach Adam and Eve, the parents of the entire human race, were real people who were created in innocence, without sin and with the capacity, desire and mandate to glorify God in all things. All human beings, whether in the womb or out, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or level of health, are images of God and are, therefore, inherently valuable and worthy of respect and protection. All human beings begin to exist as individuals at the moment of conception. Thus, we strongly oppose abortion and euthanasia as well as all kinds of research and procedures that destroy unborn children. We teach that while the highest goal for humanity is still to glorify God, in Adam's sin the whole human race fell, inherited the guilt of his sin and a sinful nature, becoming spiritually dead, enslaved to sin and alienated from God so that all people are now sinners both by nature, inclination, choice and action. We teach that humanity is guilty before God, completely infected by sin and incapable of saving himself from his depraved condition, leaving every human that has ever lived (except for Jesus) hopelessly lost and destined for God's wrath for their sins. This understanding leads us to reject all concepts of universal salvation. We also teach that for those who are trusting in Jesus for their salvation, at the moment of physical death their souls go immediately to heaven and remain there in sinless, conscious bliss until their resurrection when their souls and bodies are reunited forever. For those who do not trust in Jesus for their salvation, at the moment of physical death their souls go to hell and remain there in conscious misery until their souls and bodies are reunited at their resurrection. At that time, they will be judged, found guilty and cast into the Lake of Fire, eternally separated from God in conscious punishment. We reject all forms of reincarnation, purgatory, soul sleep, spirit

prison and annihilation as well as anyone remaining on earth in a different form or getting a second chance to be saved after death. [Gen 1:26-31, 2:15-3:20, 5:2, 6:5, 8:21, 9:6; 1 Kgs 8:46; 2 Chr 6:36; Job 5:18-19; Pss 14:1-3, 143:2; Prov 6:16-19; Eccl 7:20, 8:11; Isa 13:11, 43:7; Jer 17:9; Ezek 18:4; Dan 12:2; Matt 7:11, 10:31, 12:12, 25:41-46; John 3:19, 5:29, 6:39, 6:44, 6:65; Rom 1:18-32, 3:9-23, 5:10-21, 6:17, 6:20, 6:23, 7:18, 8:7-11; 1 Cor 2:14, 6:17-20, 11:7, 15:35-49; 2 Cor 4:3-4, 4:14, 5:8; Gal 3:22, Eph 2:1-3, 2:11-12, 4:17-18; Col 1:21, 2:13; 2 Thes 2:12; 2 Tim 1:10, 2:26; Titus 3:3; Jas 2:10-11, 3:9; 1 John 1:8, 1:10; Rev 4:11, 20:4-6, 20:11-15].

- h) Men and Women. We teach that God's original and very good creation included making both men and women in His image. This makes both genders equal in value, dignity and salvation and equally worthy of respect and protection. However, the two genders are not identical, but were created to complement each other in role and function both in the church and in the Christian home. In the church, this means only men should be elders as well as publically and formally preach or teach to a mixed audience of adult men and women. In the Christian home, husbands have been given the responsibility of humble leadership and wives have been given the responsibility of willing, intelligent submission to that leadership, which includes never following their husbands into sin. Because these marriage roles reflect God's very good creative purpose, being ordained by Him before sin entered the world, living in accordance with them fosters relational peace, blessing and joy. This is why marriage can only legitimately exist between one man (having XY sex chromosomes) and one woman (have XX sex chromosomes) and that these ideas are God-ordained, not 'old fashioned' or based on the ever-changing whims of societal acceptability and ultimatums. [Gen 1:26-27, 2:18-24, 5:1-2, 9:6; 1 Cor 11:3, 11:34-37; 1 Tim 2:11-14, 3:1-2; Eph 5:22-35; Col 3:18-19; Titus 1:6; Jas 3:9; 1 Pet 3:1-7].
- i) Salvation. We teach that salvation is completely a gift of God's grace given to all whom He chose to save before the creation of the world. Salvation includes all that God does in saving humans from the penalty, power and presence of sin and in restoring them to a right relationship with Him. Salvation can never be gained by human good works, but is a free gift given only to those who by regenerating grace repent of their sins and put their trust in Jesus Christ alone as Savior and Lord, His finished work on the Cross and His Resurrection. All who do so are united to Jesus forever, and therefore, are forgiven and saved from their sins, declared right with and reconciled to God, freed from slavery to sin and adopted into God's family so as to do His will and bring Him glory both now and forever. [Mark 1:15; John 3:16, 3:36, 6:44, 17:3, 20:31; Acts 3:19, 5:31, 10:43, 11:18-21, 13:48, 20:21, 26:20; Rom 1:16-17, 3:20-5:21, 9:15-16, 10:9-17; 1 Cor 1:27-30; 2 Cor 5:19-21, 7:10; Gal 2:16-21, 3:10-14, 4:4-5; Eph 1:3-14, 2:4-18; Phil 1:6, 3:8-9; Col 1:21-22; 1 Thes 2:13; 2 Thes 2:13; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Tim 1:8-10; Titus 1:1, 2:11-14, 3:3-7; Jas 1:18; 1 Pet 1:2-5; 1 John 1:9, 4:9-10, 5:11-13].
- j) Sanctification. We teach that sanctification from sin has both positional and practical phases. Positional sanctification as a work of the Holy Spirit is complete and absolute (a synonym for salvation). Practical sanctification is a result of the continuing work of the Spirit using the Bible as the primary means for increasing holiness and growth into Christlikeness as Christians follow His leadership in their lives. While the Word and the Spirit assure one of

practical sanctification, it always remains imperfect in this life. After a sinner is regenerated, there is some element of corruption left in every Christian, which is the source of the internal war between the flesh and the Spirit. In general, spiritual growth occurs as Christians grow in love for Jesus through the Gospel, follow the Spirit's leadership into holiness, feed on His Word and are in fellowship with other believers for encouragement and service. [John 17:17; Acts 20:32, 26:18; Rom 6:1-8:17, 15:16; 1 Cor 1:2, 1:30, 6:11; Gal 5:16-25; Eph 4:20-5:21, 5:26-27; Phil 2:12-13, 3:12-19; Col 2:6-7, 3:1-17; 1 Thes 4:3-4; 2 Thes 2:13; Heb 2:11, 10:10, 13:12; 1 Pet 1:2, 2:11].

- k) Preservation & Perseverance. We teach that all who have ever been saved are kept by God's power and thus, their salvation is secure forever, meaning a truly saved person cannot ever lose his or her salvation, going from saved back to unsaved again. Saving faith in Christ is expressed by a fruitful, God-pleasing life that stays faithful to that commitment until death. While the moral perfection of the Christian will never be completed in this life, this should never be used as an excuse for sinful living. God in His holiness does not tolerate persistent sin in His children. [Pss 31:23, 66:8-9; John 6:37-40, 8:31-35, 10:28-29, 17:2, 17:11-12, 17:24; Rom 8:31-39; Eph 4:30; Phil 1:6; Col 1:21-23; 1 Thes 5:24; 2 Tim 1:12, 4:7, 4:18; Titus 2:14, 3:8; Heb 3:6, 3:14, 7:25; Jas 2:14-26; 1 Pet 1:5, 1:23-24; 1 John 2:3-6, 2:15-19, 2:29-3:1, 3:4-10, 5:1-2, 5:11, 5:18; 2 John 2; Jude 1, 24].
- l) The Church. We teach the true Church, the Church Universal, is made up of every person who has ever been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, united to Christ, repented of his or her sins and trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation. Though there is one people of God, the Church is distinct from Israel. It began on the Day of Pentecost and will continue until its completion at the Rapture. Each local church, as an expression of the true Church, is made up of redeemed individuals who have joined together for worship, instruction, fellowship, service and evangelism. Jesus is the Supreme Authority in the Church and He delegates that authority through His Word to qualified elders in each local church. Every church is independent in that it must remain free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that, therefore, Church and State must be kept separate as having different spheres of authority, roles and functions, each fulfilling its duties best when both are free from dictation or patronage from the other [Matt 16:18, 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21, 30-31; Acts 1:8, 2:1-21, 38-47, 8:3, 9:31, 20:28; Rom 11:25-29; 1 Cor 3:9, 3:16-17, 10:31-32, 11:3, 12:12-28; Gal 6:16; Eph 1:22-23, 2:11-3:6, 3:10, 3:15, 4:7-16, 5:23-27; Col 1:18, 1:24, 1:28-29, 2:19; 1 Thes 5:11-13; 1 Tim 3:1-7, 15; Titus 1:5-9; Heb 9:12, 13:7, 13:17; 1 Pet 2:9-10, 5:2-3; Rev 19:7-8, 21:9; Religious Liberty: Matt 22:21; Acts 4:18-20; 5:29; Rom 13:1-7; 1 Tim 2:1-3; 1 Pet 2:13-17].
- m) Baptism and Communion. We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ ordained only two rites or ordinances and committed them to each local church to be observed until He returns. First, baptism is the submersion of a believer in water in the name of the Triune God and is to be done after a person experiences salvation, not before and never to earn salvation. It is a public expression of one's union with Christ, a proclamation of one's lifelong commitment to Him and an identification with the Universal Church. We teach that Communion commemorates and proclaims Jesus' death and is to be done regularly until He returns. While the two elements represent His body and His blood, we also commune with the living Christ whenever we celebrate it together as a local church. [Baptism: Matt 28:19; Mark 1:10; John

3:23; Acts 8:38-39, 10:44-47; Rom 6:3-4; 1 Cor 1:14-17; Col 2:12; Communion: Matt 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:17-20; 1 Cor 10:16-17, 11:20-32].

- n) Angels. We teach that angels are created, personal beings, and therefore should not be worshiped. They worship God and carry out His purposes in the world. We teach that Satan, also known as the Devil, Abbadon, Apollyon, Belial, Lucifer, the Dragon, the Serpent, the Tempter, the Prince of this World, the Accuser of Believers, the Father of lies and the Angel of the Bottomless Pit, is not equal with God, but is a created being and a fallen angel. He is not God's equal opposite, but is the enemy of both God and humanity, who took numerous angels with him when he rebelled and helped introduce sin to the human race. He and his demonic army, though they know their end, have been and continue to propagate deception, sin and false religion until they are finally defeated and punished eternally in the Lake of Fire for their rebellion. [Gen 3:1-24; Num 22:22, 1 Kgs 19:5; Job 1:6-12, 2:1-7; Pss 34:7, 91:11-12, 103:20-21, 104:4, 148:2-5; Neh 9:6; Isa 6:2-3; Dan 8:16-17, 9:20-23, 10:11, 12:6-7; Matt 4:3-10, 13:39-42, 13:49-52, 18:10, 24:31, 25:41, 28:2; Mark 8:38; Luke 1:19, 2:13-14, 15:7, 16:22, 20:36; John 5:4, 8:44, 12:31; Acts 5:20, 7:53, 8:26, 10:5, 12:5-11, 27:23; 1 Cor 4:9; 2 Cor 4:4, 6:15, 11:3, 11:14; Eph 2:2, 3:9-10, 6:11-12; Phil 2:9-11; Col 1:16, 2:18; 1 Thes 2:18; 2 Thes 1:7; 1 Tim 3:6, 3:16, 5:21; 2 Tim 2:26; Heb 1:6-7, 1:14, 2:2, 12:22; Jas 2:19, 4:7; 1 Pet 5:8-9; 2 Pet 2:4; 1 John 3:8; Jude 6; Rev 1:1, 5:11-12, 7:11-12, 9:11, 12:4, 20:2, 10].
- o) End Times. We teach an imminent, physical, personal, visible and future return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth. We teach that the Rapture of the Church will take place before the 7-year Tribulation period begins. Jesus will return to earth at the end of this 7-year period to defeat the enemies of a repentant Israel, literally fulfill God's covenants to them and set up His peaceful, righteous and worshipful Kingdom in Jerusalem on the Throne of David. He will reign as Earth's King for 1000 literal years, after which time Satan as well as both his spiritual and human followers will be judged and cast into the Lake of Fire. After that, this present creation will be destroyed and remade into a New Heavens and a New Earth. [Gen 12:1-3, 2 Sam 7:11-16; 1 Chr 17:8-14; Isa 11:1-16, 65:17-25; Jer 31:31-37; Ezek 36:22-38; Dan 2:44, 9:24-27, 12:2; Zech 8:1-17, 12:10, 13:9; Matt 5:12, 6:20, 13:40-42, 24:3-51, 25:41-46; Mark 13:32; Luke 10:20, 12:33; John 5:22-29, 14:2; Acts 1:9-11, 2:29-30, 10:42, 17:31; Rom 2:8-16, 6:16-23, 8:17, 8:30, 11:25-29, 13:12, 14:10; 1 Cor 3:10-4:5, 13:12, 15:24-28, 16:22; 2 Cor 5:6-10, 12:2-4; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; Phil 1:21-23, 3:20-21, 4:5; 1 Thes 1:9-10, 3:13, 4:13-5:11; 2 Thes 1:7-10, 2:7-14; 2 Tim 2:10, 4:1; Titus 2:13; Heb 6:2, 9:27, 11:16, 12:22-23; Jas 1:15, 5:7-9; 1 Pet 1:4, 4:5-7, 5:4; 2 Pet 2:17, 3:7-12; 1 John 3:2; Jude 6, 14-15, 23; Rev 1:7, 6:17, 7:16-17, 11:15, 14:11, 19:1-22:5].