



## REDEEMING GRACE CHURCH

### Statement of Faith

TOGETHER WITH THE CHURCH IN ALL AGES,

We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who, for us humans and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And we believe in one holy universal and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins<sup>1</sup>, and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

FURTHERMORE,

#### **Concerning the Scriptures**

We believe that the Bible, specifically the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, is the written Word of God, having been written by men inspired by the Holy

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<sup>1</sup> This language does not mean that the act of water baptism produces the forgiveness of sin. Rather, it indicates that baptism is the external sign of the internal reality of faith in Jesus Christ and repentance from sin. The language reflects Acts 2:37 (*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.*), 1 Peter 3:21 (*Baptism...now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience.*), and Ephesians 4:5 (*One Lord, one faith, one baptism*). Baptism saves and indicates forgiveness from sin insofar as it is grounded in the death and resurrection of Jesus and reflects the inward faith of the believer (see below, "Concerning Baptism").

Spirit. The Bible has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its content. It reveals the standard by which God will judge us. Therefore, the Bible is the true center of Christian fellowship and the only sufficient, certain, and authoritative source of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.

### **Concerning the True God**

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, the Maker, Sustainer, and Ruler of heaven and earth. God is inexpressibly glorious in holiness, infinite in all his perfections, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love. In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – who are equal in every divine perfection and without division of nature, essence, or being. Each person of the triune God has distinct personal attributes and executes distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

### **Concerning Divine Providence**

We believe that God, from eternity, decrees or permits all things that come to pass, and perpetually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and all events. However, God is not in any way the author or approver of sin, nor does he destroy the free will and responsibility of mankind.

### **Concerning the Sinfulness of Man**

We believe that God created man in his own image and originally free from sin. Through the temptation of Satan, man voluntarily transgressed the command of God and fell from his original holiness and righteousness. Consequently, all of humanity are now sinners, having inherited a corrupt nature that is wholly opposed to God and are under his just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

### **Concerning God's Purpose of Grace**

We believe that God eternally chose some persons unto everlasting life, not because he foresaw merit in them, but solely because of his mercy in Christ, through which he called, justified, and glorified them. Election is perfectly consistent with the free will of man and includes all means in connection with the end. It gloriously displays God's sovereign goodness and his infinite freedom, wisdom, holiness, and unchangeability. God's electing love utterly excludes boasting and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and imitation of his free mercy in the hearts of his people.

### **Concerning the Mediator**

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace and is accomplished through Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God and divinely appointed Mediator between God and man. Jesus Christ took upon himself human nature, yet without sin, and perfectly fulfilled the divine law. By his death upon the cross, he made a full atonement for the sins of his people. On the third day, he rose bodily from the dead according to the Scriptures, thus proving his innocence, breaking the power of death, and bringing everlasting life to all his people. He then ascended to his Father, at whose right hand he now sits enthroned, ever living to make intercession for his people. He is the only Mediator, the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church, and is therefore in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior.

### **Concerning the New Birth**

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again. Regeneration is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit, who resurrects those who are dead in trespasses and sins. In regeneration, the Holy Spirit spiritually and savingly enlightens sinners' minds to understand the Word of God and renews their whole nature so that they voluntarily love and practice holiness. It is a work of God's free and special grace alone, and it certainly produces the holy fruits of repentance and faith, and newness of life.

### **Concerning Repentance and Faith**

We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God. Repentance is a gospel grace, wherein a person, being deeply convinced by the Holy Spirit of his guilt, danger, and helplessness and of the way of salvation through Christ, turns from his sin to God. The repentant sinner is sincere in contrition, humbles himself with godly sorrow, and commits to walk before God so as to please him in all things. Saving faith is also a gospel grace, wherein a person believes everything revealed in God's Word concerning Christ, accepting, relying, and resting upon Christ alone for justification and eternal life.

### **Concerning Justification**

We believe justification is God's gracious and full acquittal of sinners wherein he removes our guilt, reconciles us to himself, and declares us righteous. God grants justification through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone, not through anything done by us. It is solely on account of Christ's substitutionary death on the cross and on the basis of his perfect righteousness, which is freely credited to us by God. It brings us into a relationship of peace and favor with God and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

### **Concerning the Freeness of Salvation**

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel. All people have an immediate duty to accept these blessings by sincere, repentant, and obedient faith. There is nothing that prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel, which condemns him before God.

### **Concerning Sanctification**

We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made sharers of his holiness. It is a progressive work that began at regeneration and is carried on for the duration of life in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit sanctifies a believer through his continual use of God's appointed means – especially the word of God, the communion of the saints, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.

### **Concerning the Perseverance of the Saints**

We believe that those whom God has accepted in Christ and sanctified by his Holy Spirit will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end. Persevering attachment to Christ is the primary mark that distinguishes Christians from superficial professors. Though saints may fall through neglect and temptation into sin, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the church and temporal judgments on

themselves, yet they shall be renewed again unto repentance and be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

### **Concerning the Church**

We believe that Christians are to associate themselves into particular local churches, according to Christ's commandment. A visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, bound together by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel and exercising the various gifts given them by the Holy Spirit for the building up of the church. Its primary duties are the reading and preaching of God's Word, the right administration of Christ's ordinances, and the faithful exercise of discipline over its members. The church's only scriptural officers are elders or pastors, and deacons, whose qualifications and duties are defined in the New Testament letters to Timothy and Titus.

### **Concerning the Lord's Day**

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, a Christian institution commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The weekly gathering of the church is not only a sacred command, but a blessed privilege in which believers participate in the worship of the Lord and the fellowship of the saints. As such, the Lord's Day points to a greater rest that still awaits the people of God.

### **Concerning Baptism**

We believe that baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ, required for every believer, wherein he is baptized in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Immersion into water demonstrates in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and our death to sin and resurrection to a new life. Baptism is reserved for those who profess repentance towards God and faith in and obedience to the Lord Jesus. Because it is also an ordinance of the church, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

### **Concerning the Lord's Supper**

We believe that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be observed by his churches until the end of the world. The eating of bread and the drinking of the cup is in no sense a sacrifice, but rather is designed to commemorate Christ's death, to confirm the faith and other graces of Christians, and to be a bond, pledge, and renewal of their communion with Him and with the church.

### **Concerning Liberty of Conscience**

We believe that God alone is Lord of the conscience and that he has designed it to be free from the doctrines and commandments of men that are contrary to his Word or not contained in it. We also believe that God appointed civil government for the benefit and good order of human society. Christians should pray for, honor, and obey public officials except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Prince of the kings of the earth.

### **Concerning Gender and Sexuality**

We believe God created humanity in two distinct sexes, male and female, to reflect his image in the world. As image bearers, men and women are equal in dignity and value, yet God in his wisdom has

assigned them complementary roles in the home and in the church. God designed marriage to unite one man and one woman in a lifelong, joyful covenant of love to display the profound mystery of Christ and his church. Sexual activity outside of the covenant of marriage twists God's good gift into idolatry, belittles his purpose for marriage, and transgresses his commands.

### **Concerning the Righteous and the Unrighteous**

We believe that there is a profound and essential difference between the righteous and the unrighteous. Only those who are justified through faith in the name of the Lord Jesus and sanctified by the Spirit of our God are truly righteous, while all who continue in rebellion and unbelief are in God's sight wicked and under the curse. This distinction holds true both before and after death.

### **Concerning the World to Come**

We believe that death is not the end. Though the bodies of men after death return to dust, their spirits live on, the righteous departing immediately to be with the Lord, and the wicked to be reserved under darkness to the judgment. We believe that the end of the world is approaching. On the last day, Christ will descend from heaven and raise the dead, both righteous and wicked, from the grave to final retribution. A solemn separation will then take place that will forever fix the final state of men in heaven or hell, the wicked being judged to everlasting, conscious punishment, and the righteous to everlasting life and joy.