

## CORE BELIEFS

**We use the term “core beliefs” to designate those beliefs we consider essential Christian beliefs that we as a church unite around. They are not simply what we affirm, but are the foundation for how we live our individual and corporate lives, a framework for how we interpret Scripture and express a shared faith that binds us together in unity.**

### **GOD**

There is one true and living God, the eternal triune God who reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our highest calling as humans is to love God with all our being and devote our lives to obeying and serving Him.

*Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:28-30; Ephesians 4:4-6*

### **GOD THE FATHER**

God is Creator of the universe, in particular our world, and by His power sustains and rules over it. Central to His character is His great redemptive love for us, which has been most clearly and importantly demonstrated in the coming, death, and resurrection of His eternal Son, Jesus, an event that lies at the heart of the biblical story and the Christian faith.

*John 3:16; Acts 17:24-28; I Corinthians 8:6; Romans 1:19-20; I John 4:8*

### **JESUS**

Jesus Christ is the one and only Son of God. Although co-equal with the Father, Jesus humbly came to earth and fully became human. Jesus demonstrated God's love toward us and made His grace available to us by dying a sacrificial death on a cross, voluntarily suffering in our place the penalty that our sins deserve. After three days, Jesus rose from the grave, conquering death and offering forgiveness; a new relationship as a child of God; and eternal life for everyone who believes in Him and becomes his follower (disciple). The desire of Jesus is for everyone to enter that relationship. Jesus now reigns as Lord—and as High Priest, intercedes for his people.

*Matthew 1:22-23; John 1:1, 14, 18; Acts 10:37-43; Romans 5:5-10; I Corinthians 15:3-4; Ephesians 2:4-8; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-21; Hebrews 1:1-3, 4:14-16*

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Through the Holy Spirit, God dwells within God's people. The Holy Spirit comes to us as a gift at the time of our salvation to be a Helper and Guide. The Holy Spirit gives assurance that we are God's children, unifies us together in Christ, and equips us with spiritual gifts for Christian service. The Holy Spirit instructs, guides, molds, and comforts us; and produces godly virtues in our lives.

*Matthew 3:11; John 14:16-17; John 16:7-13; Acts 2:38; Romans 8:13-17; I Corinthians 6:19-20; II Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 3:16; Ephesians 4:3-4*

### **HUMAN BEINGS**

We are created in the image of God; designed to recognize and honor Him as God; live in fellowship with God; and share in his oversight of creation. But God gave us the choice to love Him or to turn away. The first man, Adam, chose to sin and every person since has followed that same path. Through our moral failings and mistreatment of others (sin) and through our self-serving life-style, we have lived apart from God and alienated ourselves from Him. It is impossible for us—through our own efforts—to make amends and experience reconciliation with God. Only Jesus, through the grace of God, can bridge this gulf.

*Genesis 1:27; Genesis 3:1-19; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:4-6; John 4:24; Romans 3:23; Ephesians 2:1-5*

## **SALVATION**

When Jesus died on the cross, he paid the price for our sin. When Jesus rose again, he conquered death for us as well. When we believe in Jesus; turn from our old way of living (repent); confess our faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior; and are baptized into Christ, we receive—through the grace of God—the gifts of forgiveness, salvation, and the Holy Spirit. We are adopted into God’s family as His children and know God henceforth as our Heavenly Father. We are blessed with the abundant life Jesus brought and the great hope of sharing in the resurrection of Jesus at the end of time and live our lives in light of that hope. All this is possible only through the gracious work of God through Jesus.

*John 3:5, 3:16, 10:10, 14:6; Acts 2:37-39, 16:29-33; Romans 6:3-4; I Corinthians 6:11, 15:1-4; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 2:1-10; Philippians 3:20-21; Titus 3:3-8; I John 3:1-3*

## **THE CHURCH**

The church was founded by and belongs to Jesus; and consists of those who have accepted this salvation and become followers of Jesus. It is the Body of Christ on the earth. We gather regularly to worship and fellowship; and to remember, celebrate, and proclaim the death and resurrection of Jesus, primarily through the Lord’s Supper. But beyond that, our whole lives are to be a worship of devoted service to God. We are to live together in Christian unity; to love and encourage one another; and to use our gifts in service to God and one another. And we are to be molded with the help of God’s Spirit to be people who reflect more and more the character of Jesus, those moral and spiritual qualities that please and honor God.

*Matthew 16:15-18; John 13:34-35; John 17:20-23; Acts 2:42-47; Romans 12:1-2; I Corinthians 12:12-27; Galatians 5:22-26; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 4:2-4, 15-16; I Peter 2:4-10; I John 4:9-11*

## **CHRISTIAN MISSION AND LIFE**

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the church continues the task of reaching out to and sharing the good news of Jesus with non-believers. Believers also need to be encouraged and instructed so that they can mature in the faith; become fully devoted followers of Christ; and be transformed more and more into the image of Christ. Believers are called to be a loving community and to follow the example of Christ in serving and helping those in all kinds of need or distress; and encouraging a good and just society. In short, the church seeks to establish God’s Kingdom on earth.

*Matthew 5:13-16, 6:10, 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; II Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:11-13; James 1:27*

## **THE BIBLE**

The Bible is the inspired word of God—written by men guided by the Holy Spirit to whom God had revealed Himself. It is our trustworthy guide for truth, faith, and life. It records the story of God’s redemptive love to win a lost world back. It tells us who God is; why God loves us; what God has done for us; and what God’s plans are for us. Through Scripture, God reveals to us the truths He wants us to know and equips us for living fruitful lives of service.

*Psalms 19:7-11; John 13:34-35, 14:26, 17:17; I Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21*

## **LAST THINGS**

At the close of his ministry and resurrection appearances, Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father, where he reigns as Lord. At the end of time Jesus will return in power and glory. There will be a resurrection and a final judgment of all—with faithful believers and followers of Jesus being welcomed into God’s presence and eternal kingdom.

*Matthew 7:21-23, 25:31-46; John 14:1-6; I Corinthians 15:22-28, 52-57, Philippians 3:18-21; I Thessalonians 4:13-18*

**Each of the preceding paragraphs should be carefully considered in light of the accompanying scriptures. The scriptural references root our beliefs in scripture and amplify on them. Conversely, our beliefs identify and focus on key ideas from the scriptures and attempt to express them clearly. Our beliefs and their underlying scriptures should be read and studied together.**