

WHAT WE BELIEVE

The Bridge Community Church and Maranatha Transitional Housing, Gainesboro, TN

Doctrinal Statement:

I. The Word of God:

We believe the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31-32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32

II. The Trinity:

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption. Genesis 1:1, 26; John 1:1, 3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19-20; Ephesians 4:5-6

III. God the Father:

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. We believe that He orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace. Luke 10:21-22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; 1 Timothy 1:1-2; 2:5-6; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6; Isaiah 46:9-10

As the only absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption. In His sovereignty, He is neither author nor approver of sin, nor does He waive the accountability of His creatures. He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own, not based on anything we have done, but according to His own good pleasure. Genesis 1:1-31; Revelation 4:11; Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:36; 1 Timothy 6:13-16; Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38-47; 1 Peter 1:17; James 1:13; Ephesians 1:4-6; 2:8-9

IV. Jesus Christ:

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary, propitiatory (satisfaction of His Father's holiness, thereby averting His wrath) death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal, visible return to earth. We believe Jesus Christ is coequal, consubstantial (i.e., having the same substance, nature, or essence), and coeternal with the Father. Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1, 14; 10:30; 14:9; 20:28; Romans 8:46; 9:5; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30-31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; 6:9-10; Hebrews 1:8; 7:25; 9:28; 1 Timothy 3:16; Isaiah 9:6-7; 2 Peter 1:1

We believe that in the Incarnation (God becoming man), Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9

We believe that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness. Micah 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9-10; Colossians 2:9

We believe that on the basis of the efficacy (effectiveness) of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, every genuine believer is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin; and that he/she is declared righteous (justification), given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God. Romans 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18

We believe that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, God the Father displayed to His creation the deity of His Son and gave proof that He accepted the propitiatory work of Christ on the cross. Isaiah 53:10-12

V. The Holy Spirit:

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and the Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration. It is His work to indwell, sanctify, instruct, empower for service, and seal until the day of redemption all who believe on Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. He is a divine person, eternal, underived (having no beginning or source), possessing all the attributes of personality and deity. In all the divine attributes, He is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father and the Son. John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26-27; John 16:9-14; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Acts 2:15-20; Hebrews 10:15-16; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13

VI. Humanity:

We believe that humanity was directly and immediately created by God, in His own image and likeness, free from sin, with a rational nature, intelligence, and volition; yet with a moral responsibility to the God who created him. Genesis 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 11:7; Genesis 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9

We believe that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God by enjoying Him forever. Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11

We believe that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, humanity lost its innocence, incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death, became subject to the wrath of God, and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. Thus, every human being is utterly depraved and, having no recuperative powers to enable him to rescue himself, is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is, therefore, wholly of God's

grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:10-11, 23; 5:12; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 John 1:8; Ephesians 2:8-9

We believe that because all humanity descended from Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all of humanity (Jesus Christ, having no human father, being the only exception). All of humanity is thus sinful by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration, spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins, and by nature, children of God's wrath. Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12; Ephesians 2:1-3

VII. Salvation:

A. Election:

We believe that election is the sole act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ all whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies. Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2

We believe when God grants grace to utterly depraved sinners, it is not related to any initiative of their own, nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely on the basis of His sovereign purpose and will. Ephesians 1:4-8; 2 Peter 1:1; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:1-2

B. Regeneration:

We believe that man was created by God in His own image; that he sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners and therefore under condemnation. We believe that those who are regenerated by the Holy Spirit repent and forsake sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior and become new creatures, delivered from condemnation, and recipients of eternal life. Genesis. 1:26; 5:2; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17; 3:19; Ecclesiastes 2: 11; John 3:14; 5:24; John 5:30; 7: 13; 8:12; 10:26; Romans 9:22; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 19:3, 20; 20:10, 14-15; 21:18; Psalm 51:7; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14; Romans 3:19; 5:19; Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9; John 3:16; John 1:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1

We believe that regeneration is manifested by fruits consistent with repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Matthew 7:18-21; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:10

C. Justification:

We believe that justification is the act of God by which He declares man righteous. This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us. By this means, God is able to "be just,

and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26). Romans 8:33; 3:20, 4:6; Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:26

D. Sanctification:

We believe that every genuine believer experiences justification before God. Therefore, having been justified, we believe that in the daily life of the believer he/she is being progressively conformed to the likeness of Christ. In this respect, every saved person is involved in a daily conflict-the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh (indwelling sin). John 17:17, 19; Romans 6:1-22; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23; Matthew 24:13

VII. The Church:

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, ministry and fellowship. We believe that the overflow of the worship of this glorious God will lead the members of the local church to declare the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. Ephesians 2:19-22; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:19-21; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25

We believe that every child of God is baptized by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the bride of Christ, of which Christ is the Head. We also believe that the bride of Christ includes Old Testament saints (Isaiah 54:5-6; 62:4-5; Hosea 2:19-20). 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8; Ephesians 1:22; 23; Colossians 1:18

We believe that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures and that the members of the one spiritual, universal body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25). Acts 13:1-3; 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Romans 16:1-5, 16; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1

We believe that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (also called bishops, pastors, and pastor-teachers; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11). The local congregation is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7, 17). The biblically designated officers serving the assembly under the direction of the elders are deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-13). Both elders and deacons must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5). Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18

VIII. Christian Conduct:

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well being of his fellow men; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his

possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:1-3; Hebrews 12:1-2; John 14:15, 23-24; 1 John 2:3-6; 2 Corinthians 9:6-9; 1 Corinthians 4:2; Colossians 1:9-10

IX. The Ordinances:

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of the believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not believe these ordinances hold any salvific value; that is, they do not convey saving grace upon the recipient. Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

X. Religious Liberty:

We believe that every human being is created in the image of God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority. 1 Timothy 2:5; Romans 14:7-9, 12

XI. The Last Things:

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and in His eternal kingdom in heaven. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous and the endless suffering of the wicked. Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 2 Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15

Our Church Covenant:

(1) Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

(2) We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge and holiness; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel to all nations.

(3) We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly

in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment, to avoid all gossip, backbiting and excessive anger; to seek God's help in abstaining from all drugs, food, drink, and practices that bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith.

(4) We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the guidelines of our Savior to secure it without delay.

(5) We moreover engage that when we move from this place, we will, if possible, unite with a church where we can carry out the articles of this confession and the spirit of this covenant.