

Grace Church of the Black Hills

*“What We Teach”*

## Preface

The elders and members of Grace Church of the Black Hills are committed to the absolute authority of the Scriptures as the only trustworthy standard of faith and conduct. Our priority is to glorify God by faithfully proclaiming the truth of His Word so that people can understand it and apply it to their lives. We recognize that any doctrinal statement is but a fallible and finite human attempt to summarize the riches of an infallible and infinite divine revelation. We also acknowledge there are differences in how genuine believers understand some of the doctrines set forth in this document. However, this in no way detracts from the importance of such a statement. The affirmations which follow summarize our teaching positions regarding major biblical doctrine and thus provide a framework for instruction at this church. They also provide an anchor to protect the church against theological drift. For this reason, pastors, elders and any members engaged in teaching ministries at Grace are annually expected to affirm substantial agreement with the following statement of faith.

## The Holy Scriptures

We teach that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the sixty-six books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-14; 2 Peter 1:20-21). We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Timothy 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed. We teach the literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of Scripture which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Genesis 1:31; Exodus 31:17), describe the special creation of man and woman (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:5-25), and define marriage as between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5). We teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We teach that God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual authorship. The Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's Word to man (2 Peter 1:20-21) without error in the whole or in the part (Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16). We teach that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal, grammatical, historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20). It is the responsibility of believers to ascertain carefully the true intent and meaning of Scripture, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations. Yet the truth of Scripture stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it.

## God

We teach that there is but one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4), an infinite, all-knowing Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)—each equally deserving of worship and obedience. The triune God exhibits an array of attributes, all which define His essence and character (Exodus 34:5-7; Deuteronomy 7:9-10; 32:3-4; Psalm 145:8-21). Some of God's attributes are unique to Him alone while others God bestows upon his creatures and are to be reflected by man.

### God the Father

We teach that God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psalm 145:8-9; 1 Corinthians 8:6). He is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:36). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator, He is God to all men but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Romans 8:14; 2 Corinthians 6:18). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1

Chronicles 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38-47), nor does He diminish the accountability of moral, intelligent humanity (1 Peter 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own based on no merit he foresaw in the person in the future but instead based solely on his eternal purpose and glory (Ephesians 1:4-6; 9-12); In time, He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as his own all those who come to Him; and, upon adoption, He becomes Father to His own (John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Hebrews 12:5-9).

### **God the Son**

We teach that Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies, and in these, He is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father (John 10:30; 14:9). We teach that God the Father created according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence and in operation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2). We teach that in the incarnation (God becoming man) Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. In His incarnation, the eternally existing second Person of the Trinity accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-Man (Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9). We teach that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness forever (Micah 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9-10; Colossians 2:9). We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23, 25; Luke 1:26-35); that He was God incarnate (John 1:1, 14); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:29; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 7:25-26; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

We teach that, in the incarnation, the second person of the Trinity laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes (Philippians 2:5-8). We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (John 10:15; Romans 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24). We teach that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High Priest (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Romans 4:25; 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1). We teach that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that God has accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross. Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers (John 5:26-29; 14:19; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23).

We teach that Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is His Body, unto Himself and returning with His church in glory, will establish His kingdom on earth (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20). We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One through whom God will judge all mankind (John 5:22-23). This includes: all true believers (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10); living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matthew 25:31-46) and unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15).

As the Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5), the Head of His Body the church (Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18), and the coming universal King, who will reign on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31-33), He is the final Judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Matthew 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31). We teach that on the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin; and that he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God (Romans 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18).

### **God the Holy Spirit**

We teach that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity including intellect (1 Corinthians 2:10-13), emotions (Ephesians 4:30), will (1 Corinthians 12:11), eternity (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscience (Isaiah 40:13-14), omnipotence (Romans 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; and Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 10:15-17). We teach that it is the work of

the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind. We recognize His sovereign activity in creation (Genesis 1:2), the incarnation (Matthew 1:18), the written revelation (2 Peter 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7).

We teach that the work of the Holy Spirit was active in the Old Testament but was fully manifested in this age at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16-17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ, which is His church (1 Corinthians 12:13). The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming believers into the image of Christ (John 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22). We teach that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher, who guided the apostles and prophets into all truth as they committed to writing God's revelation, the Bible. Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation, and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (John 16:13; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 5:18; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 1 John 2:20, 27). We teach that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays, but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18). We teach, in this respect, that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the perfecting of the saints today and that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles in the beginning days of the church were for the purpose of pointing to and authenticating the apostles as authoritative revealers of divine truth, and were never intended to be characteristic or normative of the lives of believers today (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:1-4).

## **Man and Sin**

We teach that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Genesis 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9). We teach that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live his life in the will of God, rule over and subdue the earth (Genesis 1:28), and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11).

We teach that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence; incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death; became subject to the wrath of God; and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. All of man's God-given capacities and endowments have since been thoroughly corrupted by sin, in every aspect, and now stand disordered before God. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is radically depraved and hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8). We teach that because all men were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).

## **Salvation**

We teach that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

## **Election**

We teach that election is the sovereign act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously calls, regenerates, saves, sanctifies and glorifies (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians

2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2). We teach that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Romans 9:22-23; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17). Nevertheless, since sovereign grace includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself, sovereign election will result in what God determines. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; James 4:8). We teach that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own part nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Ephesians 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:2). We teach that election should not be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty. God is truly sovereign, but He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Romans 9:11-16). This sovereignty will always exalt the will of God in a manner totally consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:25-28; 2 Timothy 1:9). While it is impossible for finite humanity to harmonize God's sovereign election of sinners to salvation and man's responsibility to believe the gospel for salvation, it is the clear teaching of the Word of God and it remains perfectly resolved in the infinite mind of God (Romans 11:33-36; Isaiah 55:8-9)

### **Regeneration**

We teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given to sinners in the new birth (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24), when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation. Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works will be its proper evidence and fruit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:10), and will be experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (Ephesians 5:17-21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:16; 2 Peter 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). Such a conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3).

### **Justification**

We teach that justification before God is an act of God (Romans 8:33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Isaiah 55:6-7) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20; 4:6) and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21). By this means God is enabled to "be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

### **Sanctification**

We teach that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and is therefore identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. This sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2). We teach that there is also by the work of the Holy Spirit a progressive sanctification by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17,19; Romans 6:1-22; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23). In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh—but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

### **Security**

We teach that all the redeemed once saved are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24). We teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality (Romans 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

### **Separation**

We teach that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments, and that the Scriptures clearly indicate that in the last days apostasy and worldliness shall increase (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5). We teach that out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God and because our glorious God is so worthy of our total consecration, all the saved should live in such a manner as to demonstrate our adoring love to God. We teach believers should strive to bring no reproach upon our Lord and Savior and that no believer should display a poor testimony of Christ to the world (1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1). We teach that believers in a spirit of love and humility should avoid any practice or preference that would violate another believer's conscience or put a stumbling block before them (Matthew 18: 6-7; Romans 12:9-10; 14:13; 1 Corinthians 8:13; Philippians 2:1-4). We also teach that separation from all religious apostasy and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God (Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11). We teach that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; Hebrews 12:1-2) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness that reflects the teaching of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:2-12) and a continual pursuit of holiness (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 3:1-10).

## **The Church**

### **The Universal Church**

We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8), of which Christ is the Head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18). We teach that the formation of the church, the Body of Christ, began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at His return (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). We teach that the church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born again believers in this present age (Ephesians 2:11-3:6). The church is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this new covenant age (Ephesians 3:1-6; 5:32) and is comprised of both believing Jews and Gentiles in one body (Romans 1:16-17; Ephesians 2:13-17; 3:1-6).

### **The Local Church**

We teach that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 4:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1) and that the members of the one spiritual Body are directed to fellowship together in local assemblies for edification, worship, prayer and the ministry of the word (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).

### **Leadership**

We teach that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (also called overseers, pastors, and pastor-teachers; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11) and deacons who serve in capacities delegated to them by the elders (Acts 6:1-6), both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5). We teach that these leaders serve, lead and rule as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17-22) and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership, follow their example and pray for them (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:7, 17-18).

## **Purpose**

We teach that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (2 Timothy 2:2, 15; 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3), by prayer (Acts 2:42; 1 Timothy 2:1-2) by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42), by establishing the character of Christ in its members (1 John 2:6; Colossians 1:28) and by communicating and advancing the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42).

We teach the importance of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:2), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matthew 18:5-14), as well as the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matthew 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16). We teach the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Acts 5:27-29; 14:23; 20:17,28; Titus 1:5). We teach that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Each local church, however, through its elders and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. The elders should determine all other matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government as well (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 13; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

## **Spiritual Gifts**

We teach the calling of all saints to the work of service (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; Revelation 22:12). We teach that the Church is the primary vehicle God is using in the present age to accomplish His purpose in the world. To that end, He gives the church spiritual gifts. First, He gives men chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:7-12). He also gives a unique blend of spiritual abilities to each member of the Body for the purpose of glorifying God and edifying the Church through Jesus Christ (Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

We teach that there were two kinds of gifts given to the early church: miraculous gifts of divine revelation and healing, given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the apostles' message (Hebrews 2:3,4; 2 Corinthians 12:12); and ministering gifts, given to equip believers for edifying one another. With the New Testament revelation now complete, Scripture becomes the sole test of the authenticity of a man's message. While God's supernatural power and reputation is in no way diminished, the confirming gifts of a miraculous nature are no longer necessary to validate a man or his message (1 Corinthians 13:8-12). Miraculous gifts can even be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers (1 Corinthians 13:13-14; Revelation 13:13-14). The only gifts in operation today are those non-revelatory equipping gifts given for edification (Romans 12:6-8). We teach that no one possesses the gift of healing today but that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted (Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; 2 Corinthians 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15).

## **Ordinances**

We teach that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Romans 6:1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible Body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42). Baptism is also a pledge in the presence of God and man to live a life of good conscience before Him (1 Peter 3:21). Baptism has no saving merit or regenerative power.

We teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination and taken with thanksgiving and joy in the heart (Matthew 26:26-30; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32). We also teach that whereas the elements of Communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people (1 Corinthians 10:16). The Lord's Supper has no saving merit, nor does it transfer any saving grace to the recipient.

## Angels

### Holy Angels

We teach that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshiped (Revelation 22:9). Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve God and to worship Him (Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:6-7, 14; 2:6-7; Revelation 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9). Angels fulfill God's purposes and minister to God's people according to His will (Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 4:11; 18:10).

### Fallen Angels

We teach that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. As a created being he is eternally subject to the sovereignty of God (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6). He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1-15). We teach that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isaiah 14:13-14; Matthew 4:1-11; Revelation 12:9-10). We teach that even though Satan has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20, Hebrews 2:14), he is alive and active in the world today as the enemy and deceiver of believers (1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:9,10), the father of lies (John 8:44) and the prince of this world (John 12:31; Ephesians 2:2; 1 John 5:19). We teach that while it is possible for unbelievers to be indwelt by Satan and his demons, (John 13:27; Luke 8:2, 26-39) it is not possible for believers to be possessed because they are indwelt by the Spirit of God (Matthew 12:22-30; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 1 John 4:4). We teach that Satan and demons will be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

## End-Times

We teach that because of our common love for Christ and the gospel, we serve together in our high calling to advance the Kingdom of God while we await His glorious return. We teach that end-times theology is encouraging in nature, giving hope and comfort to the believer (1 Thessalonians 4:18) and was never intended to cause division in the body of Christ. While many aspects of eschatology are clearly revealed in scripture, we teach that finer details must be held graciously, as this is an area of theology yet to be fully manifested in time.

### Death

We teach that physical death involves a separation of soul and body with no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Revelation 6:9-11). The souls of the redeemed pass immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8), that there is a separation of soul and body (Philippians 1:21-24), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the return of Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17), when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8).

We teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11, 19-23; 2 Corinthians 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 20:13-15). We teach that the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until the resurrection (Luke 16:19-26; Revelation 20:13-15), when the soul and the resurrection body will be united (John 5:28-29). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15) and shall be cast into hell, the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41-46), cut off from the life of God forever (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). We teach that any concept of annihilation of the wicked or anything less than a literal, eternal and physical punishment of the wicked in hell is unscriptural (Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12; Revelation 14:9-13; 20:10-15).

### The Return of Christ

We teach the personal, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Titus 2:13) to translate His church from this earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:11) and with His saints, to reward believers according



to their works (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10) and to establish his messianic kingdom on the earth. The saints will share in Christ's authority over the nations (Zechariah 14:4; Acts 1:11; Matthew 19:28; Revelation 2:26-27; 3:21; 20:4). We teach that believers should comfort and encourage one another with the truth of Christ's return (1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11), pursue righteous and holy living (1 Corinthians 15:58; Titus 2:11-12) and be filled with hope and expectation over His return (John 14:1-3; Titus 2:13).

### **The Judgment of the Lost**

We teach that following the Return of Christ, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10) whereupon Christ, who is the Judge of all men (John 5:22), will resurrect and judge the great and small at the Great White Throne judgment. We teach that this resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment (John 5:28,29), they will be committed to an eternal conscious and unrelenting punishment in the lake of fire with the devil and his angels (Matthew 7:21-23; 13:40-42; 25:41; Hebrews 10:31; Revelation 20:11-15).

### **Eternity**

We teach that the saved will then enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved (2 Peter 3:10) and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells (Isaiah 65:17-25; Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 20:15, 21-22). Following this, the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem will come down out of heaven (Revelation 21:1-2) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another (John 17:3; Revelation 21-22). Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28) that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Corinthians 15:28).

*“Amen. Come Lord Jesus.”  
Revelation 22:20*