

Our Confession of Faith

To the judicious and impartial reader:

Grace and peace to you from the Lord Jesus Christ. It is our prayer that the truths set forth in this Confession would strengthen your faith, clarify your understanding, and lead you to deeper joy in the gospel of our Savior. May the Spirit of God grant you discernment as you read, and may all who consider these doctrines be led to worship the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Introduction

From the beginning, it has pleased Almighty God, in His sovereign wisdom and unfailing grace, to gather for Himself a people who confess His name, submit to His Word, and walk together in obedience to Jesus Christ, the only Head of the Church. Throughout every age, the Lord has preserved His truth and sustained His people by the ministry of His Spirit and the sufficiency of Holy Scripture, the final and perfect rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.

As heirs of this gracious heritage, and desiring to order our life together according to the will of Christ, we, the members of Bend Southern Baptist Church of Horseshoe Bend, set forth this Confession of Faith. We do so not to add anything to the divine Scriptures, nor to bind the conscience beyond what God has revealed, but to declare openly the doctrines we believe, teach, and defend, and to provide a clear and unified testimony to the gospel entrusted to us.

We acknowledge with gratitude the faithful witness of the saints who have gone before us, and we gladly stand in continuity with the historic, orthodox, and Baptist confession of the Christian faith. With humility and conviction, we affirm these truths for the glory of God, the good of His Church, and the advancement of the gospel until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. The Holy Scriptures

The Holy Scripture, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.¹ Although the light of nature and the works of creation and providence reveal the goodness, wisdom, and power of God so clearly that all people are left without excuse,² they are not sufficient to give the knowledge of God and His will necessary for salvation. Therefore, it pleased the Lord, at various times and in diverse ways, to reveal Himself and declare His will to His People;³ and for the better preservation and propagation of the truth, and for the sure establishment and comfort of His people against the corruption of the flesh, the malice of Satan, and the hostility of the world, He committed His revelation wholly to writing.⁴ Thus the Holy Scriptures are most necessary, for those former ways of God's revealing His will have now been completed. Because Scripture is the Word of God written—God-breathed, produced through divine-human authorship as holy men spoke from God carried along by the Holy Spirit—it is inerrant in the original writings, infallible in all it affirms, and fully authoritative.⁵ Its authority is intrinsic, resting not on the testimony of any church, tradition, or human judgment, but on God Himself who speaks therein.⁶ Scripture is therefore the final, sufficient, and supreme rule by which all doctrine, worship, ethics, and church governance must be tested and judged.⁷

Footnotes:

¹ 2 Tim. 3:15–17; Isa. 8:20;

Luke 16:29, 31; Eph. 2:20

² Rom. 1:19–21; 2:14–15; Ps. 19:1–3

³ Heb. 1:1

⁴ Prov. 22:19–21; Rom. 15:4; 2 Pet. 1:19–20

⁵ 2 Tim. 3:16–17; 2 Pet.

1:20–21; John 10:35

⁶ 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 John 5:9

⁷ Isa. 8:20; Matt. 5:18; Heb. 4:12

II. God the Holy Trinity

There is but one living and true God,¹ infinite in being and perfection,² whose essence is simple, spiritual, eternal, and unchangeable.³ He is all-sufficient, all-holy, all-wise, and sovereign over all things. This one God eternally exists in three distinct Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—each fully and truly God, sharing the same divine essence, equal in power, glory, and majesty, yet distinguished by their personal properties.⁴ The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son.⁵ Thus, God is one in essence and three in Person, worthy of all worship, love, trust, and obedience.

God sovereignly ordains, upholds, and governs all things according to the counsel of His own immutable will,⁶ working all things for His glory and the good of His people.⁷ His sovereignty neither violates human responsibility nor makes Him the author or approver of sin; rather, He orders all things in perfect wisdom, righteousness, and holiness.⁸

A. The Father

We believe that God the Father is the fountain of all being,⁹ who purposes, ordains, and accomplishes all things according to His perfect will. He lovingly sent His Son into the world for the salvation of sinners,¹⁰ and together with the Son sends the Holy Spirit to apply the blessings of redemption.¹¹ He adopts, preserves, disciplines, and delights in His people as His own children, working all things for their good and His glory.¹²

B. The Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, the Word made flesh, truly God and truly man in one Person.¹³ Conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, He took upon Himself a true human nature, yet without sin.¹⁴ He lived a perfectly righteous life, fulfilled the Law in every respect, and willingly offered Himself as a substitutionary sacrifice for sinners, bearing the wrath of God on the cross.¹⁵

He rose bodily from the dead on the third day,¹⁶ ascended into heaven,¹⁷ and now reigns at the right hand of the Father as our Prophet, Priest, and King.¹⁸ He intercedes for His people, governs all things for the sake of His church, and will return personally, visibly, and bodily to judge the living and the dead and to consummate His kingdom.¹⁹

C. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity, fully divine and personal, proceeding from the Father and the Son.²⁰ He glorifies Christ by applying the benefits of redemption to the elect. Through His

sovereign work of regeneration, He removes the heart of stone and grants a heart of flesh, uniting believers to Christ by faith.²¹

The Spirit indwells, sanctifies, seals, and preserves God's people, producing in them obedience, holiness, and perseverance.²² He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment;²³ illuminates the Scriptures;²⁴ empowers the church for worship, witness, and service;²⁵ governs all things in providence;²⁶ and intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.²⁷ His ongoing ministry is essential to the life, holiness, and mission of the church.

Footnotes:

¹ Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:4–6

² Ps. 90:2; Ps. 147:5

³ John 4:24; Ps. 102:25–27; Mal. 3:6

⁴ Matt. 28:19; John 1:1; Acts 5:3–4

⁵ John 1:14, 18; John 15:26

⁶ Isa. 46:9–10; Eph. 1:11

⁷ Rom. 8:28; Ps. 115:3

⁸ James 1:13; Acts 2:23; 1 John 1:5

⁹ Eph. 4:6; 1 Cor. 8:6

¹⁰ John 3:16–17; Gal. 4:4–5

¹¹ John 14:26; 15:26

¹² Rom. 8:14–17; Heb. 12:5–11

¹³ John 1:1, 14; Phil. 2:5–7

¹⁴ Matt. 1:18–23; Heb. 4:15

¹⁵ Isa. 53:4–6; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24

¹⁶ 1 Cor. 15:3–4

¹⁷ Acts 1:9–11

¹⁸ Heb. 1:1–3; Rev. 1:5–6

¹⁹ Matt. 24:30; Acts 17:31; Rev. 22:12

²⁰ John 15:26; Acts 5:3–4

²¹ Ezek. 36:26–27; John 3:5–8; Titus 3:5

²² Rom. 8:9–11; Eph. 1:13–14; Gal. 5:22–25

²³ John 16:8

²⁴ 1 Cor. 2:10–14

²⁵ Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 12:4–11

²⁶ Eph. 1:11

²⁷ Rom. 8:26–27

III. God's Eternal Decree

From all eternity, God sovereignly and wisely ordained all things that come to pass,¹ according to the counsel of His own will and for the praise of His glory.² His decree is comprehensive, unchangeable, and perfectly righteous.³ Yet God is neither the author of sin nor does He violate the genuine moral agency of His creatures.⁴

God's decree includes the free and certain fulfillment of all secondary causes, so that events occur in time through means, contingencies, and human choices that He has ordained.⁵ His sovereignty and human responsibility are not in conflict but are harmoniously upheld in the mystery of His perfect wisdom.⁶

Footnotes:

¹ Eph. 1:11

² Ps. 115:3; Rom. 11:36

³ Isa. 46:9–10

⁴ James 1:13; Acts 2:23

⁵ Prov. 16:33; Acts 27:22–25

⁶ Gen. 50:20; Phil. 2:12–13

IV. The Work of God in Creation

God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit freely and sovereignly created all things out of nothing,¹ calling into existence the heavens, the earth, and every creature by the word of His power and for the praise of His glory.² All that God made was very good, reflecting His wisdom, beauty, and order.³ Humanity, male and female, was created as the crown of creation, bearing His image and entrusted with dominion under His lordship.⁴

God created the angels as holy spiritual beings, mighty in strength and appointed as His servants.⁵ Some angels, led by Satan, rebelled against God and were cast down, becoming malicious adversaries who oppose His purposes and seek to deceive and destroy.⁶ Yet they remain under God's sovereign authority and cannot thwart His redemptive plan.⁷

God continues to uphold, sustain, and govern all things by His providence, directing all events according to the counsel of His will.⁸ His providence extends to the smallest details of creation and to the greatest movements of history, accomplishing His purposes without violating the will of His creatures or diminishing human responsibility.⁹

Footnotes:

¹ Gen. 1:1; Heb. 11:3

² Ps. 33:6–9; Rev. 4:11

³ Gen. 1:31

⁴ Gen. 1:26–28

⁵ Ps. 103:20; Heb. 1:14

⁶ 2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 12:7–9

⁷ Job 1:12; Rom. 16:20

⁸ Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:16–17

⁹ Prov. 16:9; Acts 17:26–28

V. Humanity, the Image of God, and the Fall into Sin

God created humanity, male and female, in His own image, upright, holy, and capable of fulfilling His law.¹ Endowed with rational faculties, moral affections, and a will inclined toward obedience, humanity was created for communion with God and entrusted with dominion over the earth.²

Through the disobedience of Adam, the covenant head of the human race, sin entered the world, and all humanity fell in him.³ By this Fall, humanity became spiritually dead, wholly corrupted in nature, and inclined toward evil.⁴ Although people retain the natural capacities of mind, heart, and will, they are morally unable to love God, submit to His law, or believe the gospel apart from the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit.⁵ Thus all are sinners by nature and by choice, justly deserving God's righteous judgment.

A. Male and Female: Creation, Equality, and Divine Design

God created humanity as male and female, equal in dignity, value, and worth, each fully bearing His image.⁶ This distinction is rooted in creation, not culture, and is therefore good, purposeful, and enduring.⁷ God designed

men and women to complement one another in harmonious unity, reflecting His wisdom and displaying His glory.

Within God's wise and loving order, men and women share equal standing before God and equal participation in the life of the church, yet they are entrusted with distinct roles in the home and the church.⁸ These distinctions do not imply superiority or inferiority but express God's good design for human flourishing and for portraying Christ and His church.

In the church, the office of elder is reserved for qualified men, as taught in Scripture.⁹ Yet both men and women are called to serve, teach, disciple, pray, and labor faithfully in accordance with God's Word and the gifts He provides.¹⁰

We reject all distortions of God's design that deny the goodness of embodied sex, blur or erase the distinction between male and female, or elevate cultural preference above biblical revelation.¹¹

Footnotes:

¹ Gen. 1:26–27; Eccl. 7:29

² Gen. 1:28; Ps. 8:3–8

³ Rom. 5:12–19; 1 Cor. 15:21–22

⁴ Eph. 2:1–3; Jer. 17:9

⁵ Rom. 8:7–8; 1 Cor. 2:14; John 6:44

⁶ Gen. 1:26–27; Gal. 3:28

⁷ Gen. 2:18–25; Matt. 19:4–6

⁸ 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22–33

⁹ 1 Tim. 2:12–14; 1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9

¹⁰ Rom. 16:1–6; Acts 18:26;

Titus 2:3–5

¹¹ Rom. 1:24–27; Isa. 5:20

VI. Election, Effectual Grace, and the Will of Humanity

God, from all eternity, according to the wise counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably chose in Christ a people for Himself.¹ This election was not based on foreseen faith, merit, or any condition met by the creature, but solely upon God's sovereign grace and good pleasure.² In love, He predestined His people to adoption, holiness, and eternal life, to the praise of His glorious grace.³

Though God ordains whatsoever comes to pass, His sovereign decree does not nullify the reality of human responsibility.⁴ Human beings make real and meaningful choices, yet always according to their nature.⁵ In the Fall, humanity became enslaved to sin, spiritually dead, and wholly inclined toward evil.⁶ Fallen humanity retains natural faculties of mind, heart, and will, and is therefore accountable before God; yet because the will is bound by sin, no sinner is willing or able to repent, believe, or come to Christ apart from divine grace.⁷

Regeneration is a sovereign, monergistic act of God in which the Holy Spirit imparts new spiritual life, removing the heart of stone and granting a heart of flesh.⁸ By this gracious work, the sinner is made alive, given a new nature with new governing desires, and enabled to repent and believe the gospel.⁹ Repentance and faith are not autonomous human achievements but gifts of God, graciously granted to all whom He effectually calls.¹⁰

Thus salvation, from first to last—from election, to regeneration, to faith, to perseverance—is the work of God alone, ensuring that all glory belongs to Him.¹¹

Footnotes:

¹ Eph. 1:4–5; 2 Thess. 2:13

² Rom. 9:10–16; 2 Tim. 1:9

³ Eph. 1:5–6; John 6:37–39

⁴ Isa. 46:9–10; Acts 2:23

⁵ Matt. 12:33–35; Luke 6:43–45

⁶ Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:1–3; John 8:34

⁷ Rom. 8:7–8; 1 Cor. 2:14; John 6:44

⁸ Ezek. 36:26–27; John 3:5–8

⁹ John 1:12–13; 2 Cor. 5:17

¹⁰ Eph. 2:8–9; Phil. 1:29; Acts 11:18

¹¹ Rom. 11:36; Jonah 2:9

VII. Salvation

Salvation is the gracious work of the triune God, accomplished solely through the person and work of Jesus Christ and applied by the Holy Spirit.¹ It is rooted in God’s eternal purpose, purchased by the Son, and brought to fruition in the elect through the Spirit’s effectual call.² Salvation is received by those who, through the regenerating work of the Spirit, repent of their sins and confess Jesus Christ as Lord, trusting wholly in Him for righteousness and life.³

God commands all people everywhere to repent and believe the gospel.⁴ While justification, sanctification, and glorification are works of God alone,⁵ each person bears real responsibility to respond to His call with faith, obedience, and perseverance. True believers endure not by their own strength but by the preserving grace of God, who keeps them by His power through faith for salvation.⁶

A. Justification

Justification is a gracious and judicial act of God in which He pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous in His sight.⁷ This righteousness is not infused or earned but is imputed to believers through the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, received by faith alone.⁸ Faith is the sole instrument of justification, yet it is never alone in the person justified, but is always accompanied by all other saving graces and produces the fruit of obedience.⁹

B. Sanctification and Assurance

Sanctification is both definitive and progressive. At conversion, believers are set apart in Christ, freed from the dominion of sin, and united to Him in His death and resurrection.¹⁰ Throughout the Christian life, the Holy Spirit works within believers to renew their minds, transform their character, and conform them to the image of

Christ through the Word of God.¹¹ Though believers continue to struggle with indwelling sin, they are enabled by the Spirit to grow in holiness, mortify sin, and walk in obedience.¹²

Assurance of salvation rests primarily on the promises of God in Christ, confirmed by the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit and evidenced by a life marked by repentance, faith, and obedience.¹³ This obedience does not earn salvation but demonstrates the reality of saving faith.¹⁴ True believers may experience seasons of doubt, yet God preserves them so that they never finally fall away from grace.¹⁵

C. Glorification

Glorification is the final and complete transformation of believers into the likeness of Christ. At the return of the Lord, the bodies of the redeemed will be raised imperishable, freed from all corruption, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God forever.¹⁶ Glorification is the certain end of all whom God has justified and sanctified, completing His saving purpose from eternity to eternity.¹⁷

Footnotes:

¹ Titus 3:4–7; Eph. 2:4–9

² 2 Tim. 1:9–10; John 6:37–39

³ Rom. 10:9–10; Acts 20:21

⁴ Acts 17:30; Mark 1:15

⁵ Rom. 8:29–30; Phil. 2:12–13

⁶ John 10:27–29; Phil. 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:3–5

⁷ Rom. 3:23–26; Rom. 4:5–8

⁸ 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:8–9; Gal. 2:16

⁹ James 2:17; Eph. 2:8–10

¹⁰ 1 Cor. 6:11; Rom. 6:1–11

¹¹ John 17:17; 2 Cor. 3:18

¹² Rom. 7:21–25; Gal. 5:16–25; Col. 3:1–10

¹³ Rom. 8:16; 1 John 2:3–6; 1 John 5:11–13

¹⁴ James 2:17; Matt. 7:17–20

¹⁵ John 6:39; Jude 24–25

¹⁶ 1 Cor. 15:42–49; Phil. 3:20–21

¹⁷ Rom. 8:30; Rev. 21:1–4

VIII. Christ the Mediator

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was appointed by the Father from all eternity to be the only Mediator between God and humanity.¹ In this office He is our Prophet, Priest, and King; the Head and Savior of the Church; the Heir of all things; and the Judge of the living and the dead.² From eternity the Father gave to the Son a people to redeem and bring to glory.³

The Son, true and eternal God, took upon Himself a true human nature when the fullness of time came.⁴ Conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, He became fully man while remaining fully God, two whole and perfect natures united in one Person.⁵

Anointed with the Holy Spirit without measure, Christ perfectly fulfilled the law, suffered in the place of sinners, died, was buried, and rose bodily on the third day.⁶ He ascended into heaven, intercedes for His people, and will return to judge the world and consummate His kingdom.⁷

By His perfect obedience and once-for-all sacrifice, Christ fully satisfied the justice of God and secured eternal redemption for all whom the Father has given Him.⁸ The benefits of His saving work were applied to the elect in every age through God’s promises, types, and sacrifices.⁹

Christ effectually applies redemption to His people by His Spirit—uniting them to Himself, granting faith and repentance, governing their hearts, and conquering all their enemies.¹⁰ This work is accomplished freely and graciously, without any condition foreseen in them.¹¹

This mediatorial office belongs to Christ alone. As Prophet, He reveals God to us; as Priest, He reconciles us to God; and as King, He subdues, rules, and preserves us for His heavenly kingdom.¹²

Footnotes:

¹ Isa. 42:1; 1 Pet. 1:19–20

² Acts 3:22; Heb. 5:5–6; Ps. 2:6; Eph. 1:22–23; Heb. 1:2; Acts 17:31

³ John 17:6; Rom. 8:30

⁴ John 1:14; Gal. 4:4

⁵ Matt. 1:22–23; Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 2:5

⁶ Heb. 7:26; Gal. 3:13; 1 Cor. 15:3–4

⁷ Acts 1:9–11; Rom. 8:34

⁸ Heb. 9:14; Rom. 3:25–26; John 17:2

⁹ 1 Pet. 1:10–11; Rev. 13:8

¹⁰ John 6:37; Rom. 8:9,14; Ps. 110:1

¹¹ John 3:8; Eph. 1:8

¹² John 1:18; Col. 1:21; Ps. 110:3

IX. The Church

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, His body, which is composed of all true believers in every age who are united to Him by faith and regenerated by the Holy Spirit.¹ This universal Church is made manifest in local congregations—visible assemblies of baptized believers who covenant together under Christ’s lordship for worship, instruction, fellowship, discipline, and mission.²

A true church is governed by the Word of God alone.³ Its authority is ministerial and declarative, not legislative; the church may only proclaim what Christ has commanded, exercising its stewardship in humble submission to His will.⁴ Christ has given His Church the keys of the kingdom for preaching the gospel, administering the ordinances, and exercising discipline, all according to Scripture.⁵

A. Pastors / Elders / Overseers

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd, has ordained that each local church be led by a plurality of qualified men who together hold the one biblical office described by the titles elder, pastor, and overseer.⁶ These titles emphasize maturity of character, shepherding care, and spiritual oversight, but they refer to the same office.

Elders are entrusted by Christ to shepherd the flock of God through faithful teaching, prayer, counsel, and personal care.⁷ They must guard sound doctrine, refute false teaching, and protect the church from spiritual danger.⁸ They lead the congregation in godliness, equipping the saints for the work of ministry and building up the body of Christ in unity and maturity.⁹

Elders must exercise their oversight willingly, eagerly, and without domineering, modeling Christlike humility and sacrificial service.¹⁰ Their authority is real yet limited—derived from Christ, bounded by Scripture, and exercised in accountability to the congregation.¹¹ Elders must meet the qualifications set forth in Scripture and demonstrate proven character, doctrinal soundness, and pastoral wisdom.¹²

B. Deacons

Deacons are servants of the church, appointed to meet practical and mercy needs, support the ministry of the Word, and promote unity, peace, and love within the body.¹³ Their ministry frees the elders to devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. Deacons must meet the biblical qualifications of godly character, dignity, and faithfulness.¹⁴

C. The Congregation

Under Christ, the congregation bears real responsibility and authority.¹⁵ The members of a local church are called to submit to godly leadership, exercise discernment, and obey Christ through His Word.¹⁶ The congregation is entrusted with affirming membership, practicing church discipline, recognizing qualified leaders, guarding the purity of the gospel, and participating in corporate worship and the ordinances.¹⁷

The congregation is also responsible to uphold sound doctrine, contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, and pursue unity, holiness, and love as the people of God.¹⁸ In all things, the church depends on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who equips every member with gifts for the building up of the body and the advance of the gospel.¹⁹

Footnotes:

¹ Eph. 1:22–23; 1 Cor. 12:12–13

² Acts 2:41–47; Phil. 1:1

³ 2 Tim. 3:16–17; Isa. 8:20

⁴ Matt. 28:18–20; 2 Cor. 10:8

⁵ Matt. 16:19; Matt. 18:15–20;
John 20:21–23

⁶ Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5–7; 1
Pet. 5:1–2

⁷ Acts 6:4; 1 Pet. 5:1–3

⁸ Acts 20:28–31; Titus 1:9

⁹ Eph. 4:11–13

¹⁰ 1 Pet. 5:2–3; Mark 10:42–45

¹¹ Heb. 13:17; 1 Tim. 5:19–21

¹² 1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9

¹³ Acts 6:1–6; Phil. 1:1

¹⁴ 1 Tim. 3:8–13

¹⁵ Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:4–5

¹⁶ Heb. 13:17; Acts 17:11

¹⁷ Matt. 18:15–17; Acts 6:3–5;
Gal. 1:6–9; Acts 2:42

¹⁸ Jude 3; Eph. 4:1–6

¹⁹ 1 Cor. 12:4–7; Eph. 4:15–16

X. Spiritual Gifts

The Lord Jesus Christ builds His Church through the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, who distributes spiritual gifts to every believer for the edification of the body, the advancement of the gospel, and the glory of God.¹ These gifts are diverse in form yet unified in purpose, enabling the Church to grow in maturity, unity, and faithful witness.² The Church today possesses, in Christ, all that is necessary for its mission, health, and perseverance.³

We affirm the sufficiency, finality, and completeness of Holy Scripture.⁴ Therefore, we deny that God continues to grant new revelation, new prophecy, or new doctrinal content beyond what has been once for all delivered to the saints.⁵ The apostolic and prophetic foundation of the Church has been fully and finally preserved in Scripture, which is the supreme and sufficient rule for all faith and practice.⁶

We affirm that the biblical gift of tongues refers to real human languages, given by the Spirit for the proclamation of the gospel across linguistic boundaries.⁷ Scripture teaches that tongues were governed by intelligibility, interpretation, and order, and were never intended as ecstatic speech, private prayer language, or heavenly utterance.⁸ As such, tongues continue today in the ordinary and ongoing use of human languages and translation for the spread of the gospel among the nations.⁹

God may act extraordinarily according to His sovereign will, yet He never authenticates error or undermines the sufficiency of Scripture.¹¹

We deny that signs, wonders, or extraordinary experiences function as authoritative validation of doctrine or ministry.¹⁰ Scripture alone is the final test of truth, and no experience—however dramatic—may contradict or supplement the written Word of God.¹²

In all things, the Spirit equips the Church with every grace necessary for life and godliness, empowering believers to serve one another in love, pursue holiness, and bear faithful witness to Christ until He returns.¹³

Footnotes:

¹ 1 Cor. 12:4–7; Rom. 12:4–8

² Eph. 4:11–13; 1 Pet. 4:10–11

³ 1 Cor. 12:31; Col. 2:9–10

⁴ 2 Tim. 3:16–17; Ps. 19:7–11

⁵ Heb. 1:1–2; Jude 3

⁶ Eph. 2:20; Rev. 22:18–19

⁷ Acts 2:6–11; 1 Cor. 14:9–13

⁸ 1 Cor. 14:14–19, 27–28

⁹ Matt. 28:19; Rev. 5:9–10

¹⁰ Gal. 1:8–9; Matt. 7:21–23

¹¹ Num. 23:19; Isa. 40:8

¹² Acts 17:11; Isa. 8:20

¹³ 2 Pet. 1:3; Gal. 5:22–25; Acts 1:8

XI. Ordinances

The Lord Jesus Christ has instituted two ordinances for His Church: baptism and the Lord's Supper.¹ These ordinances are visible signs of the gospel, appointed by Christ to strengthen the faith of believers, mark out the

people of God, and proclaim the saving work of Christ until He returns.² They are to be observed only as Christ has commanded, and not according to human invention or tradition.³

A. Baptism

Baptism is an ordinance of the New Covenant, instituted by Christ as the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.⁴ It signifies union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection; the washing away of sins; and the believer's entrance into the visible fellowship of the Church.⁵ Baptism is a public profession of faith and an act of obedience that follows conversion.⁶

Because immersion most clearly portrays the biblical symbolism of burial and resurrection, it is the normative and preferred mode of baptism.⁷ However, in cases where a believer is physically unable to be immersed due to medical limitations, the church may administer baptism by pouring as a pastoral accommodation. In such cases, the ordinance remains a true and valid sign of the believer's faith, publicly identifying them with Christ and His Church.⁸

B. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Christ in which baptized believers, by eating the bread and drinking the cup, proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.⁹ It is a memorial of Christ's once-for-all sacrifice, a means of grace by which believers are spiritually nourished, and a communion in which the Church expresses its unity in Christ.¹⁰

The Supper is not a re-sacrifice of Christ, nor does the bread and cup change in substance; rather, believers partake by faith in the benefits of Christ's body and blood through the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit.¹¹ The Lord's Supper must be observed with self-examination, repentance, and discernment of the body, lest it be taken in an unworthy manner.¹²

Only those who have repented of their sins, trusted in Christ, and been baptized upon profession of faith should partake of the Supper.¹³ The church is responsible to guard the table, ensuring that the ordinance is administered in accordance with Scripture and in a manner that honors Christ.¹⁴

Footnotes:

¹ Matt. 28:19; Luke 22:19–20

² 1 Cor. 11:23–26; Rom. 6:3–4

³ Matt. 15:9; Col. 2:20–23

⁴ Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38

⁵ Rom. 6:3–4; Acts 22:16; Col. 2:12

⁶ Acts 2:41; Acts 8:36–38

⁷ John 3:23; Rom. 6:4

⁸ Mark 2:27; Matt. 12:7

(principle of mercy in application of ordinances)

⁹ 1 Cor. 11:23–26

¹⁰ 1 Cor. 10:16–17; Acts 2:42

¹¹ Heb. 10:10–14; John 6:63

¹² 1 Cor. 11:27–32

¹³ Acts 2:41–42

¹⁴ Titus 1:9; 1 Cor. 5:6–8

XII. Worship: God's Call and Our Response

We believe that worship is initiated by God and grounded in His self-revelation.¹ True worship is the reverent and joyful response of God's redeemed people to who He is and what He has revealed in His Word and works.² Worship is God-centered, Christ-exalting, and Spirit-enabled, offered to the Father through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit.³

God speaks through His Word, and His people respond in faith, gratitude, confession, obedience, and praise.⁴ Worship is therefore dialogical and regulated by Scripture, not by culture or personal preference.⁵ God alone determines how He is to be worshiped, and all elements of corporate worship must be shaped by His revealed will.⁶

Worship is both expressive and formative. As believers respond to God's truth, they are shaped in mind, affection, and will toward greater conformity to Christ.⁷ Worship trains the heart to love what God loves and to delight in His glory.⁸

A. Worship in Songs

We believe that singing is a central and commanded expression of corporate worship, through which the Word of Christ dwells richly among the congregation.⁹ Worship in song is a congregational act of instruction, confession, exhortation, and praise, offered with reverence and understanding.¹⁰

The text of congregational song must be governed by Scripture, expressing biblical truth clearly and faithfully.¹¹ Musical forms should serve the meaning of the text, promoting clarity, reverence, and congregational participation, and avoiding distractions that draw attention away from God's truth.¹²

B. The Goal of Worship

The goal of worship is the glory of God through the joyful submission of His people.¹³ As God calls His people through His Word, they respond in prayer, praise, confession, thanksgiving, giving, obedience, and the observance of the ordinances.¹⁴ Worship encompasses the whole life of the believer, offered to God as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ.¹⁵

Corporate worship is the weekly gathering of God's people to hear His Word, proclaim His gospel, receive His grace, and respond with faith and obedience.¹⁶ The Lord's Day assembly is uniquely appointed for the renewal and formation of God's people until Christ returns.¹⁷

Footnotes:

¹ Ps. 29:2; Heb. 12:28–29

² Rom. 11:36; Ps. 96:7–9

³ Eph. 2:18; John 4:23–24

⁴ Ex. 19:3–8; Neh. 9; Ps. 95:1–7

⁵ Deut. 12:32; Matt. 15:9

⁶ Col. 3:16; 2 Tim. 3:16–17

⁷ Rom. 12:1–2; Ps. 34:1–3

⁸ Ps. 119:33–40; Phil. 4:8–9

⁹ Eph. 5:18–19; Col. 3:16

¹⁷ Rev. 1:10; Acts 2:42–47

¹⁰ 1 Cor. 14:15–17, 26

¹¹ Ps. 96:1–6; Rev. 15:3–4

¹² 1 Cor. 14:40; Heb. 12:28

¹³ Rom. 15:6; Ps. 95:1–7

¹⁴ Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 4:13

¹⁵ Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 10:31

¹⁶ Heb. 10:24–25; Acts 20:47

XIII. Spiritual Warfare

We believe that the Christian life involves real spiritual conflict against the devil, the world, and the flesh.¹ Yet this warfare is spiritual, not territorial; the kingdom of Christ is advanced not by seizing cultural power but by proclaiming the gospel, obeying Scripture, and walking in holiness.²

The weapons of our warfare are truth, righteousness, faith, the Word of God, and prayer—not earthly strategies of dominion.³ We therefore reject teachings that portray the Church’s mission as conquering societal “mountains” or establishing earthly rule before Christ returns.⁴ Christ’s kingdom is not of this world, and His Church overcomes by steadfast faith, not political or cultural conquest.⁵

Believers resist the schemes of the devil by standing firm in the gospel, renewing their minds with Scripture, and persevering in obedience.⁶ Christ has already triumphed over the powers of darkness, and His people fight from His victory, not for territory.⁷

Footnotes:

¹ Eph. 6:10–12

² John 18:36; Rom. 1:16

³ Eph. 6:13–18

⁴ Matt. 4:8–10; Col. 2:8

⁵ John 18:36; Rev. 12:11

⁶ James 4:7; 2 Cor. 10:3–5

⁷ Col. 2:15; 1 John 4:4

XIV. Last Things

We believe in the personal, visible, and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ at the end of the age.¹ At His coming, the dead will be raised bodily, and all people will stand before Him for final judgment.² God will judge the world in righteousness through Christ, rendering to each person according to what he has done.³ The wicked will suffer eternal, conscious punishment, while the redeemed will enter into everlasting joy in the presence of God.⁴ In this final consummation, all of God’s promises to His people will be fulfilled, and He will make all things new.⁵

A. Heaven

Heaven is the eternal dwelling place of God with His redeemed people. Those who die in Christ enter immediately into His presence, awaiting the resurrection of the body.⁶ At Christ’s return, believers will be raised incorruptible, glorified, and fully conformed to the image of Christ.⁷ In the new heavens and new earth, the redeemed will enjoy unbroken fellowship with God, free from sin, death, sorrow, and pain.⁸ They will behold the

glory of God, worship Him forever, and reign with Christ in perfect righteousness, peace, and joy.⁹ This is the blessed hope of the Church and the inheritance of all who trust in Christ.¹⁰

B. Hell

Hell is the eternal state of judgment for all who die in their sins apart from Christ. The wicked will be raised to dishonor and condemned to everlasting, conscious punishment under the righteous wrath of God.¹¹ Hell is a place of separation from God's favorable presence, yet not from His sovereign justice.¹² Its punishment is eternal, without relief or annihilation, and reflects the infinite holiness of the God who is sinned against.¹³

God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but calls all people everywhere to repent and believe the gospel.¹⁴ Those who refuse His gracious call remain under condemnation, while those who trust in Christ receive eternal life.¹⁵

Footnotes:

¹ Acts 1:11; Matt. 24:30; Rev. 22:12

² Dan. 12:2; John 5:28–29; Rev. 20:11–13

³ Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:5–11

⁴ Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:14–15

⁵ Rev. 21:1–5; 2 Pet. 3:13

⁶ Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:6–8

⁷ 1 Cor. 15:42–49; Phil. 3:20–21

⁸ Rev. 21:3–4

⁹ Rev. 22:3–5; 2 Tim. 2:12

¹⁰ Titus 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:3–5

¹¹ Matt. 25:41, 46; Rev. 14:9–11

¹² 2 Thess. 1:8–9

¹³ Mark 9:43–48; Rev. 20:10

¹⁴ Ezek. 18:23; Acts 17:30

¹⁵ John 3:16–18; John 3:36

XV. The Family: God's First Institution

God ordained the family as the first and foundational institution of human society, established in creation before the Fall, the state, or the church.¹ Marriage is a covenantal union between one man and one woman, designed by God for companionship, mutual help, procreation, and the display of His covenant-keeping love.² Marriage is holy, honorable, and binding, and is to be entered into with reverence, fidelity, and joy under the lordship of Christ.³

A. Marriage and the Complementary Roles of Husband and Wife

God has ordained distinct yet complementary responsibilities within the family. Husbands are called to lovingly lead their wives as Christ loves the church—exercising sacrificial, servant-hearted leadership marked by tenderness, understanding, and faithfulness.⁴ Wives are called to willingly and intelligently submit to their husbands' leadership, as the church submits to Christ, reflecting trust, respect, and partnership in the work of the home.⁵ These roles are rooted in creation, not culture, and are designed for the flourishing of the family and the display of the gospel.⁶

Marriage is a lifelong covenant that reflects the union between Christ and His church.⁷ Therefore, husbands and wives are called to pursue holiness, purity, forgiveness, and steadfast love, guarding their covenant with diligence and humility.⁸

B. Children and the Responsibility of Parents

Children are a gift and heritage from the Lord, entrusted to parents for their nurture, discipline, and discipleship.⁹ Parents bear the primary responsibility to instruct their children in the knowledge, fear, and love of the Lord, teaching them diligently through word, example, and daily life.¹⁰ Fathers, in particular, are charged to lead their homes in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, without provoking their children to anger.¹¹ Mothers likewise play a vital and honored role in shaping the hearts and lives of their children through wisdom, nurture, and faithful instruction.¹²

The family is the primary context for moral formation, spiritual growth, and the transmission of the faith from one generation to the next.¹³ While the church and civil authorities have legitimate roles in the life of the family, they do not replace or supersede the God-given responsibilities entrusted to parents.¹⁴

C. Holiness, Fidelity, and Sexuality

We affirm that marriage, family, and sexuality are to be lived out in holiness, fidelity, and love according to God’s revealed will.¹⁵ All deviations from God’s design—including sexual immorality, adultery, pornography, homosexual behavior, and any distortion of God’s created order—are the result of sin and require repentance, forgiveness, and transformation through the grace of Christ.¹⁶

The gospel offers hope and redemption to all who turn from sin and trust in Christ, restoring individuals and families to God’s good design and empowering them to walk in purity and obedience.¹⁷

Footnotes:

¹ Gen. 2:18–25

² Gen. 1:28; Mal. 2:15; Matt. 19:4–6

³ Heb. 13:4; Prov. 18:22

⁴ Eph. 5:25–30; Col. 3:19; 1 Pet. 3:7

⁵ Eph. 5:22–24; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:4–5

⁶ 1 Cor. 11:3, 8–9; 1 Tim. 2:13

⁷ Eph. 5:31–32

⁸ Col. 3:12–14; 1 Pet. 4:8

⁹ Ps. 127:3–5

¹⁰ Deut. 6:4–7; Prov. 22:6

¹¹ Eph. 6:4

¹² Prov. 1:8; 31:26–28; 2 Tim. 1:5

¹³ Josh. 24:15; Ps. 78:5–7

¹⁴ Rom. 13:1–7; Matt. 22:21; 1 Tim. 3:4–5

¹⁵ 1 Thess. 4:3–7; Heb. 13:4

¹⁶ 1 Cor. 6:9–11; Rom. 1:24–27

¹⁷ 2 Cor. 5:17; Titus 2:11–14

XVI. The Law of God

God’s moral law, summarized in the Ten Commandments,¹ is a perfect expression of His holy character and the unchanging standard of righteousness for all people in every age.² The law reveals God’s will, exposes sin, restrains evil, and guides believers in grateful obedience.³

The ceremonial laws of the Old Covenant were fulfilled in Christ and are no longer binding,⁴ and the civil laws given to Israel expired with the nation’s theocratic administration.⁵ Yet the moral law remains perpetually binding as the rule of life for all humanity.⁶

Believers are not justified by the law, nor do they obey it in their own strength, but through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit who writes God’s law on their hearts.⁷ The law, rightly understood, leads God’s people to Christ, conforms them to His image, and teaches them to walk in love.⁸

Footnotes:

¹ Ex. 20:1–17

² Matt. 5:17–19

³ Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:24; Ps. 119:105

⁴ Col. 2:16–17; Heb. 10:1

⁵ Ex. 21–23; 1 Pet. 2:9–10

⁶ Rom. 13:8–10

⁷ Jer. 31:33; Rom. 8:3–4

⁸ Gal. 5:14; Rom. 8:29

XVII. Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience

God alone is Lord of the conscience,¹ and He has freed His people from the guilt of sin, the condemnation of the law, and the traditions of men that contradict or exceed Scripture.² Christian liberty is not a license for sin but a freedom to serve God joyfully in obedience to His Word.³

In matters where Scripture does not command or forbid, believers must act in faith, guided by wisdom, love, and a desire to honor Christ.⁴ They must neither bind the consciences of others with human rules nor use their liberty in a way that causes others to stumble.⁵

The civil magistrate must not coerce the conscience in matters of faith, for Christ alone is King of the Church.⁶ Yet Christians are called to use their liberty to pursue holiness, love their neighbor, and glorify God in all things.⁷

Footnotes:

¹ James 4:12

² Col. 2:20–23; Rom. 8:1

³ Gal. 5:1, 13

⁴ Rom. 14:5–8

⁵ Rom. 14:13–21; 1 Cor. 8:9

⁶ Acts 5:29; John 18:36

⁷ 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Pet. 2:16

XVIII. The Lord’s Day

God has set apart one day in seven for holy rest and worship.¹ Under the Old Covenant this was the seventh day, but with the resurrection of Christ it became the first day of the week, the Lord’s Day, commemorating His victory over sin and death.²

The Lord’s Day is a gift of grace for the good of God’s people, providing rest from ordinary labors and opportunity for worship, fellowship, and spiritual renewal.³ Believers are called to devote the day to the public and private exercises of worship, works of mercy, and deeds of necessity.⁴

Observance of the Lord’s Day is not a burdensome legal requirement but a joyful expression of devotion to Christ, anticipating the eternal rest that awaits the people of God.⁵

Footnotes:

¹ Gen. 2:2–3

² Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10

³ Mark 2:27

⁴ Heb. 10:24–25; Matt. 12:1–12

⁵ Heb. 4:9–11

XIX. Civil Government

God has ordained civil government for the good of society, the punishment of evil, and the protection of the innocent.¹ Civil authorities are God’s servants and are to be honored, prayed for, and obeyed in all lawful matters.²

However, when civil commands contradict the commands of Christ, believers must obey God rather than men.³ The authority of the state is limited and must never intrude upon the spiritual government of Christ’s Church or coerce the conscience in matters of faith.⁴

Christians are called to live as good citizens, promoting justice, peace, and righteousness, while recognizing that their ultimate allegiance belongs to the kingdom of God.⁵

Footnotes:

¹ Rom. 13:1–4

² 1 Tim. 2:1–2; 1 Pet. 2:13–17

³ Acts 5:29

⁴ Matt. 22:21; Eph. 1:22

⁵ Phil. 3:20; Jer. 29:7

XX. Cooperation, Associations, and Mission

Local churches, while autonomous under Christ, ought to cooperate joyfully and sacrificially with one another for the advancement of the gospel, the training of leaders, the sending of missionaries, and the relief of suffering, as the Lord enables them.¹ Such cooperation expresses our unity in Christ and strengthens the whole

body, yet it must always preserve the independence of each local congregation and remain fully subordinate to Scripture.²

Associations and conventions may serve the churches by providing counsel, fellowship, and coordinated ministry, but they possess no authority over the internal affairs of any congregation.³ The mission of the Church—to make disciples of all nations—belongs to every church and every believer, empowered by the Holy Spirit and guided by the Word of God.⁴

Footnotes:

¹ Phil. 1:5; 2 Cor. 8:1–5; Acts 11:27–30

² Acts 15:22–29; 2 Tim. 3:16–17

³ 1 Cor. 16:1–3; Acts 15:2–4

⁴ Matt. 28:18–20; Acts 1:8