



Confession of Faith

TOGETHER WITH THE CHURCH IN ALL AGES,

We believe in one GOD THE FATHER Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord JESUS CHRIST, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who, for us humans and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the HOLY SPIRIT, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And we believe in one Holy, Universal, and Apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and we anticipate the return of our Lord, the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

FURTHERMORE,

1. The Holy Scriptures.

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God. Therefore, all Scripture is authoritative, infallible, and inerrant. The Word of God is the only sufficient rule for faith and practice, life and godliness. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is the focus of divine revelation (Ps. 19:7; Jn. 5:39; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

2. God.

We believe that there is but one true and glorious God, the Maker, Preserver and Ruler of all things, having in and of Himself, all perfections, and being holy and infinite in them all; and to Him all creatures owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience that springs from faith (Deut. 6:4; Ps. 145:3; John 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; 1 Tim. 1:17).

3. The Trinity.

We believe that the Scriptures reveal that the one God eternally exists in three persons: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each person has distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence or being (Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).

4. Providence.

We believe that God, from eternity, ordains all things that come to pass, and perpetually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and all events; yet so as not in any way to be the author or approver of sin, nor to destroy the agency, responsibility, and culpability of intelligent creatures (Isa. 46:9-11; Prov. 16:33; Eph. 1:11-12; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3; Jas. 1:13-15).

5. Election.

We believe that election is God's eternal choice of some persons unto everlasting life—not conditioned on any foreseen merit or goodness in them, but of His mercy in Christ—in consequence of which choice they are called, justified, and glorified (Rom. 8:28-30; 1 Cor. 1:27-29; Eph. 1:4, 11).

6. The Fall of Mankind

We believe that God has created mankind to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever. God originally created Mankind in His own image, and free from sin, but, through the temptation of Satan, Adam transgressed the command of God in unbelief, and fell from his original holiness and righteousness; whereby his posterity inherit a sinful nature, corrupt and wholly opposed to God and His law. As a result they are under condemnation, and as soon as they are capable of moral action, become actual transgressors. All people are sinners by nature and by choice (Gen. 1:26-27; 3:1-7; Is. 43:6-7; Ps. 16:11; Rom. 3:9-18; 5:12-19; Eph. 2:1-3).

7. Christ the Mediator

We believe that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is fully God and fully man; He is the divinely appointed mediator between God and man. Having taken upon Himself human nature, yet without sin, He perfectly fulfilled the law, suffered and died upon the cross as a substitute for the salvation of sinners. By His death and resurrection, Jesus satisfied the wrath of God for all of those who would trust in Him. He was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended to His Father, at whose right hand He ever lives to make intercession for His people. As the Good Shepherd who has laid His life down for the sheep, He will return again visibly and bodily to receive them unto Himself. He is the only Mediator, the Prophet, Priest and King of the Church, and Sovereign of the Universe (Isa. 53:10-12; John 1:1, 14; 6:37; 10:11, 16; 14:3; Acts 1:9-11; Rom. 3:21-26; 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; Gal. 3:13; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 1:1-3).

8. The Holy Spirit

We believe that God the Holy Spirit brings glory to the Father and the Son. He applies the life, death, and resurrection of Christ to the elect; distributes ministry gifts to every believer, according to His sovereign good pleasure, for the purpose of building up the body of Christ; and He gives understanding to believers concerning the Word of God. He is the Comforter, the Spirit of Adoption, the Seal of our Salvation, and the Guarantor of our inheritance in Christ (John 14:16-17; 16:14; Acts 5:3; Rom. 8:14-17; 1 Cor. 2:6-16; Eph. 1:13-14).

9. Regeneration

We believe that regeneration is a change of heart, wrought by the Holy Spirit, who gives life to those dead in trespasses and sins, enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the Word of God, and renewing their whole nature, so that they love and practice holiness. Regeneration is a work of God's free and special grace alone (Eph. 2:1-6; Tit. 3:5; 1 John 5:1).

10. Repentance

We believe that repentance is a gift of God's grace, wherein a person is made sensible of the manifold evil of his sin, humbles himself for it, possesses godly sorrow for, and detestation of it, and with purpose, endeavors to walk before God so as to please Him in all things (Acts 2:37-38; 11:18; 2 Cor. 7:10-11).

11. Faith

We believe that saving faith is the belief, on God's authority, of whatever is revealed in His word concerning Christ, receiving, treasuring, and resting upon Him alone for justification and eternal life. Faith is the gift of God, wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, is accompanied by all other saving graces, and leads to a life of holiness (Rom. 3:27-28; 4:1-5; 4:17-25; 10:14, 17; Phil. 1:29; Eph. 2:8; Jas. 2:14-26).

12. Justification

We believe that justification is both God's gracious and full acquittal of sinners from all sin, and the imputation of Christ's perfect righteousness through faith alone. Justification is accomplished for believers through the satisfaction that Christ has made; not for anything wrought in them or done by them; but on account of the obedience and satisfaction of Christ. By faith alone the Christian receives and rests on Christ and His righteousness (Gen. 15:6; Acts 13:38-39; Rom. 3:21-26; 8:34; 10:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9).

13. Sanctification

We believe that those who have been regenerated are also sanctified by God's Word and indwelling Holy Spirit through faith. This sanctification is progressive through the supply of Divine strength, which all saints seek to obtain, pressing after a holy life in faithful obedience to all of Christ's commands (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:27-27; Rom. 8:1-17; Gal. 5:13-24; 2 Pet. 1:3-21).

14. Perseverance of the Saints

We believe that all those whom God has regenerated will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end; and though they may stumble through neglect and temptation, into sin, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the church, and temporal discipline on themselves, yet they shall be renewed again unto repentance, and be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (John 6:37-40; 10:28-29; Rom. 8:28-39; 1 Cor. 1:8-9; Phil. 1:6).

15. The Church

We believe that the church exists for the glory of God and the joy of His people. The Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the church, which is composed of all His true disciples, and that in Him is invested supreme power for its government. According to His commandment, Christians are to associate themselves into particular churches; and to each of these churches He has given needful authority for administering that order, discipline and worship which He has appointed. The regular officers of a church are Elder and Deacon

(Matt. 16:13-20; 18:15-20; John 10:16; Acts 20:17, 28; Eph. 1:22; 2:19-22; 3:21; 5:23; 1 Tim. 3:1-15; 5:17-18; Tit. 1:5-9; Heb. 10:25).

16. Baptism

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience and a profession of faith in Christ, symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. Baptism is the believer's entrance into the body of Christ, and is a testimony to faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 12:13).

17. The Lord's Supper

We believe that the Lord's Supper is a sign to be received by faith and obedience, whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, celebrate the New Covenant in Christ's blood, memorialize the death of the Redeemer, profess and signify their persevering faith in Christ, display their communion with Christ's body in church membership, and anticipate His second coming. Self-examination and reflection upon the death and resurrection of Jesus for one's sins should always precede and accompany this solemn and celebratory observance (Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:23-34).

18. The Lord's Day

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead, salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone, and looks forward to the rest that still remains for the people of God. The Lord's Day should include expressions of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be regulated and guided by the Word of God, and commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Ex. 20:8-11; Matt. 12:1-14; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3, 33-36; John 4:21-24, 20:1, 19-28; Acts 20:7; Rom. 14:5-10; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Col. 2:16, 3:16; Heb. 4:1-10; Rev. 1:10).

19. Disciple-Making

It is the joyful privilege and responsibility of every Christian to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the glory of God. This includes spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ to unbelievers, and teaching, admonishing, counseling, warning, encouraging, and correcting one another in love, for the building up of the body in Christ-likeness. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded His Church to make disciples in the power of the Holy Spirit, by baptizing professing believers and teaching them to observe all that our Lord Jesus has commanded. The verbal witness of the gospel is to always be undergirded by a Christian lifestyle and prayer (Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 4:11-16; Col. 3:16; 4:2-6; Heb. 3:12-13).

20. Marriage and Family

We believe that marriage was instituted by God to image forth His triune glory and picture for the world the gospel of Jesus Christ. With that as God's grand goal in marriage, He has established the marital framework of committed companionship for mutual aid in fulfilling the creation mandate, for sexual intimacy and expression, and for the reproduction and raising of children, who are a blessing from the Lord and, from conception, have been

created in the image of God. Marriage is the union of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. Gender is a gift from God. Male and female were created in God's image, and are equal before Him in dignity and personhood. In God's wisdom, men and women have been given differing roles and responsibilities within marriage which are essential and complementary (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Pss. 78:1-8; 127; 139:13-16; Prov. 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Eccl. 9:9; Mal. 2:14-16; Matt. 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; 1 Tim. 5:8, 14; 2 Tim. 1:3-5; Tit. 2:3-5; Heb. 13:4; 1 Pet. 3:1-7).

21. Liberty of Conscience

We believe that God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form, practice, and propagate biblical convictions without interference by the civil power (Gen. 1:27; 2:7; Matt. 6:6-7, 24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Rom. 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Gal. 5:1, 13; Phil. 3:20; 1 Tim. 2:1-2; Jam. 4:12; 1 Pet. 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19).

22. Consummation

We believe that God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in power and glory to the earth, the dead will be raised, and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting, conscious punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in the New Heavens and New Earth with the Lord (Isa. 2:4; 11:9; Matt. 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Rom. 14:10; 1 Cor. 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Cor. 5:10; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thess. 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thess. 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1,8; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 9:27-28; Jam. 5:8; 2 Pet. 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Rev. 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13).