

Statement of Faith

God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

- We believe in and surrender our lives to the one God who created the heavens and earth. We worship and praise the Father, who breathed life into humankind; Jesus, the Son, who died on a cross to redeem us from sin and whom the Father has declared our Lord; and the Holy Spirit, the seal of our salvation, who lives in us and empowers us to overcome the sinful nature. (Acts 2:22-36, Romans 8:12-28)

- The cornerstone of our faith is our belief in Jesus Christ and in his resurrection from the dead. Everything we hold dear in our faith originates from His words and life (John 3:16, John 12:47-48, 1 John 2:5-6).

- The Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God. It is powerful, challenging and encouraging when it is studied, taught and obeyed because it is from our creator and therefore relevant for all generations. (1 Timothy 4:13, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 4:1-5, Hebrews 4:12-13)

- Our salvation fully depends on the work of God, prompted by His own mercy and grace, not our good deeds. His work redeems those who hear; believe; decide to obey Jesus Christ; repent; are baptized (full immersion in water) into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins; and remain faithful until death. (Luke 13:3-5, Acts 2:22-41, Ephesians 2:8-10, Colossians 2:12, Mark 16:15-16, Acts 22:6-16).

- Our motivation to love God, love each other and love the lost is prompted by God's love for us, demonstrated in its greatest form by the sacrificial death on a cross of Jesus Christ for our behalf (2 Corinthians 5:14-21, 1 John 3:16, Luke 10:27).

Individual response: the surrender of God's children

- As disciples of Jesus, we surrender our lives to His lordship. We rejoice in our adoption as God's children, and each accepts the call to be holy and follow the example of Jesus.

- Conversion begins with belief in Jesus as God's Son and in his death and resurrection. Subsequent steps must include unmistakable repentance of sin, embracement of discipleship and confession that "Jesus is Lord." A person is saved

through God's miracle of rebirth during baptism. Baptism is immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins and the promise that God will give the gift of the Holy Spirit. (John 20:31, Luke 14:25-33, Acts 2:38-41, Romans 10:9, Titus 3:3-5)

- God desires a personal relationship with us and our response to that is to follow the first and second greatest commandments: to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves. (Mark 12:28-30)

- Our personal discipleship to Christ begins with total commitment to the Father, who is over all and through all and in all. It involves an understanding of and a commitment to his terms of lordship, a daily decision to deny the self, and perseverance. (Luke 9:23ff; 14:33, Romans 2:7, Galatians 6:9)

- Our earthly mission involves every member's participation in the Great Commission to "seek and save what was lost" by bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to all parts of the world. Our testimony must be consistent with a Christ-like life of doing good deeds and supporting other Christians and churches. In imitation of Jesus, we are committed to remembering the poor and demonstrating compassion to those who suffer by regularly serving in and supporting benevolent efforts. (Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 10:37-38, Colossians 3:1-6, Luke 19:10, Galatians 2:10, James 1:27).

- Holiness in daily living is a command from God. From baptism we are called to be set apart from the world and the ways of the world and to live as saints of God. (Ephesians 1:1, Ephesians 2:1-4, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, 1 John 2:15-17). With holiness in mind, romantic and marriage relationships of Christians are to be pursued with only those who "belong to the Lord" as defined by Scriptures. (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, 1 Corinthians 7:39)

Church community: sharing in fellowship and strengthening

- As members of the body, we are connected to each other in our rebirth. Together, we make up the church body and devote ourselves to other members of the family of God – a community that helps its members grow to be like Jesus. (1 Corinth 12:12-13)

- Membership in each congregation is made up of baptized disciples – men and women who have pledged to live their lives as saints of God in the holiness He requires. Our members agree to be devoted, not only to their Maker, but also to the body life of the church. This includes making wholehearted efforts, for example, to participate in gatherings of the body and to pursue caring, challenging and encouraging "one another" relationships to spur one

another on toward love and good deeds (Acts 2:42, Romans 12:10, Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:24-25).

- Our community worship includes devotion to Scriptures, prayer, fellowship and the Lord's Supper as a weekly breaking of bread and drinking of the fruit of the vine together. As a community imitating the first century disciples, we willingly give financially as a fragrant offering and sign of thankfulness to God. Since everything we enjoy in life is a gift from God, we agree to cheerfully and sacrificially contribute to the church so that the ministry of Jesus will advance throughout our communities and around the world (Acts 2:42-47, 1 Corinthians 10:17-34, 1 Corinthians 9:7-14, Philippians 4:14-19).

- We believe in the church supporting women, as they serve a vital ministry role in evangelizing, baptizing, teaching, counseling and training other women. In addition, we recognize the value and significant influence that all sisters can have in the lives of Christian brothers (1 Corinthians 9:5, Titus 2:3-4, Acts 18:24-26, Romans 16:1-15).

- The decision-making responsibilities of established congregations belong to the individual congregation. We are also resolved to pursue and maintain our congregation's relationships with other congregations and individual Christians – soliciting, giving and receiving input and godly influence from those outside our local congregation (1 Peter 5:5).

- Communication within the church and outside of fellowship should always be genuine, respectful and never deliberately antagonistic. We affirm the authority of exemplary leadership – including the twin shepherding responsibilities to build up the church according to her needs and discipline the church in order to protect her. (1 Peter 2:17).

- Mature conflict resolution is a priority to our churches and may sometimes require help from outside our own congregation. We agree to obey the Scriptures that insist on godly conflict resolution while renouncing gossip and slander. (1 Corinthians 5:1-13, 6:1-8, Philemon)