

## **Statement of Faith**

### **I. Scripture**

The Bible was written by human authors at the inspiration of its divine author God. Therefore, it is inerrant, infallible, and authoritative. The Bible consists of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments and nothing more. Scripture is the only sufficient instruction for faith and practice. The message of salvation that Scripture contains is necessary for salvation, and that message is clear enough to be understood by human beings. By being the Word of God, the Bible has the power and efficacy to transform lives.

*Deut 6:6-9; Ps 19:7-10; 119; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Rev 22:18-19*

### **II. God**

There is only one living and true God. He is the Creator and Preserver of all things, King and Lord of the universe. He is entirely perfect and infinite, knowing all things and exercising authority over His creation. As God, He is due all love, obedience, admiration, worship, and glory.

*Gen 1:1; Deut 6:4; Jer 10:10; John 1:3; 1 Tim 1:17*

### **III. The Trinity**

Scripture reveals God to us as one God existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each person has distinct personal attributes without division of nature, essence, or being. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are coequal and coeternal, existing in perfect unity.

*Matt 3:16-17; 28:19; John 1:1; 2 Cor 13:13; Eph 4:4-6*

### **IV. Father**

The Father reigns over creation, always accomplishing His purposes. He is the perfect Father who responds to his creation appropriately, ever loving and merciful. Those who place their trust in Jesus Christ know God intimately as their Father, becoming children of God. The Father disciplines His children while also extending grace at the pleasure of His will.

*Prov 3:11-12; Ps 103:13; John 5:26; Rom 8:14-15; 1 Pet 1:17*

### **V. Son**

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is the eternal second person of the Trinity, in perfect unity with the Father and Holy Spirit. In the incarnation, Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He humbled himself in taking human flesh, and in so doing, he perfectly fulfilled the law by living a life of sinless righteousness. He is fully God and fully man. His substitutionary death on the cross atoned for the sins of mankind, granting salvation to all who place their trust in Him. He was buried and physically rose from the dead three days later. After appearing to many of His disciples, He ascended into heaven where He sits at the right hand of the Father, interceding for his people as the only Mediator between God and man. One day, he will return bodily in power to judge the world and consummate his rule.

*Ps 2:7; Isa 7:14; 52:13-53:12; Luke 1:30-35; John 1:1-5, 14; Gal 4:4-5; Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:1-3; Rev 5:8-14*

## **VI. Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity who seeks to bring glory to the Father and Son. The Holy Spirit lives within every believer and distributes spiritual gifts according to His will and purposes for the edification of the body of Christ. He regenerates the heart and empowers Christians to live righteously. He is the Seal of our salvation and Guarantor of our inheritance.

*Gen 1:2; Joel 2:28-29; Mark 1:10-12; Acts 5:3-4; Rom 8:14-16; Eph 1:13-14*

## **VII. Man and Sin**

God created man in His own image, free from sin. Through Satan's temptation, Adam rebelled against God and fell from his original innocence and holiness. As a result, every person inherits a nature that is corrupted and opposed to God. Each person subsequently becomes an actual sinner as soon as he or she is capable of taking a moral action.

*Gen 1:26-31; 3:1-7; Ps 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Rom 3:10-12, 23; 5:12-17; 1 Cor 15:21-22; Eph 2:1-3*

## **VIII. Election**

Election is the gracious purpose of God, in which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is not based upon any human merit but upon God's mere mercy in Christ. Election neither contradicts the free agency of man nor undermines human responsibility for sin and evil. It is the sovereign choice of God that in no way removes the need for evangelism.

*Ex 4:21; Prov 21:1; Rom 8:28-30; 1 Cor 1:27-29; Eph 1:4-6, 11; 2 Thess 2:13-14*

## **IX. Salvation**

Salvation is the process whereby God saves people from their sin and His judgment through the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross. Salvation comes through personal faith in Jesus Christ alone as Savior and Lord, and it is not the result of good works or any inherent merit within the sinner. Salvation includes the following:

(1) Regeneration – Regeneration is the work whereby God causes sinners to become new creations through the Holy Spirit. The believer’s entire nature is renewed, thus becoming able to love and worship Christ. Regeneration is a free work of God’s grace, bringing the spiritually dead sinner alive.

(2) Repentance – Repentance involves becoming aware of and turning from sin through the conviction of the Holy Spirit. The person then turns toward God in humility with an earnest desire to please the Lord. It must include both a godly sorrow regarding sin and a desire for holiness before Christ.

(3) Faith – Faith is saving belief and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord as revealed in Scripture. It is God’s gift to Christians and leads to a holy life. It includes resting in Christ alone for salvation and seeking God for ultimate satisfaction.

(4) Justification – Justification is the action whereby God acquits sinners and declares them to be in good legal standing before him without any guilt of sin or wrong. Justification does not demand goodness in one’s previous life, instead erasing and forgiving past wrongs. It ensures that the believer enters into a relationship of peace with the Father.

(5) Sanctification – Sanctification is the process through which God changes believers to become more like Christ. This process is progressive and enables the Christian to grow toward spiritual maturity with the presence and empowering of the Holy Spirit. Sanctification takes time and often includes setbacks but gradually moves the believer toward greater love and affection for God.

(6) Glorification – Glorification is the culmination of salvation. It is the point where Christians are restored to God’s initial design of sinlessness in perfect relationship with Him. It is the final and lasting state of His church.

*Gen 3:15; Matt 4:17; Acts 2:38; Rom 3:21-26; 4:1-5; 8:28-30; 2 Cor 3:18; 5:21; Gal 3:13; Eph 2:8-9; Phil 2:5-11; Titus 3:5; Heb 9:24-28; James 2:14-26; 1 John 3:1-2; Rev 3:20*

## **X. Perseverance of the Saints**

All true believers will never fully nor totally fall away from the state of grace but will persevere to the end. Believers may partially fall into temptation and sin. Such sin grieves the Holy Spirit, inhibits their relationship with God, hurts the church, and causes other damage and harm. Nevertheless, those believers will always be restored to repentance and faith in Christ and will be kept by the power of God through faith until salvation.

*John 6:37-40; 10:27-29; Rom 8:38-39; 1 Cor 1:8; Phil 1:6; 1 Pet 1:5*

## **XI. The Church**

Jesus Christ is the head of the church, which consists of all true believers. Christians are commanded by Scripture to associate themselves into local churches. In these churches, pastors (limited to men) and deacons are to lead the congregations in teaching and discipleship and to administer the ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Although each church should be led by pastors and deacons, each individual is ultimately accountable to Christ.

*John 10:16; Acts 20:17, 28; Eph 5:23; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9; Heb 10:25*

## **XII. Baptism**

Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is an obligatory act of obedience that symbolizes the believer's fellowship with the death and resurrection of Christ. It reflects forgiveness of sins and the making of a new life in Christ. It is a prerequisite to church membership and to participation in the Lord's Supper.

*Matt 28:19; John 3:22-23; Acts 2:38, 41; Rom 6:3-5; 1 Cor 12:13; Col 2:12*

## **XIII. The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper is an act of obedience, which the church is commanded to observe until Christ's return. It is a commemorative event in which Christians partake of bread and wine to memorialize Christ's death on the cross, and it is in no way a sacrifice. The bread represents Christ's body, and the wine represents his blood.

*Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor 10:16-17; 11:23-29*

## **XIV. The Lord's Day**

The Lord's Day is the first day of the week and a Christian institution for regular observance under the Lordship of Christ. It commemorates Christ's resurrection from the dead and includes exercises in spiritual devotion, public and private.

*Matt 12:8; John 20:1; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:1-2; Rev 1:10*

## **XV. Resurrection**

Although all people die, the soul of each person is preserved by God. The spirits of believers return to rest with the Lord, and the spirits of nonbelievers wait in darkness for the judgment. The bodies of all the dead will be raised in the end.

*Luke 23:42-43; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor 5:1-10; 1 Thess 4:14-18; Phil 1:23-24*

## **XVI. Judgment**

According to His own time and purpose, God will judge the world by Jesus Christ and bring the world to a conclusion. Every person will receive reward or punishment according to His standing with Christ. The righteous will receive eternal life in heaven among the Lord's presence, and the unrighteous will receive eternal punishment in hell with God's wrath.

*Matt 16:27; 25:46; Acts 17:31; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Thess 1:5-10; 2 Tim 4:1, 8; Rev 20-22*

## **XVII. Evangelism**

Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ is the duty and privilege of every one of His followers. Evangelism is both a response to Scripture's command and a natural outflow of Christian joy through the Holy Spirit. The church is called to spread Jesus's message to all nations, and this task should be accomplished individually and corporately. Evangelism is a natural extension of a believer's love for his neighbor.

*Gen 12:1-3; Isa 6:8; Matt 9:37-38; 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Rom 10:14-15*

## **XVIII. Marriage**

Marriage is sanctioned by God as the exclusive union between one man and one woman as delineated in Scripture. God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. Any sexual activity that occurs outside the union of marriage is condemned in Scripture: adultery, fornication, homosexuality, pornography, incest, or bestiality. Marriage is God's unique gift that reveals the union between Christ and His church and provides the means for intimate companionship and procreation of the human race.

*Gen 2:18-25; Ex 20:14, 17; Lev 18:6, 21-23; Matt 5:27-30; 19:4-6, 8; Rom 1:24-32; 1 Tim 1:9-10; Heb 13:4; Jude 7*

Note: If any person(s) desires to use the property and facilities of Gravel Hill Baptist Church and yet be in direct violation of upholding the doctrinal beliefs of marriage and sexuality contained herein, he or she will not be permitted to use the property and facilities, which includes but is not limited to marriage ceremonies, marriage retreats, and marriage counseling. This is not to discriminate against an individual based upon his or her sexual orientation or marital status, but rather to preserve the principle of Gravel Hill Baptist Church in obedience to God as an

expression of religious freedom so as to abide by such doctrinal beliefs. We continue to advocate with utmost, sincere conviction that, by divine precepts, same-sex marriage should not be condoned. The First Amendment ensures that religious organizations, such as Gravel Hill Baptist Church, are given proper protection as we seek to teach the principles that are central to our life and faith. Although opposition to comply with the practice of these doctrinal beliefs is to sin against God, God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

## **XIX. Gender and Sexuality**

God has designed humans with two genders: male and female. Men and women have divinely ordained differences that display God's original design for creation and are intended for its flourishing. The biological differences between men and women are integral to self-conception and this link cannot be separated. Any attempt to change one's sex or to identify as the opposite gender is sinful. Those who are born with physical disorders of sex development are created in the image of God and have the same dignity and worth as any human being, and they should embrace their biological sex insofar as it may be known. The grace of God enables anyone to abandon a transgender self-conception and through faith and repentance be restored to right standing with God through Jesus Christ.

*Gen 1:26-28; 2:15-25; Deut 22:5; Isa 59:1; Matt 19:4, 12; Rom 1:24-32; Eph 5:22-33*

## **XX. Religious Liberty**

We reserve the right to follow Christ faithfully free from governmental interference, acknowledging that our authority and judgment comes from Christ alone and not from any earthly power. Nevertheless, Scripture commands our obedience to the state in any matter that does not contradict God's Word or jeopardize our conscience. Similarly, the church has local autonomy in decision making over any denominational body. While we may join with other local churches in cooperation, we retain final authority over judgments for our local body of believers. Lastly, we affirm that each individual member has the freedom to follow his conscience on any matter that exists outside the bounds of Scripture. The church may discipline any believer, however, regarding an issue of sin clearly laid out in the Bible in keeping with God's commands.

*Matt 18:15-20; Acts 4:19-20; Rom 13:1-7; 1 Cor 8; Phil 3:20; 1 Tim 2:1-4; 1 Pet 2:13-17*

## **XXI. Additional Elements**

To preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local body of Christ and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the surrounding community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this statement of faith and conduct themselves accordingly. For information

regarding church membership, see the Gravel Hill Baptist Church Constitution & Bylaws (Article 4).

For further details concerning Gravel Hill Baptist Church's convictions, see the following resources:

Baptist Faith and Message, 2000

Nashville Statement