

Grace Church of Rootstown  
Doctrinal Statement

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## Section 1: 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<sup>1</sup>; 2 Peter 1:20-21<sup>2</sup>). We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1 Thessalonians 2:13<sup>3</sup>; 1 Corinthians 2:13<sup>4</sup>), verbally inspired in every word (2 Timothy 3:16<sup>5</sup>), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God breathed. We teach the literal, grammatical, and historical interpretation of Scripture, which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Genesis 1:31<sup>6</sup>; Exodus 31:17<sup>7</sup>).

We teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matthew 5:18<sup>8</sup>; 24:35<sup>9</sup>; John 10:35<sup>10</sup>; 16:12-13<sup>11</sup>; 17:17<sup>12</sup>; 1 Corinthians 2:13<sup>13</sup>; 2 Timothy 3:15-17<sup>14</sup>; Hebrews 4:12<sup>15</sup>; 2 Peter 1:20-21<sup>16</sup>). 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<sup>17</sup>) without error in the whole or in the part (Matthew 5:18<sup>18</sup>; 2 Timothy 3:16<sup>19</sup>). 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 illumination of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17<sup>20</sup>; 16:12-15<sup>21</sup>; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15<sup>22</sup>; 1 John 2:20<sup>23</sup>). 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. The truth of Scripture judges men; never do men judge scripture.

## Section 2: The Godhead

We teach that there is but one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4<sup>24</sup>; Isaiah 45:5-7<sup>25</sup>; 1 Corinthians 8:4<sup>26</sup>), an infinite, all knowing Spirit (John 4:24<sup>27</sup>), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-22<sup>28</sup>, 2 Corinthians 13:14<sup>29</sup>)—each equally deserving worship and obedience. He is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31<sup>30</sup>; Ephesians 3:9<sup>31</sup>).

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<sup>32</sup>; 1 Corinthians 8:6<sup>33</sup>). As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalm 103:19<sup>34</sup>; Romans 11:36<sup>35</sup>). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator, He is Father to all men (Ephesians 4:6<sup>36</sup>), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Romans 8:14<sup>37</sup>; 2 Corinthians 6:18<sup>38</sup>). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11<sup>39</sup>). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chronicles 29:11<sup>40</sup>). In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (Habakkuk 1:13<sup>41</sup>; John 8:38-47<sup>42</sup>), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Peter 1:17<sup>43</sup>). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Ephesians 1:4-6<sup>44</sup>); He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as his own all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (John 1:12<sup>45</sup>; Romans 8:15<sup>46</sup>; Galatians 4:5<sup>47</sup>; Hebrews 12:5-9<sup>48</sup>).

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<sup>49</sup>; 14:9<sup>50</sup>). We teach that God the Father created according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things were created and continue in existence and in operation (John 1:3<sup>51</sup>; Colossians 1:15-17<sup>52</sup>; Hebrews 1:2<sup>53</sup>). We teach that in the incarnation, the eternal Son - - the second person of the Trinity - - without altering His divine nature or surrendering any of the divine attributes made Himself of no reputation by taking on a full human nature consubstantial with our own, yet without sin (Philippians 2:5-8<sup>54</sup>; Hebrews 7:26<sup>55</sup>).

We teach that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Micah 5:2<sup>56</sup>; John 5:23<sup>57</sup>; 14:9-10<sup>58</sup>; Colossians 2:9<sup>59</sup>). We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born as God incarnate (Isaiah 7:14<sup>60</sup>; Matthew 1:23, 25<sup>61</sup>; Luke 1:26-35<sup>62</sup>); (John 1:1, 14<sup>63</sup>); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (Psalm 2:7-9<sup>64</sup>; Isaiah 9:6<sup>65</sup>; John 1:29<sup>66</sup>; Philippians 2:9-11<sup>67</sup>; Hebrews 7:25-26<sup>68</sup>; 1 Peter 1:18-19<sup>69</sup>). We teach that, in the incarnation, Jesus - - the second person of the Trinity - - laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God, as the external Son, and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes (Philippians 2:5-8<sup>70</sup>). 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<sup>71</sup>; Romans 3:24-25<sup>72</sup>; 5:8<sup>73</sup>; 1 Peter 2:24<sup>74</sup>).

We teach that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that Jesus is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High Priest (Matthew 28:6<sup>75</sup>; Luke 24:38-39<sup>76</sup>; Acts 2:30-31<sup>77</sup>; Romans 4:25<sup>78</sup>; Romans 8:34<sup>79</sup>; Hebrews 7:25<sup>80</sup>; Hebrews 9:24<sup>81</sup>; 1 John 2:1<sup>82</sup>). 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<sup>83</sup>; John 14:19<sup>84</sup>; Romans 1:4<sup>85</sup>; Romans 4:25<sup>86</sup>; Romans 6:5-10<sup>87</sup>; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23<sup>88</sup>). We teach that Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is called His body, unto Himself at the rapture, and returning with His Church in glory, will establish His millennial kingdom on earth (Acts 1:9-11<sup>89</sup>; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18<sup>90</sup>; Revelation 20<sup>91</sup>).

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One through whom God will judge all mankind (John 5:22-23<sup>92</sup>); a. Believers (1 Corinthians 3:10-15<sup>93</sup>; 2 Corinthians 5:10<sup>94</sup>); b. Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matthew 25:31-46<sup>95</sup>); c. Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15<sup>96</sup>). As the Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5<sup>97</sup>), the Head of His body the church (Ephesians 1:22<sup>98</sup>; Ephesians 5:23<sup>99</sup>; Colossians 1:18<sup>100</sup>), and the coming universal King, who will reign on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6<sup>101</sup>; Luke 1:31-33<sup>102</sup>), He is the final Judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Matthew 25:14-46<sup>103</sup>; Acts 17:30-31<sup>104</sup>). 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<sup>105</sup>; Romans 5:8-9<sup>106</sup>; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15<sup>107</sup>; 1 Peter 2:24<sup>108</sup>; 1 Peter 3:18<sup>109</sup>).

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<sup>110</sup>), emotions (Ephesians 4:30<sup>111</sup>), will (1 Corinthians 12:11<sup>112</sup>), eternity (Hebrews 9:14<sup>113</sup>), omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10<sup>114</sup>), omniscience (Isaiah 40:13-14<sup>115</sup>), omnipotence (Romans 15:13<sup>116</sup>), and truthfulness (John 16:13<sup>117</sup>). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19<sup>118</sup>; Acts 5:34<sup>119</sup>; Acts 28:25-26<sup>120</sup>; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6<sup>121</sup>; 2 Corinthians 13:1<sup>122</sup>; and Jeremiah 31:31-34<sup>123</sup> with Hebrews 10:15-17<sup>124</sup>). 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<sup>125</sup>), the incarnation (Matthew 1:18<sup>126</sup>), the written revelation (2 Peter 1:20-21<sup>127</sup>), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7<sup>128</sup>). We teach that the work of the Holy Spirit (and the church age) began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16- 17<sup>129</sup>; John 15:26<sup>130</sup>) to initiate and complete the building of the body of Christ, which is His church (1 Corinthians 12:13<sup>131</sup>). 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<sup>132</sup>; Acts 1:5<sup>133</sup>; Acts 2:4<sup>134</sup>; Romans 8:29<sup>135</sup>; 2 Corinthians 3:18<sup>136</sup>; Ephesians 2:22<sup>137</sup>). 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<sup>138</sup>; 1 Peter 2:24<sup>139</sup>) The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Romans 8:9<sup>140</sup>; 2 Corinthians 3:6<sup>141</sup>; Ephesians 1:13<sup>142</sup>).

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<sup>143</sup>; Romans 8:9<sup>144</sup>; Ephesians 5:18<sup>145</sup>; 2 Peter 1:19-21<sup>146</sup>; 1 John 2:20, 27<sup>147</sup>). 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<sup>148</sup>; Acts 1:8<sup>149</sup>; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11<sup>150</sup>; 2 Corinthians 3:18<sup>151</sup>). 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 revealers of divine truth, and were never intended to be characteristic of the lives of believers after the apostolic age. (1 Corinthians 12:4-11<sup>152</sup>; 1 Corinthians 13:8-10<sup>153</sup>; 2 Corinthians 12:12<sup>154</sup>; Ephesians 4:7-12<sup>155</sup>; Hebrews 2:1-4<sup>156</sup>).

### **Section 3: Man**

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<sup>157</sup>; James 3:9<sup>158</sup>). 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, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Isaiah 43:7<sup>159</sup>; Colossians 1:16<sup>160</sup>; Revelation 4:11<sup>161</sup>). We teach that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and command 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. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the recuperative work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 2:16-17<sup>162</sup>; Genesis 3:1-19<sup>163</sup>; John 3:36<sup>164</sup>; Romans 3:23<sup>165</sup>; Romans 6:23<sup>166</sup>; 1 Corinthians 2:14<sup>167</sup>; Ephesians 2:1-3<sup>168</sup>; 1 Timothy 2:13-14<sup>169</sup>; 1 John 1:8<sup>170</sup>). 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<sup>171</sup>; Jeremiah 17:9<sup>172</sup>; Romans 3:9-18, 23,<sup>173</sup> Romans 5:10-12<sup>174</sup>).

### **Section 4: 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<sup>175</sup>; Ephesians 1:7<sup>176</sup>; Ephesians 2:8-10<sup>177</sup>; 1 Peter 1:18-19<sup>178</sup>).

**Election** — We teach that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies (Romans 8:28-30<sup>179</sup>; Ephesians 1:4-11<sup>180</sup>; 2 Thessalonians 2:13<sup>181</sup>; 2 Timothy 2:10<sup>182</sup>; 1 Peter 1:1-2<sup>183</sup>). 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<sup>184</sup>; Ezekiel 33:11<sup>185</sup>; John 3:18-19, 36<sup>186</sup>; John 5:40<sup>187</sup>; Romans 9:22-23<sup>188</sup>; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12<sup>189</sup>; Revelation 22:17<sup>190</sup>). 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<sup>191</sup>; Acts 13:48<sup>192</sup>; James 4:8<sup>193</sup>).

**Regeneration** — We teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-7<sup>194</sup>; Titus 3:5<sup>195</sup>). 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<sup>196</sup>), 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 in keeping with repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works will be its proper evidence and fruit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20<sup>197</sup>; Ephesians 2:10<sup>198</sup>), 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<sup>199</sup>; Philippians 2:12<sup>200</sup>; Colossians 3:16<sup>201</sup>; 2 Peter 1:4-10<sup>202</sup>). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to

the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18<sup>203</sup>). Such conformity culminates in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17<sup>204</sup>; 2 Peter 1:4<sup>205</sup>; John 3:2-3<sup>206</sup>).

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<sup>207</sup>; Titus 3:4-7<sup>208</sup>; 1 Peter 1:2<sup>209</sup>). 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<sup>210</sup>). 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<sup>211</sup>; 2 Timothy 1:9<sup>212</sup>).

**Justification** — We teach that justification before God is an act of God (Romans 8:33<sup>213</sup>) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Luke 13:3<sup>214</sup>; Acts 2:38<sup>215</sup>; Acts 3:19<sup>216</sup>; Acts 11:18<sup>217</sup>; Romans 2:4<sup>218</sup>; 2 Corinthians 7:10<sup>219</sup>; Isaiah 55:6-7<sup>220</sup>) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Romans 10:9-10<sup>221</sup>; 1 Corinthians 12:3<sup>222</sup>; 2 Corinthians 4:5<sup>223</sup>; Philippians 2:11<sup>224</sup>). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20<sup>225</sup>; Romans 4:6<sup>226</sup>) and involves the imputation (assigned) of our sins to Christ (Colossians 2:14<sup>227</sup>; 1 Peter 2:24<sup>228</sup>) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (1 Corinthians 1:30<sup>229</sup>; 2 Corinthians 5:21<sup>230</sup>). By this means God is enabled to "be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26<sup>231</sup>).

**Sanctification** — We teach that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and 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<sup>232</sup>; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30<sup>233</sup>; 1 Corinthians 6:11<sup>234</sup>; 2 Thessalonians 2:13<sup>235</sup>; Hebrews 2:11<sup>236</sup>; Hebrews 3:1<sup>237</sup>; Hebrews 10:10, 14<sup>238</sup>; Hebrews 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2<sup>239</sup>).

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<sup>240</sup>; Romans 6:1-22<sup>241</sup>; 2 Corinthians 3:18<sup>242</sup>; 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4<sup>243</sup>; 1 Thessalonians 5:23<sup>244</sup>).

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<sup>245</sup>; Ephesians 4:22-24<sup>246</sup>; Philippians 3:12<sup>247</sup>; Colossians 3:9-10<sup>248</sup>; 1 Peter 1:14-16<sup>249</sup>; 1 John 3:5-9<sup>250</sup>).

**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<sup>251</sup>; John 6:37-40<sup>252</sup>; John 10:27-30<sup>253</sup>; Romans 5:9-10<sup>254</sup>; Romans 8:1, 31-39<sup>255</sup>; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8<sup>256</sup>; Ephesians 4:30<sup>257</sup>; Hebrews 7:25<sup>258</sup>; Hebrews 13:5<sup>259</sup>; 1 Peter 1:5<sup>260</sup>; Jude 24<sup>261</sup>). 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 behavior and carnality (Romans 6:15-22<sup>262</sup>; Romans 13:13-14<sup>263</sup>; Galatians 5:13<sup>264</sup>, 25-26<sup>265</sup>; Titus 2:11-14<sup>266</sup>).

**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<sup>267</sup>; 2 Timothy 3:1-5<sup>268</sup>). We teach that out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us 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 and so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior. We also teach that separation from all religious apostasy and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God (Romans 12:1-2<sup>269</sup>; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13<sup>270</sup>; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1<sup>271</sup>; 1 John 2:15-17<sup>272</sup>; 2 John 9-11<sup>273</sup>).

We teach that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12<sup>274</sup>; Hebrews 12:1-2<sup>275</sup>) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of righteous obedience to the Bible's teachings such as the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:2-12<sup>276</sup>) and a continual pursuit of holiness (Romans 12:1-2<sup>277</sup>; 2 Corinthians 7:1<sup>278</sup>; Hebrews 12:14<sup>279</sup>; Titus 2:11-14<sup>280</sup>; 1 John 3:1-10<sup>281</sup>).

## **Section 5: The 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<sup>282</sup>), the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2<sup>283</sup>; Ephesians 5:23-32<sup>284</sup>; Revelation 19:7-8<sup>285</sup>), of which Christ is the Head (Ephesians 1:22<sup>286</sup>; Ephesians 4:15<sup>287</sup>; Colossians 1:18<sup>288</sup>). We teach that the formation of the church, the body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21<sup>289</sup>; Acts 2:38-47<sup>290</sup>) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-52<sup>291</sup>; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18<sup>292</sup>).

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<sup>293</sup>). The church is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32<sup>294</sup>), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6<sup>295</sup>; Ephesians 5:32<sup>296</sup>). We teach that the establishment and continuity of local Churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23-27<sup>297</sup>; Acts 20:17-28<sup>298</sup>; Galatians 1:2<sup>299</sup>; Philippians 1:1<sup>300</sup>; 1 Thessalonians 1:1<sup>301</sup>; 2 Thessalonians 1:1<sup>302</sup>) and that the members of the one spiritual body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:18-20<sup>303</sup>; Hebrews 10:25<sup>304</sup>).

We teach that the one supreme authority for the Church is Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3<sup>305</sup>; Ephesians 1:22<sup>306</sup>; Colossians 1:18<sup>307</sup>) 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<sup>308</sup>; Ephesians 4:11<sup>309</sup>) and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13<sup>310</sup>; Titus 1:5-9<sup>311</sup>; 1 Peter 5:1-5<sup>312</sup>). We teach that these leaders lead or rule as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17-22<sup>313</sup>) and have been delegated the authority to direct His church according to the authority of scripture. (Acts 20:28). The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7, 17<sup>314</sup>).

We teach the importance of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20<sup>315</sup>; 2 Timothy 2:2<sup>316</sup>), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matthew 18:5-14<sup>317</sup>), as well as the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matthew 18:15-22<sup>318</sup>; Acts 5:1-11<sup>319</sup>; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13<sup>320</sup>; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15<sup>321</sup>; 1 Timothy 1:19-20<sup>322</sup>; Titus 1:10-16<sup>323</sup>).

We teach the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control except under the authority of the Scriptures or Holy Spirit, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5<sup>324</sup>). 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 shall determine and shall have the sole discretion to interpret and decide all matters of membership, policy, doctrine, benevolence and governance. (Acts 15:19-31<sup>325</sup>; Acts 20:28<sup>326</sup>; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 13<sup>327</sup>; 1 Peter 5:14<sup>328</sup>)

We teach that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21<sup>329</sup>) by building itself up in the faith and love (Ephesians 4:13-16<sup>330</sup>), by instruction of the Word (2 Timothy 2:2, 15<sup>331</sup>; 2 Timothy 3:16-

17<sup>332</sup>), by fellowship (Acts 2:47<sup>333</sup>; 1 John 1:3<sup>334</sup>), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19<sup>335</sup>; Acts 2:38-42<sup>336</sup>) and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19<sup>337</sup>; Acts 1:8<sup>338</sup>; Acts 2:42<sup>339</sup>). We teach the calling of all saints to the work of service (1 Corinthians 15:58<sup>340</sup>; Ephesians 4:12<sup>341</sup>; Revelation 22:12<sup>342</sup>).

We teach the need of the church to submit to God as He accomplishes 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<sup>343</sup>), and He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each member of the body of Christ (Romans 12:5-8<sup>344</sup>; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31<sup>345</sup>; 1 Peter 4:10-11<sup>346</sup>).

We teach that there were two kinds of gifts given 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<sup>347</sup>; 2 Corinthians 12:12<sup>348</sup>); 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, and confirming gifts of a miraculous nature are no longer necessary to validate a man or his message (1 Corinthians 13:8-12<sup>349</sup>); Revelation 13:13-14<sup>350</sup>). We teach that the only gifts that are active today are those nonrevelatory equipping gifts given for edification (Romans 12:6-8<sup>351</sup>). 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<sup>352</sup>; John 5:7-9<sup>353</sup>; 2 Corinthians 12:6-10<sup>354</sup>; James 5:13-16<sup>355</sup>; 1 John 5:14-15<sup>356</sup>).

We teach that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's supper (Acts 2:38-42<sup>357</sup>). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39<sup>358</sup>) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing 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<sup>359</sup>). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible Body of Christ (Acts 2:41, 42<sup>360</sup>). 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 (1 Corinthians 11:28-32<sup>361</sup>). 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<sup>362</sup>).

## **Section 6: Angels**

**Holy Angels** — We teach that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshiped. Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve God and to worship Him (Luke 2:9-14<sup>363</sup>; Hebrews 1:6-7<sup>364</sup>, 14; Hebrews 2:6-7<sup>365</sup>; Revelation 5:11-14<sup>366</sup>; Revelation 19:10<sup>367</sup>; Revelation 22:9<sup>368</sup>).

**Fallen Angels** — We teach that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isaiah 14:12-17<sup>369</sup>; Ezekiel 28:11-19<sup>370</sup>), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41<sup>371</sup>; Revelation 12:1-14<sup>372</sup>), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1-15<sup>373</sup>). We teach that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isaiah 14:13-14<sup>374</sup>; Matthew 4:1-11<sup>375</sup>; Revelation 12:9-10<sup>376</sup>); the prince of this world, who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20<sup>377</sup>); and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Isaiah 14:12-17<sup>378</sup>; Ezekiel 28:11-19<sup>379</sup>; Matthew 25:41<sup>380</sup>; Revelation 20:10<sup>381</sup>).

## **Section 7: Last Things (Eschatology)**

**Death** — We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial or soul consciousness (Revelation 6:9-11<sup>382</sup>), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43<sup>383</sup>; Philippians 1:23<sup>384</sup>; 2 Corinthians 5:8<sup>385</sup>), that there is a separation of soul and body (Philippians 1:21-24<sup>386</sup>), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17<sup>387</sup>), which initiates the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6<sup>388</sup>), when our soul and body will be

reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Philippians 3:21<sup>389</sup>; 1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54<sup>390</sup>). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8<sup>391</sup>). We teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (John 6:39<sup>392</sup>; Romans 8:10-11<sup>393</sup>, Romans 6:23<sup>394</sup>; 2 Corinthians 4:14<sup>395</sup>) and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2<sup>396</sup>, John 5:29<sup>397</sup>; Revelation 20:13-15<sup>398</sup>). We teach that the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Luke 16:19-26<sup>399</sup>; Revelation 20:13-15<sup>400</sup>), when the soul and the resurrection body will be united (John 5:28-29<sup>401</sup>). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15<sup>402</sup>) and shall be cast into hell, the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41-46<sup>403</sup>), and separated from God forever (Daniel 12:2<sup>404</sup>; Matthew 25:41-46<sup>405</sup>; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9<sup>406</sup>).

**The Rapture of the Church** — We teach the personal, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ in the air before the seven-year tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:16<sup>407</sup>; Titus 2:13<sup>408</sup>) to translate His Church from this earth (John 14:1-4<sup>409</sup>, 2 Corinthians 5:1-10<sup>410</sup>; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53<sup>411</sup>; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:11<sup>412</sup>) before His glorious return to the earth with His saints, to reward believers according to their works (1 Corinthians 3:11-15<sup>413</sup>; 2 Corinthians 5:10<sup>414</sup>).

**The Tribulation Period** — We teach that immediately following the removal of the Church from the earth (John 14:1-3<sup>415</sup>; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18<sup>416</sup>) the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world (Jeremiah 30:7<sup>417</sup>; Daniel 9:27<sup>418</sup>; Daniel 12:1<sup>419</sup>; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12<sup>420</sup>; Revelation 16<sup>421</sup>), and that these judgments will culminate in the return of Christ in glory to the earth (Matthew 24:27-31<sup>422</sup>; Matthew 25:31-46<sup>423</sup>; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12<sup>424</sup>). At that time, the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be judged (Daniel 12:2-3<sup>425</sup>; Revelation 20:4-6<sup>426</sup>). This period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27<sup>427</sup>; Matthew 24:15-31<sup>428</sup>; Matthew 25:31-46<sup>429</sup>).

**The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign** — We teach that, after the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matthew 25:31<sup>430</sup>; Luke 1:31-33<sup>431</sup>; Acts 1:10-11<sup>432</sup>; Acts 2:29-30<sup>433</sup>) and establish His kingdom for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-7<sup>434</sup>). During this time, the resurrected saints will reign with Him (Ezekiel 37:21-28<sup>435</sup>; Daniel 7:17-22<sup>436</sup>; Revelation 19:11-16<sup>437</sup>). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world (Daniel 7:17-27<sup>438</sup>; Revelation 20:1-7<sup>439</sup>). We teach that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Isaiah 65:17-25<sup>440</sup>; Ezekiel 37:21-28<sup>441</sup>; Zechariah 8:1-17<sup>442</sup>) to restore them to the land, which they forfeited through their disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68<sup>443</sup>). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matthew 21:43<sup>444</sup>; Romans 11:1-26<sup>445</sup>) but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (Jeremiah 31:31-34<sup>446</sup>; Ezekiel 36:22-32<sup>447</sup>; Romans 11:25-29<sup>448</sup>). We teach that this time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Isaiah 11<sup>449</sup>; Isaiah 65:17-25<sup>450</sup>; Ezekiel 36:33-38<sup>451</sup>), and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Revelation 20:7<sup>452</sup>).

**The Judgment of the Lost** — We teach that following the release of Satan after the thousand year reign of Christ (Revelation 20:7<sup>453</sup>), Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints and the beloved city, at which time Satan's army will be devoured by fire from heaven (Revelation 20:9<sup>454</sup>). Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41<sup>455</sup>; Revelation 20:10<sup>456</sup>) where upon Christ, who is the Judge of all men (John 5:22<sup>457</sup>), 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, where upon receiving their judgment (Romans 14:10-13<sup>458</sup>), they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41<sup>459</sup>; Revelation 20:11-15<sup>460</sup>).

**Eternity** — We teach that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (2 Thessalonians 1:9<sup>461</sup>; Revelation 20:7-15<sup>462</sup>), the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved (2 Peter 3:10<sup>463</sup>) and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells (Ephesians 5:5<sup>464</sup>; Revelation 20:15<sup>465</sup>; Revelation 21-22). Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven (Revelation 21:2<sup>466</sup>).

and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another (John 17:3<sup>467</sup>; Revelation 21-22<sup>468</sup>). Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28<sup>469</sup>) that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Corinthians 15:28<sup>470</sup>).

### **Section 8: Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female<sup>A</sup> distinct from and superior to their animals. These two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27<sup>471</sup>; 9:1-7.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that "marriage" is only the uniting of one man as created by God and one woman as created by God in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25<sup>472</sup>) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18<sup>473</sup>; 1 Cor 7:2-5<sup>474</sup>; Heb 13:4<sup>475</sup>) We believe that God has commanded that no sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including, but not limited to, adultery, fornication, cohabitation, homosexual behavior, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20<sup>476</sup>; 1 Cor 6:9-10<sup>477</sup>)

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21<sup>478</sup>; Rom 10:9-10<sup>479</sup>; 1 Cor 6:9-11<sup>480</sup>).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31<sup>481</sup>; Luke 6:31<sup>482</sup>) Hateful and harassing behaviors or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Grace Church of Rootstown.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the local church as part of the bride of Christ, as well as to provide a biblical role model to all members, those who attend this local church, and to the community, members or regular attendees, including all persons serving in any capacity in this local church, whether as a paid employee or a volunteer, must abide by this Doctrinal Statement. (Matt 5:16<sup>483</sup>; Phil 2:14-16<sup>484</sup>; 1 Thess 5:22<sup>485</sup>.)

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<sup>A</sup> In a fallen world, there are situations where sex can only be determined chromosomely.