

To Our Brothers and Sisters in a Common Faith:

A statement of faith has to combine two seemingly contradictory things: brevity and depth. It has to be brief: it is only a *statement* of faith, after all. It is not a book outlining every nook and cranny of one's beliefs. It also has to be deep: it has to say enough to get the point across. It has to convey the full range of belief. Because of this, every word and phrase has to carry as much theological weight as possible. We humbly submit to you the fruit of our efforts to produce such a document for our church. May God be honored and His people edified by our labor.

We thought it would be helpful to give some background to the formation of this statement of faith. First, it is longer than we had imagined it would be. However, we came to realize that this statement of faith presents our church with a golden opportunity to stand for the truth. Many churches and institutions put out vague, short, easily-misinterpreted statements of their belief; it seems the fashion today is to make your belief statement as short as possible, as if there is something shameful in even having one. In a day when the truth is minimized, pushed to the side, or made subservient to man-centered goals, we desire to declare unashamedly to a world in love with the lie that Christ Community Church stands on the solid rock of God's truth and we will not move.

With this confession of faith, we hope to give our church in the present day as well as the future a good and worthwhile foundation. With these words, we have an outline of the sound doctrine on which a good servant of Jesus Christ should be constantly nourished (1 Timothy 4:6), and a summarization of the teaching of Holy Scripture on the most important subjects: God, Christ, man, salvation, the Holy Spirit, the Church, and the end of time. By God's grace, we will impart to the next generation a legacy of devotedness to the truth of God's word, on which they can continue to build.

This belief statement covers what we think are the major areas of agreement within our church. Included are such doctrines as the inerrancy, infallibility, authority, sufficiency, and clarity of Scripture;

the Trinity; the attributes of God; the sinfulness of man; the necessity of Christ for salvation; Christ's humanity and deity; the sinlessness of Jesus; justification; sanctification; adoption; glorification; the deity of the Holy Spirit; the nature of the church; and, very broadly, the last things. The confession is silent on issues of difference among us, since we have endeavored to proclaim only those central truths which we all hold in common.

Finally, a word on what this statement is not: It is not equal to Scripture in any way, nor does it carry with it the intrinsic authority of the word of God. It is a subordinate document, having authority only inasmuch as it accords with the truth of God's word. It is a proclamation of our common faith and of what our church believes to be true: it is nothing more than that, nor is it anything less.

This statement is not a substitute for saving faith. Believing all the right things does not make you saved: renouncing your sin and self, clinging to Jesus, and trusting in His work for eternal life does. May the truth contained in this document fire your passion for the Lord Jesus, ignite in your heart a singular desire to know Him more, and fan the flames of your zeal to see Him glorified in this world, every day, in every way, and may our Lord use it for the building up of His body, which is the church, the pillar and support of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15).

In Christ,

The Board of Elders

Of the Scriptures

We believe and confess that every word of the Scriptures is God-breathed,¹ being from first to last the very word of God in such a way that when Scripture speaks, God Himself speaks.² Because they are God's own words, they are without error, nor are they capable of erring.³ We, therefore, believe all things contained in Holy Scripture, not simply because the church has sworn and testified to them for millennia, or because of the great many scientific and historical proofs of biblical testimony, but because, ultimately, we have heard the voice of our Lord speaking to us in them.⁴

¹ 2 Timothy 3:16

² Matthew 1:22; Acts 2:17;
Hebrews 1:1-2; 2 Peter 1:21; 1
John 5:9

³ Numbers 23:19; 2 Samuel 7:28;
Psalm 12:6; 119:89; Proverbs 30:5;
Isaiah 40:8; John 17:17; Titus 1:2

⁴ John 10:14, 27; 1 Corinthians
2:10-12

All claims to truth are to be judged by the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures,⁵ for God gave them as our only authoritative rule for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith and conduct.⁶ The word of God is entirely and wholly sufficient in and of itself for us to know the things necessary for salvation and walking with Christ,⁷ for everything which God requires from us is contained in the canon of Holy Scripture.⁸ Without its teaching, it is impossible to come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus.⁹

⁵ Matthew 22:29, 31; John 17:17;
Acts 17:11; Galatians 1:8-9; 2
Peter 1:21

⁶ Romans 15:4; Proverbs 30:5; 2
Peter 1:19-21

⁷ Psalm 119:1, 130; 2 Timothy 3:16-
17; Revelation 22:18-19

⁸ Psalm 119:1; Deuteronomy 29:29

⁹ 2 Timothy 3:15

Though there are difficult portions,¹⁰ the whole of Scripture, and the main message therein of salvation by grace through

faith, is propounded so clearly that any and all alike, whether learned or unlearned, may understand it.¹¹ This being true, we confess that we stand in need of the further, inward work of the Spirit in convincing us of their authority, illuminating our minds to understand them spiritually, and strengthening our wills to be obedient to them.¹² The rule of the interpretation of Holy Scripture is Scripture itself, comparing the unclear with the clear,¹³ so that we discern only one Mind in these sixty-six books.¹⁴ The center, point, and goal of all Scripture is Jesus Christ, the Old Testament looking forward to His advent, the New Testament reflecting on it.¹⁵

¹⁰ 2 Peter 3:15-16

¹¹ Psalm 19:7; 119:130; 2 Corinthians 1:13-14

¹² John 16:13-15; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12; Ephesians 3:14-19

¹³ 2 Peter 1:20-21

¹⁴ 2 Timothy 3:16

¹⁵ Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39

We, the church of the living God, are born of,¹⁶ abide in,¹⁷ and long for the goodness and correction of the word of truth,¹⁸ and we will not listen to the voice of a stranger;¹⁹ the ground of our union with one another is none other than the truth of the word of God.²⁰

¹⁶ James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23

¹⁷ 1 John 2:24; 2 John 1-2

¹⁸ Psalm 19:8-10; 119:11; Hebrews 4:12

¹⁹ John 10:27

²⁰ John 17:15-21

Of God

We believe and confess that there is but one God and none other, having only one divine essence,¹ yet existing in three persons, each of whom are called God and partake of the fullness of deity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.² We, therefore, teach the profound, biblical mystery that the one true God exists as a Trinity: one God and three persons within the Godhead, all of whom are fully God.

¹ Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-6; Romans 3:30; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Timothy 1:17; James 2:19

² Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-3; 2 Corinthians 13:14

The Triune God is infinitely holy,³ just,⁴ and righteous,⁵ a God who hates all sin⁶ and will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. Yet He is also equally gracious, merciful, and patient, abounding in lovingkindness and truth and forgiving the sins of many.⁷ Our Lord is unchanging and unchangeable,⁸ being throughout all ages the same, eternal Spirit:⁹ all-powerful,¹⁰ all-sufficient,¹¹ all-knowing,¹² and independent,¹³ having all life,¹⁴ glory,¹⁵ goodness,¹⁶ wisdom,¹⁷ and blessedness¹⁸ in Himself.¹⁹ To Him is due all worship, honor, service, and obedience,²⁰ for from Him, through Him, and to Him are all things.²¹

³ Leviticus 19:2; Psalm 71:22; 99:9; Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8

⁴ Deuteronomy 32:4; Nehemiah 9:32-33

⁵ Genesis 18:25; Deuteronomy 32:4; Ezra 9:15; Psalm 19:8; Romans 3:25-26

⁶ Psalm 5:5-6; Romans 1:18

⁷ Exodus 34:6-7; 1 John 4:8, 16

⁸ Psalm 102:25-27; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17

¹² 2 Chronicles 16:9; Psalm 139:1-6; 147:5; Isaiah 46:9-10; Matthew 10:29-30; Romans 11:33-34; Hebrews 4:13; 1 John 3:20

¹³ Psalm 115:3

¹⁴ John 5:26; 1 Timothy 1:17

¹⁵ Psalm 24:10; 104:1-2; Acts 7:2; 1 Timothy 1:17

¹⁶ Psalm 34:8; 100:5; 106:1; 119:68

¹⁷ Job 12:13; Romans 11:33; 16:27

¹⁸ Romans 9:5; 1 Timothy 1:11; 6:15

⁹ Psalm 90:2; John 4:24; 1 Timothy 1:17

¹⁰ Genesis 17:1; 18:14; Psalm 24:8; Jeremiah 32:17, 27; Matthew 19:26; Revelation 4:8

¹¹ Exodus 3:14; Psalm 18:30; 90:2; Acts 17:24-25

¹⁹ Job 22:2-3; Acts 17:24

²⁰ 1 Corinthians 6:20; 10:31; 1 Timothy 1:17; Revelation 5:12-14

²¹ Romans 11:36

Without need or necessity, and according to His own wise and holy reasons,²² God created in six days all that is,²³ whether things visible or invisible, in heaven or on earth,²⁴ calling it all very good²⁵ and resting on the seventh day.²⁶ Our God did not leave His creation to the forces of chance or fortune, but He continues to exercise His gracious and just providence,²⁷ by which He works all things to His own glory²⁸ according to the wise counsel of His own free will,²⁹ so that we might not fear the storm, sickness, affliction, or even death, for our God holds us and all His creation up,³⁰ as it were, by His very own fatherly hand.³¹ In Him alone we put our confidence and hope of that blessed day.³²

²² Psalm 104:24

²³ Genesis 1:1, 26; Exodus 20:11; Psalm 33:9; Acts 17:24-25; Revelation 4:11

²⁴ Jeremiah 32:17; Acts 4:24; Colossians 1:16

²⁵ Genesis 1:31

²⁶ Genesis 2:2; Exodus 20:11

²⁷ Nehemiah 9:6; Job 12:23; Psalm 104:10-20; Proverbs 16:4, 33; Matthew 5:45; Luke 12:24-30; Acts 17:24-26; Romans 8:28; Colossians 1:17

²⁸ Proverbs 16:4; Isaiah 43:7; Romans 11:36

²⁹ Psalm 33:10-11; Proverbs 16:4; 21:1; Isaiah 46:9-10; Lamentations 3:37-38; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; 17:24-26; Ephesians 1:11

³⁰ 1 Chronicles 29:11-12; Acts 17:28

³¹ Psalm 139:16; Romans 8:28; Philippians 2:13; 4:19; 1 Peter 5:6-7

³² Psalm 38:15; 42:5; 71:5; Hebrews 4:16; 1 John 4:17

Of Man

We believe and confess that God, in order to crown His creation with a suitable steward, made man in His own image.¹ He created humanity as male and female,² giving to them true knowledge of Himself,³ perfect righteousness and holiness,⁴ a true free will,⁵ and the gift of communion with Himself,⁶ in order to fulfill man's created purpose: to glorify the God who made him.⁷

¹ Genesis 1:26; 9:6; James 3:9

² Genesis 1:27

³ Colossians 3:10

⁴ Ecclesiastes 7:29; Ephesians 4:24

⁵ Genesis 3:6; Ecclesiastes 7:29

⁶ Genesis 3:8

⁷ Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 10:31

From this state of incomprehensible blessing, man willfully fell into sin by disobeying the direct command of God.⁸ In this one act of rebellion, man lost his original righteousness and holiness;⁹ forsook his ability to comprehend the true knowledge of God, which then became woefully marred;¹⁰ renounced the privilege of communion with his God;¹¹ and made himself liable to physical and spiritual death.¹² Our first parents, who enjoyed this state and fell from it, did not sin of themselves only, but dragged the entirety of the human race into sin and death with them, all those born after them in the natural way having the curse of the first sin upon them.¹³

⁸ Genesis 2:17; 3:6, 11; Ecclesiastes 7:29

⁹ Genesis 3:7-8; Romans 3:23

¹⁰ Romans 1:21; 1 Corinthians 2:14

¹¹ Genesis 3:23; Isaiah 59:2

¹² Romans 6:23; 8:6-7

¹³ Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12, 15-17;

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

This first sin has brought forth in consequence every other sin, for man in the state of nature is now wholly defiled,¹⁴ unable to do any good,¹⁵ incapable of seeking after God,¹⁶ and impaired by a will bound to the evil,¹⁷ with the terrifying result that every act of the natural man is a sinful act,

springing forth, as it does, not from faith or a desire to glorify God.¹⁸ Such iniquity is deserving of eternal punishment, for rebellion against God, which is what sin is,¹⁹ is an intolerable offense against an infinite and eternal God. Man's own abilities can in no way break the bonds that hold him captive to sin nor can they commend him to God;²⁰ he must be freed by and restored to God through Christ and Him alone.²¹

¹⁴ Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 12:34;
Romans 3:23; Ephesians 2:1-3

¹⁵ 1 Kings 8:46; Psalm 143:2;
Romans 3:12; Ephesians 4:18

¹⁶ Romans 3:10-11

¹⁷ Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Matthew 15:19;
Colossians 1:21

¹⁸ Isaiah 64:6; Romans 14:23; 1
Corinthians 10:31; Hebrews 11:6

¹⁹ 1 John 3:4

²⁰ John 1:12-13; Romans 9:16

²¹ John 6:44, 65; 15:5; Romans 8:3-
4; 2 Corinthians 3:5; Philippians
2:13

The redeemed man, who has tasted the heavenly gift and known the saving merits of Jesus Christ, yet struggles with sin,²² for it will not be until the great day of the revelation of Christ that we cease our fight against the flesh.²³

²² Romans 7:18

²³ Philippians 1:6; Hebrews 12:2

Believing and confessing these things, we marvel at the grace of God shown to such creatures as we.

Of Christ

We believe and confess that God the Father, not desiring to leave man in his state of misery and death, gave His Son,¹ the Lord Jesus Christ, to be the redeemer of mankind.² Jesus Christ is Himself true, eternal, and almighty God,³ who shares in all the divine attributes⁴ and is the very treasure of all wisdom and knowledge.⁵ At the appointed time,⁶ the Father sent the Son to be born of the Virgin Mary,⁷ and He shared our humanity in all things,⁸ though without sin.⁹ These two natures – the divine and the human – remain always distinct and without mixture, yet are forever united together in one person.

¹ John 3:16

² Galatians 4:4-5

³ John 1:1-4; Philippians 2:6;
Colossians 1:15

⁴ John 16:15; Colossians 2:9

⁵ Colossians 2:3

⁶ Galatians 4:4

⁷ Matthew 1:20-23; Luke 2:7

⁸ John 1:14; Philippians 2:6-7;
Hebrews 2:14, 17

⁹ Hebrews 4:15

Our Lord Jesus satisfied the demands of the law throughout His life;¹⁰ being, thus, holy and undefiled,¹¹ He was made ready to take upon Himself the yoke of the cross,¹² on which He offered Himself as a propitiatory sacrifice to the Father,¹³ satisfying His wrath¹⁴ by willingly giving Himself to be punished in our place and on our behalf,¹⁵ bearing in His body our sin, misery, pain, and death,¹⁶ and purchasing reconciliation¹⁷ and an inheritance¹⁸ for those who believe.¹⁹ Having conquered sin, death, and hell,²⁰ He emerged victorious from the grave three days after He died²¹ and ascended into heaven to take His seat at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,²² where He, as our faithful High Priest,²³ continually intercedes for His saints.²⁴ By His death, resurrection, and intercession, He restores us to the image in which we were created, an image which, though not totally

lost, was horribly corrupted by the sin of our first parents.²⁵

¹⁰ Matthew 5:17; Galatians 4:4

¹¹ Hebrews 9:14

¹² Hebrews 2:10; 5:9

¹³ Matthew 26:28; Romans 3:25;
Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:1; 4:10

¹⁴ Romans 5:9, 19; Romans 3:25-26;
Hebrews 10:14

¹⁵ Romans 5:6-8; 1 Corinthians
15:3; Galatians 3:13

¹⁶ Isaiah 53:6, 10; Matthew 26:37-
38; 27:46, 50; Luke 23:46; 1
Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians
5:21; Galatians 3:13; Philippians
2:8; 1 Peter 2:24

¹⁷ Matthew 26:28; Ephesians 1:7;
Colossians 1:13-14; Titus 2:14;
Hebrews 9:15; 1 Peter 3:18

¹⁸ Romans 8:16-17; Ephesians 1:14;
Hebrews 1:2; 9:15

¹⁹ Acts 26:18; Romans 4:13;
Galatians 3:7, 29

²⁰ Hosea 13:14; John 16:11, 33;
Romans 6:10; 1 Corinthians
15:55-57; Colossians 2:14;
Hebrews 9:26

²¹ Luke 24:39; John 20:27; Romans
6:8-9; 1 Corinthians 15:4-7, 14

²² Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9; Hebrews
10:12

²³ Hebrews 5:5-6; 7:26

²⁴ Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25;
9:24; 1 John 2:1

²⁵ Colossians 3:10

From thence also He exercises His kingly authority²⁶ in ruling over the affairs of men²⁷ and protecting those who are His.²⁸ Jesus Christ, our prophet, priest, and king, remains present with His church by His Spirit whom He sent,²⁹ guiding, preserving, and guarding her, even until the end of the age,³⁰ when He will return for judgment with unspeakable majesty, power, and glory.³¹ On that day, Jesus, our perfect and unshakable hope,³² will descend from heaven a second time to consummate His kingdom which He inaugurated at His first coming.³³

²⁶ Psalm 2:6; Luke 1:33

²⁷ Ephesians 1:22-23; Philippians
3:21

²⁸ Ephesians 1:22; Matthew 28:18-
20

²⁹ John 14:16

³⁰ Matthew 28:20

³¹ Matthew 25:31-34; Acts 1:10-11;
17:31; Philippians 2:9-11; 2 Peter
2:4; Jude 6

³² Colossians 1:27; 1 Timothy 1:11;
1 Peter 1:13

³³ Matthew 26:64; 2 Thessalonians
1:7-10

There are no means to free us from our slavery and condemnation but the means offered and given in the Lord

Jesus, who is, thus, the only way of salvation for all mankind.³⁴ He alone possesses the authority to reveal the Father to whom He wishes³⁵ and is most worthy of our worship, honor, adoration, and praise.³⁶ We cling to Christ as we cling to nothing else, for He alone is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.³⁷

³⁴ Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5

³⁵ Matthew 11:27; Luke 10:22

³⁶ Revelation 13:8

³⁷ 1 Corinthians 1:30

Of Salvation

We believe and confess that the beginning of all our righteousness and redemption proceeds from the mercy of God,¹ for salvation is of the Lord:² it has in no way to do with who we are or what we have done³ nor would anyone come to a saving knowledge of Christ apart from the prior revelatory work of the Lord.⁴ The sum of the gospel we hold dear is: God has acted in Christ to redeem His people from their sins on the basis of His grace working through faith.⁵ We believe the several aspects of this salvation to be: regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification.

¹ Romans 3:24; 8:29-30; Ephesians 2:8; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:13

² Psalm 37:39; 140:7; Jonah 2:9

³ Psalm 143:2; Micah 6:6-7; Romans 3:28; 9:31-32; Galatians 2:16; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5

⁴ John 6:37, 44

⁵ Isaiah 53:10; Matthew 1:21; Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:4; Ephesians 2:4-5, 8-9; 2 Thessalonians 2:13

Regeneration

Regeneration is a gracious act of the sovereign Holy Spirit of God whereby He causes us to be born again,⁶ removing from us our heart of stone and giving to us a heart of flesh with His law written on it,⁷ accompanied by a new desire to walk in faith after Christ.⁸ He thereby renews our will to reject that which is evil and contrary to His command and embrace the good and seek after it.⁹

⁶ John 3:5-8; Ephesians 2:4-5

⁷ Ezekiel 36:26-27

⁸ Romans 6:4, 17-18

⁹ Deuteronomy 30:6; Psalm 119:128; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Acts 13:39; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 2:13

Justification

Justification is an act of the divine will¹⁰ in which the Lord imputes to us the righteousness of Christ and imputes to Christ our iniquity,¹¹ thereby forgiving us of all our sins,¹² declaring us to be righteous and just in His sight,¹³ and granting us acceptance in the beloved.¹⁴ The merit of justification does not reside in the creature, but in the Savior,¹⁵ who, through His perfect life and death,¹⁶ secured it for all time;¹⁷ thus, the hope of the justified is not in themselves but in Jesus,¹⁸ in whom and through whom God showed His justice in condemning and punishing sin as well as His grace in redeeming those who sinned against Him.¹⁹

¹⁰ Romans 3:24; 8:33

¹¹ Isaiah 53:6; John 1:29; Romans 4:25; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9

¹² Psalm 32:2; Luke 1:77; Acts 10:43; 13:38; Romans 8:1; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14

¹³ Romans 1:17; 8:1; Philippians 3:9

¹⁴ Romans 5:1; 8:1; Ephesians 1:5-6; 1 John 4:9

¹⁵ Psalm 143:2; Micah 6:6-7; Matthew 1:21; Romans 3:28; 5:8; Ephesians 2:12-14, 18; Titus 3:3-7

¹⁶ Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 4:15; 12:2

¹⁷ Matthew 1:21; Hebrews 10:10, 14

¹⁸ Colossians 1:27; 1 Timothy 1:1; 1 Peter 1:13

¹⁹ Romans 3:25-26

Faith and Repentance

Justification before God remains foreign to all people until the Holy Spirit applies it to the heart through faith,²⁰ which is a pure gift of God²¹ by which a sinner comes to fully accept, receive, and rest on Christ for salvation,²² seeking nothing else whatsoever outside of Him,²³ and believing all that He says in His word.²⁴ This faith is the sole instrument of justification,²⁵ for it alone provides the entrance into and continuance in the great treasures and goodness of God.²⁶ Inseparable from faith is the grace of repentance,²⁷ which is a whole-hearted turning from and confession of sin,²⁸ resulting not simply from of a fear of punishment or embarrassment at getting caught,²⁹ but from of a profound grief over and hatred of one's offense to God.³⁰ Repentance is as necessary for

salvation as faith,³¹ for no one can continue loving one's sin while clinging to Christ, for to sojourn with the Savior is to journey away from iniquity.³²

²⁰ John 8:24; Acts 10:43; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9, 12; Colossians 1:21-22; Titus 3:3-7

²¹ 1 Corinthians 4:7; Ephesians 2:8-9

²² John 1:12; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 16:31; Galatians 2:20

²³ John 14:6; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 3:8-11

²⁴ Acts 24:14; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 John 5:10

²⁵ Romans 3:28; Romans 5:1; Galatians 2:16

²⁶ Romans 5:1-2

²⁷ Acts 11:18; Acts 20:21; 2 Corinthians 7:9-10

²⁸ Psalm 51:4; Ezekiel 18:30-31; Joel 2:12-13

²⁹ 2 Corinthians 7:9-10; Hebrews 12:17

³⁰ Isaiah 30:22; Ezekiel 36:31

³¹ Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30

³² Psalm 119:59; 1 John 3:9; 5:18

Adoption

All those who have been justified by God's free grace through faith in the Lord Jesus are given the Spirit of adoption,³³ whereby they may call upon God as their loving heavenly Father³⁴ and enjoy the privileges and liberties of the children of God.³⁵ Having had God's name put upon them,³⁶ the adopted children of God have bold access to His throne of grace³⁷ and indeed are called heirs of salvation and inheritors of the promises.³⁸

³³ John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:5

³⁴ Matthew 6:9; Romans 8:15

³⁵ Romans 8:17; Hebrews 4:16

³⁶ 2 Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 43:7; Revelation 3:12

³⁷ Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 4:16

³⁸ Ephesians 1:11; Titus 3:7; Galatians 3:29; Hebrews 6:12; 1 Peter 1:3-4

Sanctification and Glorification

Sanctification is the ongoing transformation by which God makes His children holy and fit for heaven.³⁹ Through the life-long process of sanctification,⁴⁰ sin is destroyed,⁴¹ grace is strengthened,⁴² and the faith we were given by God evidences itself to be a lively and active faith,⁴³ working itself out in love

and good deeds.⁴⁴ These good deeds in no way merit salvation nor are they evidence of any good intrinsic to the individual,⁴⁵ but they are the external outworkings of the work of grace wrought in the heart by God.⁴⁶ In a profound sense, when God promises to reward His people for good works,⁴⁷ He is, in fact, promising to graciously crown His own gracious gifts.⁴⁸

³⁹ 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 12:23

⁴⁰ Philippians 3:13-14; Colossians 3:10

⁴¹ Romans 6:6; 8:13; Galatians 5:24

⁴² Ephesians 3:16-19; Colossians 1:11

⁴³ James 2:17, 26; 1 Peter 2:9; 2 Peter 1:5-10; 1 John 2:3

⁴⁴ John 15:5; Galatians 5:6; 1 Timothy 1:5; Titus 3:8; James 2:22

⁴⁵ Psalm 143:2; John 15:4; Romans 9:32; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5

⁴⁶ Matthew 5:16; John 3:21; John 15:8; 1 Corinthians 1:8-9; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 1:11

⁴⁷ Matthew 10:42; Romans 2:6; Revelation 3:12; 3:21

⁴⁸ Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 2:13

The goal of sanctification is conformation to the image of Christ,⁴⁹ which conformation is always incomplete on this side of eternity,⁵⁰ as we always carry with us remnants of our former corruption.⁵¹ In this life, a continual war between the flesh and the Spirit is waged,⁵² but, for the believer, the ultimate victory of the Spirit is certain and infallible,⁵³ for God has promised that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.⁵⁴ Salvation is at no point dependent upon the creature, but always rests upon the unchangeableness of God's promise and choice,⁵⁵ the worthiness of the sacrifice of Christ,⁵⁶ and the presence of the Holy Spirit,⁵⁷ who will usher us finally into glory and give to us new, glorified bodies, which are not susceptible to the weakness, sin, and decay that mars our earthly bodies.⁵⁸

⁴⁹ Romans 8:29; Colossians 3:9-10

⁵⁰ Philippians 3:12; 1 John 1:10

⁵⁵ Jeremiah 31:3; Ephesians 1:4, 11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy

⁵¹ Romans 7:18

⁵² Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11

⁵³ John 10:28; Romans 8:1, 29-30; 1
Corinthians 1:8-9; Philippians
1:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:3

⁵⁴ John 10:28-29; Romans 8:35-39

2:19; 1 Peter 1:5

⁵⁶ John 17:11, 24; Hebrews 7:25;
9:12-14; 10:10, 14

⁵⁷ Ezekiel 36:26-27; John 14:16-17

⁵⁸ 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 2

Thessalonians 2:14

Of the Holy Spirit

We believe and confess that the Holy Spirit is fully and truly God,¹ being the third Person of the Holy Trinity and sharing in all the excellencies, perfections, and glory of the Father and the Son.² The Spirit was an agent in the creation³ and continues to exercise a merciful providence over the created order.⁴ Through His inspiration the biblical books were written;⁵ it is, therefore, right and proper to say that the same Spirit who spoke long ago still speaks today in the words of Holy Scripture.⁶

¹ Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17;
6:19

² Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians
13:14

³ Genesis 1:2; Psalm 33:6; 104:30

⁴ Job 34:14-15; Psalm 139:7

⁵ John 14:26; 16:13-14; 2 Timothy
3:16; 2 Peter 1:21

⁶ Matthew 22:29, 31; Hebrews 3:7

The ministry of the Spirit is a Christ-centered ministry. It was He who empowered the Lord Jesus in His earthly ministry,⁷ and it is He who draws sinners unto Christ,⁸ convicting us of our sin, convincing us of our need of the righteousness of Christ, and making us to see the reality and certainty of divine judgment.⁹ The Holy Spirit of God graciously works in us to illumine our minds to understand divine truth,¹⁰ renew our hearts to delight in heavenly things,¹¹ change our wills to embrace godliness and righteousness,¹² and baptize us into the body of Christ.¹³

⁷ Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28;
Luke 4:1, 14, 17-21

⁸ 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2
Thessalonians 2:13

⁹ John 15:26; 16:7-11

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 2:9-14; 12:3

¹¹ John 3:6; Romans 8:10-11;
Ephesians 2:5

¹² Ezekiel 36:26-27; 1 Corinthians
12:3

¹³ 1 Corinthians 12:13

Having drawn us to Jesus in faith, the Holy Spirit continues

His work of sanctifying us,¹⁴ making us more like our Savior in all that we are and do.¹⁵ He graciously abides with believers and indwells us as His temple,¹⁶ assuring us of our status as children of the King,¹⁷ comforting and aiding us in our trials,¹⁸ cultivating within us a Christian character,¹⁹ and bestowing upon us gifts for ministry and power for service.²⁰ The Spirit, along with the Lord Jesus, serves as an intercessor for us with the Father, making supplication for us with inexpressible groanings.²¹ He, the Spirit of truth and grace, is the seal of our redemption, the advanced payment of our inheritance,²² who keeps us in Christ until the day of salvation,²³ when we will finally be raised up to glory.²⁴

¹⁴ Galatians 5:17; 2 Thessalonians 2:13

¹⁵ Ezekiel 36:26-27; 2 Corinthians 3:5; Philippians 2:13

¹⁶ Joel 2:28-29; John 14:16-17; Acts 2:38; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 1 John 3:9

¹⁷ Romans 8:14-16; Galatians 4:6; 1 John 4:13

¹⁸ Luke 12:12; Acts 9:31

¹⁹ Romans 8:12-14; Galatians 5:22-25

²⁰ Acts 4:31; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11

²¹ Romans 8:26-27

²² 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30

²³ 1 Peter 1:5

²⁴ Philippians 3:21

Of the Church

We believe and confess that Jesus Christ is at work in the world making for Himself a people, which is the Church.¹ The invisible or universal Church consists of all those who have ever, do now, or will ever be joined to Christ in faith.² The Church is the bride of Christ,³ her Head,⁴ who gave Himself up for her salvation,⁵ with whom she is eternally united⁶ and without whom she can do nothing.⁷ She is the pillar and ground of the truth⁸ who will remain until the end of the age⁹ and against whom not even the gates of hell will prevail.¹⁰

¹ Ephesians 5:25-27; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9-10

² Hebrews 12:22-24; Revelation 7:9

³ 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-27

⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 1:22-23

⁵ Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25-27; Titus 2:14

⁶ John 17:21; Romans 12:5; Ephesians 1:3-7; 5:31-32

⁷ John 15:5

⁸ 1 Timothy 3:15

⁹ Psalm 46:5; Matthew 28:20

¹⁰ Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22

The invisible or universal Church finds expression in the visible or local Church,¹¹ which is where the saints, the company of those who profess true religion, are gathered and perfected,¹² being united together in a bond of love¹³ and a common faith¹⁴ to serve one another with the gifts granted unto them by the Spirit of Christ.¹⁵ An indelible mark of the true Church of Christ is the pure and faithful proclamation of the holy gospel,¹⁶ which issues forth an obedient community of constant prayer¹⁷ and worship shaped by the Word.¹⁸ It is a duty incumbent upon everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus to unite with a faithful congregation of saints, to involve themselves in its life, and to join with them in worshiping and serving the Lord in their generation.¹⁹ Christ has granted unto the visible Church the

power to discipline those joined to it,²⁰ promising His presence to those who seek to establish and maintain its purity,²¹ which, in this age, will ever remain mixed, with true believers alongside false professors,²² who, on the day of judgment, will finally be separated by Christ.²³

¹¹ Romans 16:5; Philemon 1-2

¹² Acts 2:46-47; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 4:11-13

¹³ 1 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:3-4, 15-16; 1 John 3:16

¹⁴ Philippians 2:1-2; 1 Timothy 3:14-16; Hebrews 10:23-25

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:11

¹⁶ John 17:17; 2 Timothy 4:2; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 2:24; 2 John 2-3

¹⁷ Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2; James 5:16; 1 John 5:14

¹⁸ Deuteronomy 12:32; Matthew 15:9; 1 Peter 2:5

¹⁹ Hebrews 10:24-25; 13:17

²⁰ Matthew 18:15-19; Luke 17:3-4; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5, 13

²¹ Matthew 18:20

²² 2 Timothy 2:17-19

²³ Matthew 13:24-30

The Lord Jesus has bestowed two offices upon His Church: elder and deacon. Elders are a gift unto the Church for spiritual leadership and direction,²⁴ under the guiding authority of Christ,²⁵ while deacons are His gift for service,²⁶ those elected to the office of deacon being, as it were, the leaders in serving the faithful.

²⁴ Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-3

²⁵ 1 Peter 5:4

²⁶ Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:8-13

Our Lord has entrusted two solemn ordinances to His Church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the initiatory rite of the Christian Church,²⁷ administered in the name of the Triune God²⁸ as a sign of God's promise and grace as well as a symbol of our identification with Christ.²⁹ The Lord's Supper is the continuing rite of the Church,³⁰ administered only to those who profess faith in Christ,³¹ whereby we unite together to remember our Lord's work on the cross and proclaim His death until He comes.³² Neither

ordinance confers the grace of salvation,³³ nor is either ordinance necessary for the saving knowledge of Christ.³⁴

²⁷ Matthew 28:19; Ephesians 4:4-6

²⁸ Matthew 28:19

²⁹ Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:11-12; Galatians 3:27

³⁰ 1 Corinthians 11:26

³¹ 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:28

³² 1 Corinthians 10:17; 11:26

³³ Acts 8:13, 23

³⁴ Luke 23:42-43; Acts 10:45, 47; Titus 3:5

Of the Last Things

We believe and confess that God has appointed that all men shall die¹ and their bodies see corruption.² The souls of those dying in Christ proceed directly into His presence,³ while the souls of those outside of Christ are cast immediately into hell.⁴

¹ Genesis 3:19; Romans 6:23; Hebrews 9:27

² Genesis 3:19; Acts 13:36

³ Luke 23:42-43; 2 Corinthians 5:6, 8; Philippians 1:23

⁴ Luke 16:22-23

Furthermore, we believe and confess that, at a time unknown to men,⁵ Jesus Christ will return in bodily form and visible to all,⁶ in great glory and majesty,⁷ to judge mankind⁸ and consummate and cleanse His kingdom forever.⁹ At this time, the dead, both the righteous and the wicked, will be raised,¹⁰ their souls being reunited with their bodies forever, while those alive will not die but will be changed, in the twinkling of an eye.¹¹

⁵ Matthew 24:36; 25:13; Acts 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10

⁶ Acts 1:11; Revelation 1:7

⁷ Matthew 24:30-31; 25:31

⁸ Acts 17:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8; 1 Peter 4:5

⁹ Matthew 24:30-31; Hebrews 9:28; 2 Peter 3:7, 10

¹⁰ Acts 24:15; Revelation 20:12-13

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 15:51-53

All will be made to stand before the Lord and give an account of themselves.¹² The righteous, those in Christ, who were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world,¹³ will be raised to eternal life and honor in the presence of God,¹⁴ who will thereby vindicate His people¹⁵ and conform them finally to the image of Christ,¹⁶ showing forth in their ultimate salvation the glory of His mercy and grace.¹⁷ The wicked, those who have rejected the gospel and despised God's law, will be raised to eternal punishment and dishonor,¹⁸ forever banished from the presence of God,¹⁹ who will show the

glory of His justice in their condemnation.²⁰

¹² Romans 2:6; 14:10, 12; 2
Corinthians 5:10; 1 Peter 4:5;
Revelation 20:12-13

¹³ Matthew 25:34; John 5:24, 28-29;
Romans 9:23

¹⁴ Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:21, 34;
John 5:24, 28-29; Romans 2:7; 2
Timothy 4:8; 1 John 3:2

¹⁵ Deuteronomy 32:36; Luke 14:14

¹⁶ Philippians 3:21

¹⁷ 2 Thessalonians 1:10

¹⁸ Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29

¹⁹ 2 Thessalonians 1:9

²⁰ Deuteronomy 32:43; Romans 2:5

The revelation of this great day is our most ardent expectation and hope,²¹ for which we are always watchful, always ready,²² and always willing to say with all the saints, “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.”²³

²¹ 1 Peter 1:13; 1 John 3:2-3

²² Matthew 24:42-44; Mark 13:35;
Luke 12:35-36

²³ Revelation 22:20