

Statement of Faith

The Bible

We believe the Bible is the Word of God contained in the Old and New Testament scriptures. The entire Bible is given to humanity as a gracious gift of God's special and authoritative self-revelation. All the Bible's original manuscripts were divinely inspired, having been written by individuals as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. Because God is the ultimate author of the Bible, its contents are free from error and are totally true and trustworthy. The central theme of the Bible is to reveal God's saving purposes in Jesus Christ. God's Word has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The Bible alone is the infallible rule of faith for the church. For a local church to stray from the Bible in faith or practice is to be disloyal to Jesus to whom the church belongs. We believe the entire Bible should be taught in the local church so that its members will grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (Psalm 19:7; Psalm 119:105–106; Matthew 4:4; Mark 13:31; John 8:31–32; John 17:17; Acts 20:32; Romans 10:16–17; 2 Timothy 3:14–17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20–21; 3:18)

The Trinity

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three persons contain the very nature of God and are equal in every divine perfection. They each execute distinct but harmonious roles in the work of creation, providence, and redemption. The Triune God is self-existent and self-sufficient, perfect and immutable, infinite and all-knowing, purposeful and all-powerful, sovereign and steadfast in love. God is worthy of our praise, loyalty, and love. Our church will worship the Triune God when we gather and will model our lives according to God's grace and goodness. (Genesis 1:1, 26; Exodus 34:6–7; Deuteronomy 32:3–4; Psalm 48:10; Isaiah 43:10–13; Malachi 3:6; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1–3; John 4:24; Romans 1:19–20; Ephesians 4:5–6)

God the Father

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit who is good, righteous, and just. He is perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. He is jealous for worship, opposed to idolatry, and wrathful in response to sin and rebellion. He reigns with providential care over his creation and foreknows all that shall come to pass according to his sovereign will. He deals mercifully in the affairs of people. He hears and answers the prayers of his children. He saves from sin and death all who come to him through faith in Jesus Christ. (Exodus 3:14; Psalm 19:1; Matthew 23:9; Luke 10:21–22; John 1:12; 3:16, 36; 6:27; Romans 1:7; 1 Timothy 1:1–2; 2:5–6; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6)

Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, who exists having two natures: fully human and fully divine—which are without confusion, change, division, or separation. The Son of God took on flesh when he was conceived by the Holy Spirit. He was born of the Virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, died as a substitutionary atoning

sacrifice for our sins, and rose bodily from the dead on the third day. He ascended into heaven where he intercedes for his people as an eternal high priest and from where he will return bodily and visibly in all glory to judge the earth and establish his eternal kingdom. He is the head of the church, having purchased it with his own shed blood. All who claim allegiance to Christ are to obey his commands, imitate his life, and promote his gospel. (Matthew 1:18–25; 28:18–20; Luke 1:26–38; John 1:1; 13:15–16; 20:28–31; Acts 1:11; 20:28; Romans 3:21–26; 5:6–8; 6:9–10; 9:5; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:15–20; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 7:25; 9:28; 12:2; 1 Peter 2:21–23)

Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He graciously works to call, regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who profess saving faith in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer and serves as an abiding helper, teacher, and guide. He gave us the Scriptures and illuminates them for those who desire to know the truth and to be transformed through the renewing of the mind. The Spirit of God helps believers to fight the spiritual battle and gives his fruit to those who live in submission to him. He constitutes the Church as God's family and promotes its unity and maturity. He gives spiritual gifts to each believer, empowering them to serve the local church and promote the gospel. Providing endurance for all believers, he seals them for the final day of redemption. (John 3:5–8; 4:24; 6:63; 14:16–17; Acts 1:8; 2:1–4; Romans 8:9–11; 12:2; Galatians 5: 22–25; Ephesians 1:13–14; 4:3–6, 11–16; 6:10–11; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; 1 Peter 4:10–11; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6–7)

Humanity

We believe the human person, both male and female, is the special creation of God, made in his image for his glory. Humanity was created that we might enjoy God, take delight in him, and worship him. Humans are unique in God's creation by having both a material body and an immaterial soul/spirit. Each person has an intellect and a will. Each person exists as a moral creature and is accountable before God. Humanity has been tasked by God with responsible stewardship of the earth's physical resources. Humanity was created to be relational and to commune with each other as families and as friends. Since all human persons contain the image of God, we must promote the dignity and sanctity of all human life. Therefore, every person from conception to the elderly, regardless of their abilities and resources, possesses dignity and is worthy of respect, love, and mercy.

The first man and woman were created innocent of sin, but rebelled against God and thus introduced sin into the human race. Ever since, people are born with a sinful nature. Only God's grace in Christ can restore people to a right relationship with God. Men and women are equal in the sight of God, receive giftedness from God, and have clearly defined roles in the institution of the family and the local church that complement each other and reflect the glory of our Triune God. God's good design to make male and female biologically distinct promotes human flourishing and affirms a proper self-conception of gender.

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman exclusively in covenant commitment for a lifetime. The husband is to be the head of the wife, which entails loving, Christ-like leadership. The wife is to respect her husband and to submit to him willingly as unto the Lord. Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing from the Lord. They are to obey their parents in the Lord. Parents are to raise their children in the nurture and instruction of the Lord. The Bible opposes any sin that destroys the family. This includes all forms of sexual immorality, such as fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. (Genesis 1:26–30; 2:5–7, 15–25; Deuteronomy 6:4–9; Joshua 24:15; Matthew 19:3–9; Romans 1:19–32; 3:10–18, 23; 1 Corinthians 1:21–31; Ephesians 2:1–22; 5:21–6:3; Colossians 1:21–22; 3:9–11)

Salvation

We believe salvation is offered to all people and comes as a gift of God's grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It entails justification through divine election, calling, regeneration, and spiritual adoption. Salvation continues in sanctification and will culminate in the perseverance and glorification of all saints when Christ returns. Since human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners by choice, they naturally face the condemnation of God. Salvation comes only to those who repent of their sin and place faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation cannot be gained in any other way. In following our Protestant tradition, we believe that salvation comes by faith alone, in Christ alone, by God's grace alone, according to the holy scriptures alone, to the glory of God alone. There is no mixture of faith and works in reference to salvation. Those God has accepted in Christ and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. (Genesis 2:17; 3:19; Ecclesiastes. 2:11; John 1:12,13; 5:30; 8:12; Ephesians 2:4–10; Romans 3:23–24; Romans 8:28–39; 2 Corinthians 5:17–20; 1 John 3:2)

The Church

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all born-again persons are members. We believe local churches are the visible expression of the universal church on earth. The local church is an autonomous congregation of baptized believers, who covenant themselves together under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The congregation is to gather regularly for God-centered worship, be committed to the teachings of the Bible, exercise gifts for the work of service, and enjoy common fellowship and unity in the Holy Spirit. Every church member has the responsibility to give faithfully of his time, talents, and material possessions to support the mission and ministries of the church. The church is to obey the Lord's Great Commission to make disciples from all nations and to multiply churches all over the earth. (Matthew 18:15–17; 28:16–20; John 20:21–23; 2 Corinthians 8–9; Galatians 6:1–2; Philippians 4:10–19; 1 Timothy 3:1–12)

There are two ordinances instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ for the local church to regularly celebrate— Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the immersion of a confessing believer in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy

Spirit, signifying a believer's death to sin and resurrection to new life in Christ. Water baptism is an act of obedience to Christ's command and a commitment to live in light of his Lordship. It also serves as an entry into the local church. The Lord's Supper is a regular, congregational act of worship, instituted by Jesus Christ to take a portion of bread and receive the cup as symbols of the Lord's sacrificial death for his people on the cross.

The Lord's Supper allows the local church to confess sin, seek purity, display unity, center itself upon the cross of Christ, and anticipate the Lord's glorious return. Self-discipline is encouraged during the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Church discipline may be enacted during the Lord's Supper. If so, it will be conducted according to scriptural principles under the oversight of the elders. (Matthew 4:16,17; 18:15–20; Mark 14:22–25; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:8–10; 1 Corinthians 11:23–34)

There are two scriptural offices in the local church: Elder and Deacon. The elders are charged with overall spiritual responsibility, managing oversight, and leadership of the local church before God. The elders are responsible for teaching the scriptures, and to interpret and enforce the church's statement of faith. Elders serve as pastors or under-shepherds of Christ. Deacons are chosen from the congregation and are to function as servants to the church, assisting the elders in caring for church members and church ministries. (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1–13; 1 Peter 5:1–3) 5

Liberty and Cooperation

We believe that every Christian is to relate to God directly and is personally responsible for all matters of faith. Each Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of others. Our conduct should be blameless before the world, and we should be faithful stewards of our possessions and positions of authority. Every local church is to be independent and free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority. The institution of the Church and the State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its God-ordained duties and being free from dictation or patronage of the other. We believe the local church can best promote the gospel of Jesus Christ by cooperating with like-minded churches in an organized structure. Such an organization exists and functions by the will of the churches choosing to be involved. Cooperation is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Grove Community Church will cooperate within the context of the Southern Baptist Convention. (Acts 15:36,41; 16:5; Romans 12:1,2; 14:7–9, 12; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 16:1; Galatians 1:1–3; Colossians 1:9,10; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 12:1,2; Revelation 1:4, 10, 11)

Last Things

In his own time and way, God will bring the world to its appropriate end. Jesus Christ will return to the earth bodily and visibly in glory, the bodies of the dead will be raised, and Christ will judge all people in righteousness. The unrighteous, along with the Devil and his demons, will be consigned to hell, the place of eternal punishment and torment. The righteous, in their glorified bodies, will receive their reward and will forever dwell, along with the elect angels, in the glory of heaven with the Lord. (Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 15; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10; 2 Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; Revelation 20:4–6, 11–15)