

We believe in one God, singular in ontological substance, which eternally exists as three distinct, co-equal persons, namely The Father, The Son (The Word/Jesus Christ), and The Holy Spirit:

We believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who indwells all those who have placed trust in Christ's perfect sacrifice as the only path of salvation, as evidenced by their transformed, fruit-bearing life; these are the believers and, collectively The Body of Christ/The Church.

We believe in one universal Church, the Body of Christ, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

We believe that the Church is comprised of all believers, past, present, and future, which hold/have held to **the core and foundational tenets of the Christian Faith**. We believe there is room of diversity, nuance, and different in perspective concerning secondary/tertiary beliefs, which should be held in grace and expressed in love; however, there can be no divergence from the primary and essential doctrines of the faith among fellowshiping believers as these are what identify us as Christians.

We believe all humans are guilty of sin because of the actions of our first parents: Adam and Eve. From them, all humans have inherited a sinful nature, making human efforts to please God impossible and unsustainable. All humans are spiritual dead and, apart from the salvific work of Christ on the cross, are incapable of saving themselves. Yet the Father, by virtue of His love and grace toward man, sent his Son, Jesus the Christ, to die in our place, receiving the full punishment of sin, while also removing the stain and debt of sin from those who believe in Him. His work on the cross is **perfect and potent**, a sacrifice once, for all mankind; yet it is applied exclusively to those who place faith and trust in Him. The agency of salvation is always and only God, yet humans are responsible for exercising their free will to accept or reject his sacrifice. Their acceptance does not **at all save/have saving power**, for it was God who initiated His plan of reconciliation; it was God who foreknew all that would choose to accept His Son, and in that foreknowledge, pre-ordained that His Son would die for those to empower them to enact that choice. Thus, in its initiation, its execution, its application, and its efficacy, salvation is **entirely** the work of God; we humans are participants in the process by virtue of our free-will submission (rather than resistance, opposition, and frustration) of God's grace.

We believe all believers are on a journey of sanctification (conformation into the image of the Son), which sets them apart for the work of the ministry and separates them from sinfulness and carnality. Believers may be in different stages of the journey and even moving at different paces, **but all are headed toward the same destination: becoming more like Christ**. While the believer must submit to the work of God, it is the **Spirit of God which works in [them] "both to will and**

to do,” (Phil. 2:13, KJV). Salvation is a gift from God, not of our works; yet good works are a natural expression of the redeemed heart (the fruit which is borne from the branch which has been grafted into the good tree *and remains in belief*; Romans 11:18-21). Sanctification, also, is a work of the Spirit; we are responsible for submitting to God’s process, but it is God that draws us ever closer to him.

We believe in the Ephesians 4 ministry gifts that Christ gave to the Church: Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, as well as the spiritual gifts expressed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11. These gifts/offices facilitate the spiritual growth, maturation, and spiritual formation of the believer.

In addition to these, the church is governed by the offices of the Bishop, Elder, and Deacon.

We believe that these gifts and offices can be held and/or occupied by any believer, regardless of gender, provided they are chosen by God and recognized for their faithfulness by a Bible-believing community of Christians; no one can do anything of themselves (John 5:30-37). We believe the passages which have historically been used to prohibit women from occupying leadership roles in the church which govern men (1 Tim. 2-3, Titus 2, Gen. 3) have been misinterpreted by lack of contextualization (Gen. 2, Rom. 16:1-7, Acts 18:24-28).

We believe all these gifts/offices remain functioning in the Church and will continue to function until the end of the age, when we all come into the unity of the faith. We believe miracles still occur in our present age, but that the ultimate miracle in human history is the Resurrection of Jesus; the declaration of this truth is the ultimate expression of prophecy (Rev. 19:10). We believe the demonstration of the sign gifts are secondary to the proclamation of the gospel, as the gifts are designed to point both non-believer and believer toward the glory and majesty of God.

We believe that God gave humanity the gift of reason and rationality because God is himself reasonable and rational; he gave humanity the gift of knowledge and discernment because he is, to some extent, knowable and discernable. Our task, then, is to serve God with our full person, inclusive of our intellect. This is accomplished through faithful study of His inspired, inerrant Scripture, as well as the necessary processes and disciplines which aid in that endeavor. In a broader sense, every intellectual endeavor is an act of worship to God, a method of stewarding one of our most precious resources: the mind. We seek to glorify God by pursuing, in a general sense, greater understanding of the world we’ve been charged with upkeeping, and in a specific sense, the God who charged us with keeping it.

We believe God has concretely and intentionally designed each human being with respect to their gender, that our biology and anatomy is a testament to the glory and beauty of our God; denial of our God-given gender is a rejection of God’s perfect plan in creating us in His image and likeness. We believe God designed marriage as the union between two adults: a man (a biological male) and a woman (a biological female). This sacredness of this union is maintained by its exclusivity and its express identity as a parallel of Christ’s relationship with the Church.

We believe that all humans are made in the image of God, thus equally intrinsically valuable, regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic, or birth status (this includes the unborn). Life is precious and valuable, worthy of protection and respect.