

# **BELIEF STATEMENTS:: ONE Community Church**

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## **1. THE NATURE AND ACTIVITY OF GOD**

*Nature of God* God is "I AM" (Exodus 3:14). He was, is and always will be. There is no marked beginning to God's existence, nor is there an end. God is eternal. God is made known to humanity as the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit relating in perfect unity and harmony (Mat.28:19). They are one (Eph.4:4-6). God as our Father in heaven revealed and reconciled himself to us through the Son, Jesus Christ, and God continues to manifest himself in the world and in his people through the presence of his Holy Spirit. God is holy, just, merciful, loving, and gracious.

*Activity of God* God is the creator of time, space, matter and life. God is active in the affairs of our universe and in the life of his creation. God completely commits himself to his children through the faithful covenant to be our God (Lev.26:12). He desires for us to live in relationship and commitment to him beginning now on earth and lasting for all eternity. Through our worship and submission to his reign in our lives God is honored and glorified.

## **2. THE NATURE AND ROLE OF JESUS CHRIST**

*Nature of Jesus Christ* Jesus Christ is God eternal, the Son, incarnate – fully God and man, human and divine at the same time, neither one reducing nor elevating the other (Phil.2:6,7). Jesus Christ is the promised messiah spoken of in the Old Testament (Mk.14:61-64). He is the king of light who defeated the powers of evil and darkness, namely Satan. And as Savior he made a way for our souls to be reconciled to God for eternity. Jesus continues to stand before the Father, interceding for us.

*The Role of Jesus Christ* Jesus not only was the Word, but he came to spread the word of the kingdom of heaven (Jn.1:14). He taught and healed and modeled the love and power of God. He prepared the disciples and other followers to continue to spread the good news after his resurrection. The ultimate role of Jesus Christ was not realized, however, until his death on the cross as the innocent sacrificial offering for the sin of humankind. His resurrection once and for all conquered the power of sin and death (1Pt.3:18). In this way Jesus redeemed humankind from the power of death brought into this world by Adam. On the cross Jesus Christ bridged the chasm between a holy and pure God and a sinful people. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me (Jn.14:6)."

## **3. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE EXPERIENCE OF HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM**

*The Work of the Holy Spirit* The Holy Spirit is present everywhere and has been present for all time (Ps.139:7). The Holy Spirit works in unity with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is God's ongoing presence on earth and in the life of the believer. It is the Christ-centered spirit moving among all people (Jn.14:6), and seeking to take residence in a believers heart. It is an empowering spirit that in the life of a non-believer, who invites the spirit's presence, plants the seed of the spiritual life (Jn.14:16,17). In the life of the believer the spirit brings forth spiritual growth and

change. It moves the believer to seek purity and holiness as well as compelling the believer to respond in mission and ministry (Acts1:8).

*The Experience of Holy Spirit Baptism* Holy Spirit Baptism is the pouring out of the spirit on the believer. This experience can be quite diverse among believers. Consistent, however, is that the believer is receptive to the spirit's work and indwelling power to grow in holiness and prepare for Christian service and mission. God continues to pour out his Holy Spirit in the life of believers to the extent that they are capable and willing to respond. It is an ongoing process of renewal.

#### **4. THE ORDINANCES OF BAPTISM, COMMUNION AND FEET WASHING**

*Baptism* Baptism is an act of obedience *for a believer* modeled and commanded by Jesus (Mat.3:13-17, 28:19). Through dunking under water, baptism outwardly symbolizes the death of our old sinful nature, laying it to rest, and rising to a new life with Christ cleansed by the Spirit (Rom.6:1-12). It also spiritually identifies us with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom.6:3). This symbolic act does not in itself bestow upon a person forgiveness of sin or salvation, anymore than being in an oven makes one a biscuit. However, the experience of baptism is a powerful event that helps believers physically experience what has happened to them spiritually, and publicly proclaim their identity as a Christian (Gal.3:26-28).

*Communion* Communion is also an act of obedience commanded by Jesus. By the breaking of bread and sharing in the cup, we symbolically remember and give thanks for Christ's broken body and spilled blood as a sacrifice for our sin (1 Cor.11:23-26). The act of communion does not bestow upon a person forgiveness of sin or salvation. Sharing the cup and bread, however, is a powerful experience that aligns us with Christ and unites us as Christians (1 Cor.10:17).

*Feet Washing* Feet washing too is an act of obedience commanded by Jesus. By following Jesus' example in washing his disciple's feet, we too must humble ourselves before one another and be servants unto another (Jn.13:1-7). Feet washing serves as a reminder to all that no one is greater than another, and that we must be "feet washers" in every day life with our family, friends, colleagues and strangers.

#### **5. HUMAN NATURE AND DESTINY**

*Human Nature* Human nature as it was created by God was pure, immortal, and in perfect communion with God. We were created as God worshipers. However, human nature has been corrupted by sin through Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The wages of this original sin is banishment from the presence of God and death. Adam's sin resulted in this grave punishment, a fate passed on to all of humanity (Rom.5:12).

*Destiny* While as humans we were originally destined to dwell in the eternal presence of God, through sin our realized destiny is death and separation from God. Yet, every human has the God given potential to reclaim his or her original destiny to live forever in harmony with and in the presence of God. This destiny is determined by

our willingness to respond to God. We have the choice to either repent and accept or deny and reject the sacrifice Jesus Christ paid for our sin (Rom.6:23).

## **6. SALVATION**

We have all “sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom.3:23).” But God has made a way for us to be saved from eternal damnation. God sent Jesus Christ to Earth to die in our place for our sins. Jesus said that he is the way, and, “No one comes to the Father but through me (Jn.14:6).” Only because Jesus was without sin, was he able to remove the fate of Adam’s sin on our lives (1 Peter 1:18,19). If in faith we respond to God’s grace and love, repent for our sins, ask for forgiveness, and confess Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, then we will be saved (Rom 10:9). When we believe, we will receive the Holy Spirit and be called Children of God with all the rights and privileges appertaining there to (Eph 1:5), not the least of these being eternal life with God in heaven. Having received salvation, our soul is free to worship God and experience his presence in our lives now and for all eternity.

## **7. HOLINESS**

Upon receiving salvation a believer is given a new identity as a child of God, and the new Spirit of God living within. The Spirit calls us to be holy, or set apart. God said, “Be you Holy as I am Holy.” Holiness is a life-long journey that a new Christian embarks on and carries on for life (Phil 1:6). It is the process of growing in Christ-likeness as we renew our heart and transform our mind and conform our will to God’s. As we learn to surrender to the new Spirit in us, we turn from our sinful desires and thirst for the life of the Spirit (1 Peter 2:2). The result is the “good fruit” of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness... (Gal 5:19-23). While we are to be set-apart from the world in our actions and desires, we are not set-aside from it. As we live toward Christ and turn our backs on worldly desires, holiness compels us back into the world on a mission.

## **8. THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

*The Nature of the Church* The church is the bride of Christ, the body of believers on earth. It is not an institution, but a spiritual entity spanning the centuries since the resurrection of Christ. Scripture depicts the church in three models. 1. The Church is a family of believers, the children of God, relating as brothers and sisters (Gal 3:26). 2. The church is an interconnected body and Christ is the head (1 Cor.12). Each member contributes uniquely to the whole and is vital to the life of the whole body. 3. The church is a spiritual temple with each believer being an inter-locked living stone all resting on Christ, the crucial corner stone (1 Pet 2:5).

*Church Membership* Every believer, who confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and savior is a member of the church, the body of Christ. Locally, a church may establish certain guidelines for the purpose of leadership positions, voting or decision making, however, these are not to be membership requirements for being a part of the church. The right of a believer to participate in communion, for example, must never have restrictions unique to a local church. The table must be open to all believers. In the end God alone decides who has a right to be a member of his church, the body of Christ, the family of God, the church of God.

## **9. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH**

The mission of the church simply put is to produce and mature disciples of Christ. This mission involves, worshipping God (Rom.12:1), discipling and nurturing young and old believers (Heb.6:1), reaching out to the needy (Eph 4:12), spreading the gospel throughout the local community and world (Acts 1:8), and living in fellowship and community with all believers (Eph.2:19). The body of believers regularly gathering together in their home community – the local church, realizes these major responsibilities more centrally. “Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. (Mat. 28: 19,20a).”

## **10. THE BASIS FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**

Jesus prayed, “That they may all be one (John 17).” Ephesians 4 says that we should make every effort to “keep the unity of the Spirit” because there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. There are many levels of Christian unity. The foundation upon which we must begin to build is the centrality of Jesus Christ as the Son of God in our salvation. Revelation chapter 7 paints a picture of a multitude of people from all nations bowing before the Lamb of God in worship. All who have been saved will one day stand in unity before God.

Further levels of unity this side of heaven, however, include: participating together at the Lord’s Table, the centrality of scripture as divine revelation, joint worship, cooperative ministry and mission, and common understanding of core faith doctrines. Our responsibility is not to retreat from this seemingly overwhelming task, but as Ephesians 4 says, we should “make every effort” to keep unity. Our responsibility is to work for unity.

## **11. STEWARDSHIP and TITHING**

*Stewardship* God has entrusted his children with many blessings, talents, and resources. Christians are to be wise managers of their Father’s estate (Luke 12:42). Jesus also said, “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be demanded. We are to use our time, talents, gifts, and financial resources not for personal gain, but for the advancement of Kingdom purposes. Even our bodies are to be offered as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God (Rom.12:1)

*Tithing* Tithing is an act of worship and obedience to God. Believers are expected to give back to God their first fruits, a tenth of their “harvest,” for the purpose of fearing the Lord (Deut. 14:22,23). Tithing serves as a regular reminder for us to be thankful to God and recognize his blessings and care in our lives. Secondly, the tithe was to help support the Levites, the temple workers and priests, who had no harvest to glean from.

In the New Testament, Paul encourages the Corinthians to give enthusiastically according to what they have been given (2 Cor 8:10-15). As was the custom in biblical times to bring one’s tithe to the temple and to the Levites, so today, the local church is the appropriate disseminator of tithing resources. Tithes are then to be allocated for the needs of the church body and community, for the support of ministers and church workers, and for the resourcing of the mission and ministry of the church.

## **12. THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE**

Scripture reveals to us the words of God (2 Tim 3:16). Through divine inspiration God used men, who wrote from their own personal, historical, and cultural contexts, to convey the message intended. However, the actual words and teachings of scripture are utterly powerless to change a life apart from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works in concert with scripture to bring to life the message of salvation contained therein. There is power in the scripture to pierce our heart, soul, and mind (Hebrews 4:12-13). Scripture is completely reliable and authoritative in all matters of our spiritual and physical lives even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We can trust that the revelation of God contained in the Bible has been accurately passed down through the centuries. Therefore, scripture must be the authority in which all doctrine and teaching of the faith is rooted.

### ***13. THE KINGDOM OF GOD***

The Kingdom of God is not to be thought of as a physical domain, rather as the arena in which the king, God, has authority and power. Being the creator of all, God's authority and power spans the universe (Ps 103:19). Yet, evil, through the influence of Satan, still exists in this world; just as in a civil and peaceful country, tyrants and lawbreakers exist. Although God has always been active and present in the affairs of this world, Jesus, the promised messiah (John 1:41), ushered in the spiritual Kingdom of God on Earth and now rules (Eph 1:20-23)

By overcoming Satan and the power of sin on the cross and defeating them through the resurrection, Jesus enabled all of humankind to become heirs of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is as near to a person as his or her repentant heart. Individual believers are on a mission as ambassadors of this Kingdom with its new order and ways of relating to this world as modeled and taught by Jesus Christ (Ex. *The Beatitudes*, Mat.5).

The church is not the Kingdom, but it is the body of Christ, the Kingdom community of the faithful. The church is on mission making the good news of the Kingdom known to the spiritually blind (Mat 24:14). Finally, the ultimate, perfect, culmination of the Kingdom will not be realized until Christ's second coming, when Satan is once and for all bound and all of God's children will reign with him for eternity (Rev 20:9,10).

### ***14. THE SECOND COMING***

Jesus came the first time to seek and save, not to condemn (Jn 3:17). But, when Christ returns, it will be to judge all people (Jn 12:47,48). Those who have been found faithful, the children of God, will inherit eternal life. Those who have rejected Christ will live in eternal separation from God.

No man, nor angels, nor even the Son know the hour of the second coming, only the Father. Therefore, we are simply instructed to be ready at all times. While the actual time of the second coming is a mystery, the events leading up to the end are foretold by Jesus. The times will turn violent with wars and earthquakes, persecutions and killing. Love will grow cold, but the gospel will be preached to the ends of the earth (Mat 24).

There will be no confusion surrounding Christ's actual return. It will be a very public return, before all nations, as visible as lightning crashes through the sky. He will "arrive on the clouds with great power and glory (Mk 13:26)." Then, God's chosen ones will be gathered from the ends of

the earth, and along with all people God will be worshiped. Then the book of life will be opened as the final judgement for all people dead and alive (Rev. 20:12).