

Statement of Faith

Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of this Church/Corporation's beliefs, faith, doctrine, practice, policy and discipline, the Board of Elders is SonRise Bible Church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

This Statement of Faith is consistent with sound biblical interpretation and application of the Bible. The Church believes the content in this Statement of Faith. Wherever the phrase "We believe" appears, that phrase also means "We teach" or "We maintain." Thus, these phrases may be used interchangeably and have the same meaning.

The Holy Scriptures

We believe that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the 66 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; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We believe that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Timothy 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed.

We believe the literal, grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Genesis 1:31; Exodus 31:17).

We believe that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We believe 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) without error in the whole or in the part (Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16).

We believe 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 enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20). 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. Yet the truth of Scripture stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it.

God

We believe that there is but one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4), an infinite, all-knowing Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)—each equally deserving worship and obedience.

- God the Father

We believe 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; 1 Corinthians 8:6). He is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:36). 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), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Romans 8:14; 2 Corinthians 6:18). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chronicles 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither the author nor approver of sin (Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38-47), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Peter 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those (the elect) whom He would have as His own (Ephesians 1:4-6); He saves from sin all (the elect) who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all (the elect) those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Hebrews 12:5-9).

- God the Son

We believe 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; 14:9).

We believe that God the Father created according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence and in operation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2).

We believe that in the incarnation (God becoming man) Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. In His incarnation, the eternally existing second Person of the Trinity accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-Man (Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9).

We teach that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Micah 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9-10; Colossians 2:9).

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23, 25; Luke 1:26-35); that He was God incarnate (John 1:1, 14); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:29; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 7:25-26; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

We believe that, in the incarnation, the second Person of the Trinity laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes (Philippians 2:5-8).

We believe 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; Romans 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24).

We believe 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; 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18).

We believe that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High Priest (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Romans 4:25; 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).

We believe 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; 14:19; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23).

We believe that Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is 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; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One through whom God will judge all mankind (John 5:22-23):

- Believers (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10)
- Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matthew 25:31-46)
- Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15)

As the Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5), the Head of His Body the church (Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18), and the coming universal King, who will reign on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31-33), He is the final Judge of all who fail to place their trust

in Him as Lord and Savior (Matthew 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31).

- God the Holy Spirit

We believe 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), emotions (Ephesians 4:30), will (1 Corinthians 12:11), eternity (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscience (Isaiah 40:13-14), omnipotence (Romans 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 10:15-17).

We believe 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), the incarnation (Matthew 1:18), the written revelation (2 Peter 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7).

We believe that the work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost, when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16-17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ, which is His church (1 Corinthians 12:13). 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; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22).

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13).

We believe 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 (2 Peter 1:19-21). 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; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27).

We believe 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; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

We believe, 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 (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:1-4).

Man

We believe 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; James 3:9).

We believe 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; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11)

We believe that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word 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 redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).

We believe 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; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).

Salvation

We believe 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; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Personal salvation becomes reality when an individual places believing faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (John 3:16-18; Ephesians 2:8-10).

- Regeneration

We believe that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). 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) 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 worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works are the proper evidence and fruit of regeneration (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:10), 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; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:16; 2 Peter 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). Such a conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3).

- Justification

We believe that justification before God is an act of God (Romans 8:33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Isaiah 55:6-7) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20; 4:6) and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21). By this means God is enabled to "be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

- Sanctification

We believe that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and is therefore 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; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2). 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; Romans 6:1-22; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23). 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; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

- Security

We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24).

We believe 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 living and carnality (Romans 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

- Election

We believe 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; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2).

We believe 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; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Romans 9:22-23; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17). 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; Acts 13:48; James 4:8).

We believe that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own part or 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; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:2).

We believe the doctrine of election and the following five points of Calvinism are evidenced in the Bible:

- Total Depravity of Mankind (Total Inability)
- Unconditional Election
- Limited Atonement
- Irresistible Grace
- Perseverance of the Saints (those people God elects and saves by His grace through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, will continue to believe and will be kept secure in salvation for all eternity).

We believe 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). 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; 2 Timothy 1:9).

- Separation

We believe 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; 2 Timothy 3:1-5).

We believe 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, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

We believe that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; Hebrews 12:1-2) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness that reflects the teaching of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:2-12) and a continual pursuit of holiness (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 3:1-10).

The Church

We believe 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), the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8), of which Christ is the Head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18).

We believe that the formation of the church, the Body of Christ, began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We believe 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). The church is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6; 5:32).

We believe that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1) and that the members of the one spiritual Body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).

- Church Governance

We believe the one supreme authority for the church is Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, practice and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated primary Church officers serving under Christ and having authority over the Church are male elders (in the Bible elders are also called bishops, pastors, and pastor/teachers; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11). In the Church, elders may also be referred to as “Board of Elders” or “elders” or “eldership” or “Elders.”

The business and affairs of the Church shall be conducted and all corporate powers shall be exercised by or under the direction and authority of the Board of Elders or the Elder's official designee(s).

The secondary officers serving in the Church are male deacons, referred to in the church as "deacons." Elders and deacons are to meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

The Board of Elders lead or rule as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17-22) and have Christ's authority in directing the Church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7, 17). The deacons serve in ministry roles deemed appropriate and assigned by the Elders and under the authority of the Elders.

Decision-making pertaining to the Church resides in the Elders. The Senior Pastor is also an Elder and is Chairman of the Board of Elders unless he defers the position of Chairman to another Elder. The Senior Pastor shall be the President of the Church/Corporation unless he defers the position of President to another person as selected by the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders shall appoint the necessary officers to fill positions as required for the Annual Arizona Corporation Commission filing. The Board of Elders may appoint any officers to fill positions in the Church. The Board of Elders may remove and/or replace any officers.

The Board of Elders is to manage, direct, and oversee all things pertaining to the church, including the financial affairs of the Lord's church. There are no business meetings and no voting associated with the church, except for votes taken within the Board of Elders, as deemed appropriate by the Board of Elders. The Elders are the men that God has given the role and function of managing, with authority, all the matters related to the church. Elders may delegate responsibilities. The Board of Elders select, approve and appoint the men who will become Elders and deacons. The Board of Elders has authority to remove an Elder(s) from the eldership and remove a deacon(s) from the deacons.

The government of this Church is vested in the Board of Elders. In respect to the Church and all its affairs and every possible matter, the Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs. The Church voluntarily partners with the Southern Baptist Convention, but the Church is independent of any denominational control and subject to the control of no ecclesiastical body, including the Southern Baptist Convention.

- Church Discipleship

We believe in the importance of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:2), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matthew 18:5-14), as well as the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matthew 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16).

- Church Autonomy

We believe in the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5).

- Church Cooperation

We believe 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 (Elders) interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. The Elders should determine all other matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government as well (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 13; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

- Church Purpose (identical to Article II)

The purpose of the Church is to glorify God by being a God-glorifying, Christ-exalting, Holy Spirit-led Church, believing in the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible, and striving to fulfill the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). The purpose of the Church includes full acceptance of the Holy Bible, both Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, and as the only basis for our beliefs. The Church accepts the Bible as the final authority on all matters. For purposes of this Church/Corporation's beliefs, faith, doctrine, practice, policy and discipline, the Board of Elders is SonRise Church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

The purpose of the church includes glorifying God (Ephesians 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), by instruction of the Bible (2 Timothy 2:2, 15; 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42) and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42). The Church partners with the Southern Baptist Convention. Furthermore, the Church strives to be involved in:

1. EVANGELISM/MISSIONS – “To preach, teach and share the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people.” (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; II Peter 3:9)
2. DISCIPLESHIP – “To help Christians develop toward full Christian maturity and train them for effective ministry, and promote personal, spiritual growth and discipleship through Bible teaching.” (Ephesians 4:11-13; Matthew 18:20; II Timothy 2:2)
3. WORSHIP – “To participate in worship services together and to maintain personal devotions.” (John 4:24)

4. MINISTRY/SERVICE – “To serve unselfishly, in Jesus’ name, meeting the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those in our Church, community and in the world.” (I Peter 4:10-11; Matthew 25:34-40; I Thessalonians 5:11; Galatians 5:13)
5. FELLOWSHIP – “To encourage, support and pray for each other as Christians in the family of God.” (I John 1:7; Acts 2:44-47; Hebrews 10:23-25; Romans 15:5-7; John 13:34-35)

- Spiritual Gifts

We believe the calling of all Christians to the work of service (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; Revelation 22:12).

We believe in the need of the church to cooperate with God as He accomplishes His purpose in the world. To that end, He gives the church spiritual gifts. He gives men chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:7-12), and He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each member of the Body of Christ (Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

We believe 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; 2 Corinthians 12:12); 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). Miraculous gifts can even be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers (1 Corinthians 13:13-14:12; Revelation 13:13-14). The only gifts in operation today are those non-revelatory equipping gifts given for edification (Romans 12:6-8).

We believe 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. Thus, God may heal if in accord with His divine purposes. (Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; 2 Corinthians 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15).

- Ordinances

We believe that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord’s Supper (Acts 2:38-42). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth 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). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible Body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

We believe 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). We also teach that, whereas the elements of Communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, participation in the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ, who indwells every believer, and so is present, fellowshiping with His people (1 Corinthians 10:16).

Angels

- Holy Angels

We believe 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; Hebrews 1:6-7, 14; 2:6-7; Revelation 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9).

- Fallen Angels

We believe 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; Ezekiel 28:11-19), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1-15).

We believe that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isaiah 14:13-14; Matthew 4:1-11; Revelation 12:9-10); that he is the prince of this world, who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20); and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

Last Things

- Death

We believe that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Revelation 6:9-11), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8), that there is a separation of soul and body (Philippians 1:21-24), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17), which initiates the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6), when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-

54). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8).

We believe the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11, 19-23; 2 Corinthians 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 20:13-15).

We believe that the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Luke 16:19-26; Revelation 20:13-15), when the soul and the resurrection body will be united (John 5:28-29). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15) and shall be cast into hell, the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41-46), cut off from the life of God forever (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

- The Rapture of the Church

We believe in the personal, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ before the seven-year tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Titus 2:13) to translate His church from this earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:11) and, between this event and His glorious return with His saints, to reward believers according to their works (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

- The Tribulation Period

We believe that immediately following the removal of the church from the earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world (Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 16), and that these judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth (Matthew 24:27-31; 25:31-46; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12). At that time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be judged (Daniel 12:2-3; Revelation 20:4-6). This period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24:15-31; 25:31-46).

- The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign

We believe that, after the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30) and establish His messianic kingdom for 1,000 years on the earth (Revelation 20:1-7). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Ezekiel 37:21-28; Daniel 7:17-22; Revelation 19:11-16). 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; Revelation 20:1-7).

We believe that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-17) to restore them to the land that they forfeited through their disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:1-26), but will again be awakened

through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32; Romans 11:25-29).

We believe that this time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Isaiah 11; 65:17-25; Ezekiel 36:33-38), and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Revelation 20:7).

- The Judgment of the Lost

We believe that following the release of Satan after the 1,000-year reign of Christ (Revelation 20:7), Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints and the beloved city, at which time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven (Revelation 20:9). Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10), whereupon Christ, who is the Judge of all men (John 5:22), will resurrect and judge the great and small at the Great White Throne Judgment.

We believe that this resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment (Romans 14:10-13), they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15).

- Eternity

We believe that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:7-15), 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) and replaced with a new earth, wherein only righteousness dwells (Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 20:15; 21:1-27; 22:1-21). Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven (Revelation 21:2) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another (John 17:3; Revelation 21-22). Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28), that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person, and is sin against God in all cultures and for all generations.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Holy Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between one man and one woman who are

married to each other (Hebrews 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman (Matthew 19:4-6).

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual behavior, transgendered behavior, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10) and is incompatible with biblical teaching.

We believe God's design is that a man and woman either be joined together in a perpetual monogamous relationship of marriage, or live in a state of singleness. The Church maintains the only sexual orientation is heterosexuality. We teach the Bible does not affirm that homosexuality, bisexuality or transgendered sexuality is an orientation, but is willful sin against God.

We believe homosexuality, bisexuality, transgendered sexuality, same-sex unions and same-sex marriages are sin in all cultures and for all generations. The Church does not recognize nor give validity to homosexuality, bisexuality or transgendered sexuality as an orientation, nor does the Church approve, recognize or give validity to same-sex unions or same-sex marriages.

By the Church maintaining such a position, the homosexual, bisexual and transgendered person may be adequately warned and encouraged to demonstrate faith and belief in the Gospel of Christ, trust Christ as Savior and Lord, repent of sin, disavow homosexuality, bisexuality and transgendered sexuality, same sex unions and same sex marriage, and be set free from such sins.

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; Romans 10:9-10). The teaching of the Bible on marriage, gender, and sexuality safeguards the Church from being deceived by erroneous philosophies that seek to promote the approval of immoral sexuality, same-sex unions and same-sex marriages (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-25; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Matt. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:18-32; Jude v. 5-7).

The Church does not permit same-sex unions nor same-sex weddings to be conducted in any Church buildings nor on Church property. In no event shall persons or groups who hold, advance, or advocate beliefs, or advance, advocate, or engage in practices that contradict the Church's Constitution and Bylaws, which includes this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality, use any church facility or use any portion of the church property. Nor may any church facility or any portion of the church property be used in a way that contradicts the Church's Constitution and Bylaws, which includes this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. This applies to all church property facilities and property, regardless of whether the facilities are connected to the church's sanctuary, because the Church sees all of its facilities and property as set apart to worship God

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the Church, it is imperative that all persons employed by the Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, or who are Church-members, or hold any office, or are officers, or who attend the Church, agree to and abide by the Church's Constitution and Bylaws, which includes this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

We believe this statement on marriage, gender, and sexuality represents the truth and love taught in the Bible. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity as defined in the Bible, regardless of their own personal view on marriage, gender and sexuality (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:27-36). Hateful and harassing attitudes and actions, and violent behavior directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with the Bible nor the beliefs of the Church.

We believe truth and love as taught in the Bible compels the Church to teach that immoral sexuality, same-sex unions and same-sex marriages are sinful and offensive to God. We believe the Church should maintain and teach this belief without apology, while maintaining a disposition and attitude that is calm and respectful toward people who hold to a different position on marriage, gender, and sexuality.

Abortion

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life.

We believe abortion is sin in all cultures and for all generations. The Scripture is clear that God does not decrease the sanctity of life regarding an unborn child. Birth does not create life, but manifests a life already created at conception. The life of the unborn child in the mother is just as sacred as the life of the born child. The Scripture is clear that God creates life. We did not make ourselves, but God made us (Psalm 100:3; 139:13-16). Abortion is that murderous intervention on the part of humans which kills the life God fashioned. God's Word, the Bible, addresses this clearly as Exodus 20:13 states, "You shall not murder." God hates abortion (Proverbs 6:16-17).

A key Greek word proving that God does not differentiate between an unborn child and a born child is "brephos." Brephos is defined as a breathing, nursing infant or baby (Luke 2:12, 16; 18:15). But the same exact word is also used to denote an "unborn" babe (Luke 1:41, 44). Thus, God equates an unborn babe with a newborn child by using the same precise word as a description of both, brephos. The mother, father, nor anyone else has the right in the sight of God to terminate the life of the unborn child.

A person who has participated in an abortion is not beyond the full forgiveness of God. The Bible

reveals that God has forgiven people for grievous sins, including murder. When a Christian who was involved in some capacity regarding an abortion sincerely and honestly agrees with God (confesses their sin) that they have sinned against Him, and desires Jesus to be the Lord of their lifestyle, God fully forgives (1John 1:9; Psalm 32:1-2,5).

If the person involved in an abortion has not yet trusted Jesus as Savior and Lord, their need is to surrender their heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sin, and to follow Christ as Lord and Savior. This results in salvation and eternal life (Romans 10:10-13). The Lord's church must have a clear and biblical position that stands against abortion. Our political environment and culture increasingly support abortion. This grieves God.

Divorce/Remarriage

We believe the two reasons for a biblical divorce are adultery and abandonment:

Matthew 19:3 The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" 19:4 And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' 19:5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 19:6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." 19:7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" 19:8 He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 19:9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

We believe Jesus was saying that divorce that does not result from adultery, will result in adultery, if remarriage to another person takes place. The following verse safeguards against adultery in the context of divorce/remarriage:

1 Corinthians 7:10 Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. 7:11 But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.

We believe the other biblical allowance for divorce and remarriage is when one spouse abandons the other. The spouse who does not do the abandoning is permitted by God to remarry another believer.

1 Corinthians 7:12 But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. 7:13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by

the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. 7:15 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.

If a spouse dies, the widow or widower may remarry another believer.

Romans 7:2 For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.

We believe the evidence of Scripture is that people commit adultery when remarriage is experienced, outside of the boundaries of a biblical divorce. There are lasting consequences for an unbiblical divorce. Although the Bible gives the reasons for a biblical divorce, the Bible does not command that a divorce take place, but that divorce “may” take place when within the boundaries of the Scripture. Many people have experienced unbiblical divorces with grievous consequences. God promises forgiveness to all who genuinely confess and repent of their sin of an unbiblical divorce and adultery.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Proverbs 28:13 He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.

Complementary Roles for the Genders in Ministry

We believe God has made available His grace, mercy, and salvation to both genders, male and female. God also calls all followers of Christ, both male and female, to serve Him through the church. God has designated complementary role distinctions for the genders (male and female) in the church. Those distinct roles include that only the male gender is to occupy the position of pastor(s), elder(s), deacon(s), and that only the male gender is permitted to teach adult males in the church. These limited role distinctions are not designed by God to negate women from using their gifts and abilities for the glory of Christ.

We believe the issue of male and female gender roles in the church and family is given in Scripture. Woman is not inferior to man, nor does God hold man in favor over woman. But God does have a design of “spiritual headship” designated for the husband in his family, and the man in the church. It should also be understood that women were involved in ministry functions with Christ and in the early church. These were not roles which would violate the spiritual headship of man, but were ministry roles suitable for women. God ‘s biblical plan for families and churches is to trust Him and His plan of complementary role distinctions for the genders. (1 Cor. 11:1-12; 14:33-36; Eph. 5:21-25; 1 Tim. 2:11-14; 3:1-13; Titus 2:3-4; 1 Pet. 3:1-7)

