

# Doctrinal Statement of Faith

**On God, the Father:** We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We believe in the aseity, or the self-existence, of God. God reveals His aseity when He declares that “I AM WHO I AM” (Ex 3:14). God is eternally existent from eternity past to eternity future and has no beginning or end (Gen 1:1; Ps 90:2; Jn 1:1-3; Rev 1:8, 22:13). He is the uncreated One, Who, for the pleasure of His glory and Name, created all things out of nothing by His Word (Rev 4:11; Col 1:16). God did not have to create but did it out of His own goodness and pleasure (Mal 3:6). It must be said that He did not need or derives glory from any creature or created thing but rather manifests His glory unto them. God alone is good and every perfect gift comes from Him (James 1:17). He is omnipotent (Ps 147:5; Jer 32:17-20), omnipresent (2 Chron 6:18), and omniscient (Job 37:16). God is Spirit (Jn 4:24) and invisible (Col 1:15).

**On Jesus Christ, the Son:** We believe in the deity of Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

We believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God – the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Trinity and the image of the invisible God – of one substance and essence of the Father (John 3:16; Col 1:15). He was eternally existent with God from the beginning (Jn 1:1). By Him all things were created and are held through Him and for Him (Col 1:16-17).

When the fullness of time came, He took upon Himself all the characteristics and properties of man to reconcile all things to Himself, yet was without sin (Col 1:19-20). While taking on and incarnating human nature, He was still fully God in nature (Phil 2:6); in Him were both the human and divine natures inseparably joined in one person without conversion, composition, or confusion, who stood as the only Mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5; Heb 9:15). He experienced the full range of the finite human nature (Lk 4:2; Jn 11:35, 19:28) and was even tempted though He did not sin (Lk 4).

We believe that Jesus is the fulfillment of all that is prophesied of Him in the Old Testament – all the promises, types, and shadows – and that all Scriptures speak of Him (Gen 3:15; Mt 26:54; Lk 24:27, 44-48; Jn 5:39; Acts 18:28; Rom 1:2; 1 Cor 15:3-4; Col 2:17; Heb 10:1). He is also the fulfillment of the three offices instituted in the Old Testament: Jesus Christ is the Prophet (Lk 4:17-20), the Priest (Heb 5), and the King (Mt 26:64; Rev 4). He is also the Head of the Church (Col 1:18).

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (Lk 1:35). He was born under the Law in order to redeem those under the Law (Gal 4:4-5); as sons of the first Adam, all die, but as Last Adam, He became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor 15:22, 45). Christ, both in His active and passive obedience to the Law (Rom 5:18-19), came to offer complete and full atonement for our sins to die on the cross so that we may be reconciled to God (Rom 3:25; Heb 2:17; 1 Jn 2:2). It is in the shedding of His blood that has provided the purification from the penalty of the Law (Heb 9:22; 1 Pt 1:18-19) and bears the full weight of the covenant that we could not keep (Gen 15; Mt 26:28; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 8:7-30, 9:15). He has purchased our everlasting inheritance by His atoning death for those whom the Father has given unto Him (Eph 1:11-23; Heb 9:15).

In His death, Jesus experienced the full weight of God’s wrath against sin (Lk 22:42-44; Rom 5:9); on the third day, Jesus resurrected from the tomb and from death (Mt 28; Mk 16; Lk 24; Jn 20; Acts 2:32). He ascended

into Heaven and is seated the right hand of the Father where He intercedes for us (Mk 16:19; Acts 1:9; Heb 8:1). At His selected time, Jesus will once again return to us in power and in glory (Jn 14:3; Acts 1:11)

**On the Holy Spirit:** We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by Whose indwelling power and fullness the Christian is enabled to live a godly life in this present evil world. As justification is an act of God's grace by which our judicial status is changed, sanctification is also the work of God (Gal 3:3), renewing our inner being by which we die to the power of sin progressively (Gal 2:20; 1 Cor 6:11). We are no longer slaves to sin's power (Heb 10:10) and are called to walk in newness of life (Ps 56:13; Rom 6:1-12). Because our old self is crucified with Him, we are no longer enslaved to sin's power (Rom 6:6). It is by the Spirit and His indwelling power that the Christian is able to live and walk in this world (Gal 5:25; 1 Pet 4:6) until the day that we are given new resurrection bodies (1 Cor 15:49).

What this entails is that sanctification is not just a simple gratitude for justification but a daily dying to sin (Col 3:5; Rom 8:13) and a rising to new life in Christ (Lk 9:23; Col 2:6). We are ever being conformed to the Son's image (Rom 8:29; Gal 3:3; Col 2:11-13). This is an ongoing process. Although sin's power is gone, its presence is still around (Rom 6:12, 18; Col 3:1-4). Paul's command to be transformed, as ongoing and progressive in character, can also be seen in Rom 12:2 and 2 Cor 3:18.

**On the Trinity:** We believe in the doctrine of the Trinity that there is one God, eternally existent in Three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is One (Deut 6:4; Rom 3:30), yet Many (Gen 1:26; John 1:1-2). Each Person is distinct in their relationship to one another and in their functions, yet they are one in substance and share in all aspects of divinity (Mt 26:39; Lk 23:46).

The Father is neither begotten nor proceeded from anyone in anytime or anywhere; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; and the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (Jn 5:18, 15:26, 10:30; Col 2:9; Phil 2:5-6).

Although the doctrine of the Trinity is not explicitly stated in Scripture, we can imply from many passages: Christ's baptism (John 3:16-17); to Nicodemus (Jn 3:5); the Great Commission (Matt 28:19); and in various greetings written by Paul (Rom 1:4, 15:30; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 13:14; 1 Pt 1:2; 1 Jn 4:2-3).

**On the Sacraments:** We believe that there are only two sacraments that are instituted by Jesus Christ by which the Church must administer: baptism and communion (Lord's Supper). Sacraments are the signs and seals of the covenant of grace. As a sign, they teach some symbolic truth about its object and God reveals its meaning by His Word. As a seal, the sacrament certifies by the authority of God that the person receiving it has the quality signified (Eph 1:13). Both baptism and communion signify and seal the cleansing work of Christ's atonement and the conveyance of His continual removal of the guilt of sin. They also visibly mark out those who are part of covenant community from those who are not.

Baptism is a sign of the union we have in Christ in His death and resurrection (Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:11-12) that is to be administered through the application of water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19). Baptism is also the means of fulfilling the Great Commission of making disciples of all nations. One can be baptized upon the confession of Christ through faith or as the child of believing parents. It must be stated that baptism is a covenantal seal just as circumcision was the sign of the covenant made with Abraham (Gen 17). As male infants were circumcised by the eighth day and did not have any recognition or profession of faith, so can an infant be baptized without any recognition or profession of faith. Baptism is not symbolic of the faith of the believer but rather of God's covenant He has with us. Just as circumcision did not guarantee all the promises of the covenant (Lev 26), baptism by confession does not guarantee that a believer will remain one throughout. Also, the sign of circumcision was given to Abraham before he or his seed received the promised land of Canaan and thus signified a future fulfillment of the promise. He possessed no immediate

blessings from the sign of the covenant. Likewise, baptism signifies a future fulfillment of a promise that, by union with Christ in His death and resurrection, we will one day obtain (Heb 13:14).

Communion is a covenantal seal of the union that a believer has with Christ into His corporate and spiritual body, that is the Church (1 Cor 10:17, 11:17-34). Unlike baptism, communion is to be administered continually as it “proclaims the Lord’s death until He comes” (1 Cor 11:26). Furthermore, one must carefully examine oneself of any guilt and sin before taking part of communion (1 Cor 11:27-28).

**On the Bible and Revelation:** We believe the Bible consisting of the Old and New Testament, to be the only inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative Word of God written.

“Man’s chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy Him forever” (WLC #1). God is only known in His self-disclosure (Is 40:12-31; Jn 17:17; 1 Cor 2:10-13). Therefore, it was necessary for God, in His infiniteness and holiness, to take the first initiative and condescend to finite man so that he may glorify and enjoy Him forever (Jn 12:28; Rev 15:4). The means of this was to come into covenantal fellowship with man to reveal Himself as Creator, Lord, and King. This can only happen by the revelation of God.

We believe that God has given two types of revelations in which He has made Himself known unto all men: general and special revelation. General revelation comes through God’s creational acts in the universe (Ps 19:1-6; Rom 1:19-20; Acts 14:15-17). Although God can be known through general revelation so that “men are without excuse,” it alone is not sufficient for the regeneration and salvation of man (Rom 1:21; 1 Cor 1:21) because of sin.

Since the Fall, God has also given all men special revelation through the inscription of Canon – the 66 books of the Old and New Testament (2 Tim 3:14-17), the incarnation of the Word (John 1), and through the various messages, ways, and acts of God in time (Heb 1:1-2). Scripture alone cannot save but it is with the illumination of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2) that the unregenerate can “call upon the name of the Lord and be saved” (Acts 2:21).

Scripture, as the written word of God, has been given to us by the breathing out of God (2 Tim 3:16) to the in-breathing, or inspiration, of human authors. Although God used men bound by their time, place, culture, and even personalities (2 Pet 3:15-16), they were used as instruments of God by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:21) such that their original autographs were inerrant, infallible, and authoritative (Tit 1:2-3; 1 Thess 2:13). God is the primary Author of Scripture while man is the subordinate author of Scripture. Though the original manuscripts may no longer exist, God has preserved His Holy Word by His providence so that it may be the rule of life and faith for the Church (Mt 5:18; Lk 24:44-48; Acts 17:11; 1 Cor 15:1-4).

The function of Scripture, in revelation, is historical-redemptive in nature. There is an organic unity between the Old and New Testaments that points to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Faith, as the sovereign gift of the Spirit of God, is given so that the object and focus is on Jesus Christ. Faith, therefore, is focused on the Word of God and the saving relationship in Christ (Rom 10:17).

It would be futile to say that we can exhaustively or comprehensively know God as finite beings (Deut 29:29; Ecc 12:12; Rom 11:33). The fullness of God’s glory and honor are incomprehensible. However, His incomprehensibility is a function of His knowability in that the more we know God in revelation, the more incomprehensible He becomes (Is 55:8-9; Job 38). There will be a day where we will more fully know the heart and will of God in eternity future (1 Cor 13:12; Rev 22).

**On the Church:** We believe that the Holy Spirit unites all believers into the spiritual body of the Church into

which Christ is the head of the Church (Eph 4:1-16, 5:23-33). Because we have received the Spirit of adoption as the children of God, we share in the sufferings of our Savior and other believers in order that we may be glorified with Him (Rom 8:14-30).

We know that our sufferings are not in vain as we hope and wait to be freed from our current bondage so that we may be justified and glorified like our Savior before us. “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” (Rom 8:28). As sons, we know that we are also heirs of God (Gal 4:5-7).

As part of the larger Church, we are commanded to be witnesses who testify of our Savior until the day He comes again (Mt 28:18-20). The Church is without cultural, racial, socioeconomic, and geographical boundaries – we were all once alienated from God but now are united to Christ through His work (Eph 2; Col 1). As it stated in Rev 5:9-10: “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

We are also commanded to love our God and to love our neighbors by the greatest of all spiritual gifts, love (Lk 10:27; 1 Cor 13:13). Love is how the world will know that we are spiritually united as believers and disciples of Christ (Jn 13:34-35).

**On the Second Coming and Final Judgment:** We believe that there is a resurrection of both the elect and non-elect and that eternal life is to be enjoyed with God for the elect and damnation for the non-elect. When one dies, their bodies decay and return back to dust (Gen 3:19; Job 17:16, 34:15). The souls, which are of immortal subsistence, do not perish and await the time of Jesus’ 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming – the souls of the righteous wait in Heaven for the redemption of their bodies, while the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, or Hades (Mt 25:46; Lk 19:16-31; 23:43; 2 Cor 5:8, 12:1-3, Rev 20:13, 22:12).

God has appointed a day where He will judge the world according to His righteousness by Jesus Christ (Ps 96:13; Acts 17:31). When Jesus returns again to the earth, the dead will be resurrected in their earthly bodies and judged according to what they have done (1 Cor 15:12; Rev 20:11-15). Those who are not in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire. It is also said that in the final judgment, Christ will separate the weeds from the wheat (Jn 5:26-27; Mt 13:38-42). Jesus will gather the weeds, the non-elect, and throw them into the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. To those who are united to Christ, they are given eternal spiritual bodies (1 Cor 15:44). In this state of glory, the will of man is perfectly free to do good only and cannot sin (Eph 4:13; Heb 12:23; 1 Jn 3:2; Jude 24).

No one knows the day or the hour – not even the angels, nor the Son, but the Father only – that Christ will return to the earth (Mt 24:36-44). However, when that day comes, He will usher in the new Heaven and new earth in which everything will be made new and the dwelling place of God will forevermore reside with men (Rev 21:1-5; Ps 90:1; Ezek 37:27).