



# AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

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## PURPOSE

This statement is a summary of those truths of God revealed in the Scriptures that we believe are essential for the understanding and defense of the gospel, for instruction in godly living, for the order of a biblical church, and for evangelism. This document is a foundational guide for all instruction, teaching, and preaching at Grace Church.<sup>1</sup>

## THE WORD OF GOD

We believe that the Bible is the word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts<sup>2</sup>, written by people who were guided by the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.<sup>A</sup> The Bible—including all the books of the Old and New Testaments—is holy Scripture and the inspired true word of God. It is fully authoritative and our only absolutely trustworthy guide for life and faith.<sup>B</sup>

(<sup>A</sup>2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 12:6; 2 Peter 1:20, Matthew 24:35. <sup>B</sup>John 17:17; 21; John 8:31, 32; John 20:31)

## THE TRINITY

We believe that there is one true, living, and good God<sup>A</sup> who is of one substance, power, and eternal purpose yet eternally existing in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We believe that the holy Trinity is without division of nature, essence, or being.<sup>B</sup> Although the word Trinity is not found in the Scriptures, this term has been used since earliest times to convey the collective nature and being of God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit as revealed in the Scriptures.<sup>3</sup> The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; and the Holy Spirit is eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.<sup>C</sup> The persons of the Trinity are equal in every divine perfection. They execute distinct but harmonious functions in the work of creation, history, providence, and redemption. God the Trinity possesses all life, glory, goodness, and blessedness in and of himself.<sup>D</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to this *Affirmation of Faith*, we also accept the *Apostles' Creed* (second century) and the *Nicene Creed* (381 AD) as accurate summaries of the biblical Christian faith that have been left to us by the ancient churches. See Appendices 1 and 2.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to this paragraph, we also affirm the summary "Short Statement" of the *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* (1978). See Appendix 3.

<sup>3</sup> We also affirm the *Athanasian Creed*, first paragraph (fourth–fifth centuries), as an accurate exposition of the Bible's teaching on the three Persons of the Godhead. See Appendix 4.

(<sup>A</sup>Genesis 1:1, 26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 86:5; Mark 10:18; 1 Timothy 4:10. <sup>B</sup>Job 42:2; Psalm 115:3 5:26; Matthew 28:19; I John 5:7; Matthew 3:16–17; 2 Corinthians 13:14. <sup>C</sup>Psalm 2:7; Acts 13:33; John 15:26; Galatians 4:6. <sup>D</sup>Matthew 25:23; John 15:11; 17:26; Romans 1:19, 20; 9:5; Ephesians 4:5, 6; Colossians 2:9)

## GOD THE FATHER

We believe in God the Father, an everlasting, infinite, perfect, personal, and spiritual being who is the sovereign and rightful ruler of all that exists.<sup>A</sup> He created all things and upholds, directs, disposes, and governs all creatures, actions, and things by his wise and holy providence according to his infallible foreknowledge and the immutable counsel of his own will. God, in his ordinary providence, makes use of all natural and spiritual means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them at his pleasure. He does this to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and grace.<sup>B</sup> He is sufficient in himself, not standing in need of any creature that he has made. He conducts himself with steadfast mercy towards humanity. He draws people to himself through his Son. He forgives the sins of those who come to him through Christ for salvation and delivers them from death.<sup>C</sup> The Father hears and answers prayer according to his wisdom, love, and providence. He will carry out all things in their proper time and order so that they are brought to fulfillment in Jesus Christ in order to reveal the supremacy of his name, power, holiness, and wisdom.

(<sup>A</sup>1 Chronicles 29:10–13; John 4:24; Psalm 139. <sup>B</sup>Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 55:10–11; Job 38:11; Isaiah 46:10–11; Psalm 135:6; Matthew 10:29–31; Ephesians 1:11; Acts 27:31; Acts 27:31, 44; Romans 4:19–21. <sup>C</sup>Job 22:2–3; Psalm 117:2; John 6:44; Acts 10:43. <sup>D</sup>Psalm 138:2; Revelation 4:11; 99:3, 6, 9; 1 Timothy 1:17)

## GOD THE SON

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten eternal Son, true God of true God, and the image of the invisible God. He took upon himself our nature, being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary and manifested in a body of flesh.<sup>4</sup> He lived a sinless life, performed many signs and wonders, and taught the words of eternal life.<sup>A</sup> He offered himself as a penal substitutionary atoning sacrifice for sinners. He was physically crucified, suffered, bled, died, and was buried. By the blood of his cross, he secured eternal redemption for all who trust in him alone. By his resurrection from the dead, he opened the way to life everlasting.<sup>B</sup>

(<sup>A</sup>John 3:16–17; Colossians 1:15; Luke 1:34–35; Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 1:26–38; Galatians 4:4; 1 Timothy 3:16; Romans 9:5; 1 Peter 2:22; Mark 1:32–34; John 6:68. <sup>B</sup>Romans 3:23–26; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; 1 Corinthians 15.3–5; Ephesians 1:7)

Salvation is found in and through Christ and him alone. It is only because of his shed blood that we may approach the throne of grace and receive pardon for our sins from the Father. He was raised from the dead on the third day and appeared to his disciples in his resurrected body. He later ascended into heaven where he now sits at the right hand of the Father and is perpetually interceding for the saints. He awaits the time when the Father will send him personally back to earth to resurrect his people, to judge his creation, and to usher in the final portion of redemptive history. He is due from angels, men, and every other creature whatever worship, service, or obedience

<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, we affirm the second paragraph of the *Athanasian Creed* (fourth–fifth centuries) as an accurate exposition of the Bible's teaching on the humanity and deity of Jesus Christ. See Appendix 4.

he is pleased to require of them. At his appearing, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.<sup>C</sup>

<sup>C</sup>Acts 4:12; Hebrews 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1–28; Hebrews 7:25; 9:28; Acts 10:42; 1 Corinthians 15:23–25; Romans 5:6–8; Philippians 2:9–10)

## GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit, eternally one with the Father and Son, who convicts and convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He illuminates people to understand the truth.<sup>A</sup> The Holy Spirit is the divine agent by whom believers are born into the kingdom of God. He applies the redemption purchased by Christ to those whom God has chosen by effectively calling them to faith in Christ. He also unites them to Christ by faith so that all of the benefits of Christ's person and work are imputed to them.<sup>B</sup> As our abiding helper, the Spirit sanctifies, empowers, baptizes, indwells, guides, teaches, and equips all believers for service and witness. The indwelling Holy Spirit guides, governs, and protects the child of God from spiritual defeat and oppression. He enables believers to live in union with Christ and God the Father.<sup>C</sup>

(<sup>A</sup>John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26–27; 16:9–14. <sup>B</sup>John 3:5–7; Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13–14. <sup>C</sup>1 Peter 1:2; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22–26; Romans 8:9, 12–13; Ephesians 6:11–18)

## CREATION

We believe that God created all things visible and invisible for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness. He created each species of life separately and finished his work by creating Adam from the dust and Eve from Adam. We believe that the universe has its beginning and end in God's will. The universe is in no sense independent of him; rather, the formation and maintenance of the created order represent a continuing exertion of his creative power and ability.<sup>A</sup> Both Adam and Eve were created equally in the image of God, without sin. He endowed them with knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. They had God's moral law written in their hearts and reflected in their conscience and the ability to keep that law. They lived with the possibility of transgressing since they were left to the liberty of their own will. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God uniquely created man and woman in his own image. Therefore every human being of every race, station, and condition possesses full human dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.<sup>B</sup>

(<sup>A</sup>Genesis 1:1–2:25; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Psalm 24:1–2; Isaiah 55:10–11. <sup>B</sup>Genesis 1:26–28; Ephesians 4:24; Romans 1:20; 2:14–15; Colossians 1:16; 3:10; James 3:9–12)

## THE FALL and ITS EFFECTS

We believe that God created humanity upright and perfect. He gave them a righteous law that would have led to eternal life if they had kept it but threatened death if they broke it. Yet, they did not remain for long in this position of honor. Satan used the craftiness of the serpent to seduce Eve, who then seduced Adam. Adam acted without any outside compulsion and deliberately transgressed the law of their creation and the command given to them by eating the forbidden fruit. In keeping with his wise and holy counsel, God permitted this act because he intended it to result in the magnification of his glory.<sup>A</sup>

(<sup>A</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:28; Genesis 2:17; 3:1–7; Ephesians 1:11)

By this sin, they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God and so became dead in sin and completely corrupted in all their capabilities and parts of soul and body. As they were the root and representatives of the whole human race, the guilt of their sin was accounted, and their corrupt nature passed on, to all their offspring who have descended from them by ordinary procreation. Because of this original corruption of our nature, we are, in our natural state without redemption, thoroughly biased against—and unable to do—all that is good. We are thus wholly inclined to all evil; from this nature proceed all specific acts of sin.<sup>B</sup>

(<sup>B</sup>Romans 3:20–23; Ephesians 2:1–3; Romans 5:12–21; Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 15:19; Romans 3:10–18)

This corruption of nature, during this life, remains in those who are saved. Even though this sin is pardoned and put to death through Christ, it is never completely overcome until our glorification.<sup>C</sup>

(<sup>C</sup>Romans 7:18–25; 1 John 1:8; Galatians 5:17)

## MARRIAGE, GENDER, and SEXUALITY

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning: a covenant between one man and one woman, in a single exclusive union, by which their status changes from two individuals to “one flesh” as God joins them together. This covenant creates a new family such that their lifelong primary human loyalty is now to one another before anyone else. God created and sanctioned this earthly covenant between one man and one woman to image the unbreakable heavenly covenant between Christ and his church.<sup>A</sup> It was God’s original intention that the marriage covenant be permanent and only be broken by the death of one of the partners. From Genesis to Revelation, the authority of Scripture witnesses to the nature of biblical marriage as uniquely bound to the complementarity of man and woman. The Lord Jesus himself said that marriage was created by God from the beginning. No human institution has the authority to redefine marriage any more than a human institution has the authority to redefine the gospel, which marriage mysteriously reflects.

(<sup>A</sup>Genesis 1:26–28; 2:18–25; Ephesians 5:22–33; Hebrews 13:4. <sup>B</sup>Matthew 19:3–12)

Regarding gender, God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. This maleness or femaleness of the human being extends beyond the external differences to the very heart of the human person. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one’s biological gender is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

(<sup>B</sup>Genesis 1:26–28; Psalm 139:13–16)

God created sex as a gift to be enjoyed within the covenant of marriage. Thus, God intends sexual expression to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of this marriage covenant. We believe that the exercise of sexual expression outside the biblical definition of marriage in any manner, including but not limited to adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestial-

ity, incest, and use of pornography, is contradictory to God's design for sexuality and marriage.<sup>C</sup>

(<sup>C</sup>Genesis 1:26–28; 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8; Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:22–23; Romans 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 6:9–11)

## SALVATION

We believe that God, by his providence and eternal counsel, chose some persons to eternal life and salvation before the foundation of the world. In God's appointed and acceptable time, he is pleased to call effectively, by his word and Spirit, those he has predestined to life. He calls them out of their natural state of sin and death to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. Whoever God calls, he will justify and keep by his power through faith to salvation.<sup>A</sup>

(<sup>A</sup>Acts 13:48; Ephesians 1:4–5; Romans 8:30; Ephesians 2:1–9; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2, 5)

God's choice of his people was of himself, for his own pleasure and glory, and not with regard to, or with reference to, any foreseen works of faith or deeds in the creature as his motive. His choice prevails and triumphs over human resistance to bring his own to saving faith.

(<sup>B</sup>John 17:6, 9; 11:51–52; Ephesians 1:4, 11; Romans 8:32–33; 11:5–6; Titus 3:4–7; Revelation 5:9)

Justification occurs by and through Christ because of his sinless life, atoning death, and glorious resurrection. It is received solely through faith, which is itself the gift of God.<sup>C</sup> No person is justified in the sight of God partly by Christ and partly by works.<sup>D</sup> Salvation is the gracious purpose of God according to which he justifies, adopts, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness and grace and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It precludes boasting and encourages humility. The grace of redemption is that by which God effectively calls his chosen, making them spiritually alive and converting them to himself.<sup>E</sup> This grace is operative by and through God alone, not in cooperation with the human intellect or will. This means that those who are redeemed always come to saving faith, as they are made most willing to come to Christ by the drawing of God, and receive through faith their redemption and eternal salvation.<sup>F</sup>

(<sup>C</sup>Ephesians 2:8–9; Philippians 1:29. <sup>D</sup>Romans 3:20, 28, 30; 8:33; 11:5, 6; Galatians 5:4. <sup>E</sup>Romans 3:24–26; Galatians 4:4–5; 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24; 2 Timothy 1:9. <sup>F</sup>Titus 3:4–5; Ephesians 2:8; Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26)

We further believe that the work of Christ on the cross for sin both warrants and urges a universal offering of the gospel to all persons. To every person it may be truly said, "God gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Those whom God calls will hear his voice and follow him. Whoever comes to Jesus Christ by the drawing of God through the effective work of the Holy Spirit, he will not cast out.<sup>G</sup>

(<sup>G</sup>Matthew 28:19; John 3:16; 4:14; 6:37; 10:27–29)

We believe that by his complete and perfect obedience to God and by his suffering and death, Jesus Christ once and for all obtained forgiveness of sins and the gift of his righteousness for all who trusted in God's promised redemption prior to the cross and

all who trust in Christ's death and resurrection after the cross.<sup>H</sup> By living a perfect life and dying in our place, the just for the unjust, Christ absorbed and became sin and succumbed to our due punishment, thereby satisfying the wrath of God against us.<sup>I</sup>

(<sup>H</sup>Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4-5; 1 Corinthians 10:4; Revelation 13:8; Romans 3:23-26. <sup>I</sup>1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:14, 21; Galatians 3:13)

Believers are accountable for their response to the forgiveness, pardon, and reconciliation freely granted to them in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those whom God has united to Christ by faith are justified by God and adopted into his family. They also have a new heart and a new spirit created in them through the power of Christ's death and resurrection.<sup>J</sup> On the basis of this new creation, God's will for believers is to exhibit transformed lives evidenced by purity, holiness, and growth in Christ-like character. He directs them each to participate, according to their spiritual gifts, in the task of effectively sharing the gospel message of salvation with those near and far who have not believed in Jesus.<sup>K</sup>

(<sup>J</sup>Philippians 2:13; 1 John 4:7; Isaiah 8:20; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Romans 3:24-25; Galatians 4:4-5; Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26. <sup>K</sup>2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 4:10; Philippians 2:15-16)

We believe that those who are redeemed and come to saving faith will never lose their salvation but will remain in Christ.<sup>L</sup> Believers may fall into sin through the temptation of Satan and the world, the strength of sin remaining within them, and the neglect of the means God has given to preserve and strengthen them. By doing this, they suffer God's displeasure, grieve his Holy Spirit, degrade their graces and joys, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves.<sup>M</sup> Even so, they will be kept by the power of God through faith for salvation, sanctified by his Spirit, and will never fall away from the state of grace but will endure to the end. They will never fall fully and completely because God, by his grace, preserves them. The intercession of Christ for those God has called is eternally effective.<sup>N</sup>

(<sup>L</sup>John 10:28-29; 17:8-12, 24; 89:31-33; Jeremiah 31:3; Romans 8:38-39. <sup>M</sup>Psalms 32:3-5; 51:1-12; Mark 16:14; 1 John 3:9; II Timothy 2:18-19; 1 Corinthians 11:32; Ephesians 4:30; 1 John 2:3; 3:14, 18-19, 21, 24. Revelation 2:4. <sup>N</sup>1 Peter 1:5, 9; Romans 8:33-39; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; Hebrews 9:12-15; 10:10, 14; 13:20-21; 7:25)

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS

We believe the Holy Spirit empowers spiritual gifts as God wills to his children. These gifts are designed to testify to the presence of the kingdom and are distributed to equip the saints for worship and ministry to build up the body of Jesus Christ. God uses these spiritual gifts to display his glory and anointing in individual believers so that the body of Christ may build itself up and so that the work of ministry that is revealed in the Scriptures may be displayed in the extension of his kingdom in the world.<sup>A</sup>

(<sup>A</sup>Romans 12:6-8; Hebrews 2:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; 14:12; Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Peter 4:10-11)

## EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS

We believe that the call and holy privilege of every child of God and of all churches of Jesus Christ is to go and make disciples of the nations. God creates transformed lives evidenced by purity, holiness, and growth in Christ-like character by means of new

birth. The Holy Spirit imputes the love of Christ into the hearts of believers, thus transforming their love toward others, for his Name's sake. This results in children of God who actively seek to take the gospel to sinners and who share in carrying out the Great Commission. The highest purpose for evangelism and missions is that the name of Jesus Christ and the glory of his kingdom be taken to the ends of the earth until he returns.<sup>A</sup>

(<sup>A</sup>Matthew 9:37–38; 24:14; 28:18–20; Romans 10:13–15; 2 Corinthians 5:14–21; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 22:17)

## THE CHURCH

We believe that the church consists of all the elect of all ages who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for their eternal salvation and have been, are, or will be gathered together into one under Christ as their head.<sup>A</sup> It is the spiritual body of Christ that includes all believers who have been effectively called from among every tribe and language and people and nation. This universal church may be called invisible in this world since it is marked by the grace of God and the internal work of the Holy Spirit in its members. Yet, the universal church is represented by local churches which are concrete expressions of the “body of Christ” in the world.<sup>B</sup>

(<sup>A</sup>Ephesians 2:11–22; Titus 12–3; Revelation 13:8. <sup>B</sup>1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Revelation 5:9–10; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1)

A local church is a congregation of baptized believers who covenant together to live and worship in unity under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and through the guidance of his Holy Spirit speaking in the word of God. Though there are human leaders, Christ is the head of the church, who acts—according to Scripture—as the Prophet, Priest and King, of his people. The primary purpose of the local church is to worship and glorify God by building up believers to effectively reach the world with the gospel of Christ. God ordained the ministry of the local church to include taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world, thereby accomplishing his redemptive purposes among all peoples.<sup>C</sup>

(<sup>C</sup>Matthew 16:15–19; Acts 2:41–42, 47; 1 Corinthians 9:13–14; Acts 3:22–23; Hebrews 4:14; 1 Corinthians 15:25; Romans 15:5–7; Revelation 2–3; 5:9–10; 22:2)

A local church, gathered and fully organized according to the Scriptures, consists of officers and members. The officers appointed by Christ are elders (also called bishops) and deacons whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the New Testament. All believers are obligated to join a local congregation when possible, in order to participate in the fellowship of Christ, the ministry of the gospel, and the ordinances of the New Testament.<sup>D</sup>

(<sup>D</sup>Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; Philippians 1:1; Acts 20:17–35; 1 Timothy 3:1–13; 2 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:5–9; Hebrews 13:17; Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Acts 20:7)

## BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that water baptism is the covenant sign instituted by Christ for entrance into the new covenant community of the church. It is the immersion of a believer, upon confession of faith, in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy

Spirit.<sup>A</sup> As an act of outward obedience, it symbolizes the believer's cleansing from sin; faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior; death to sin; burial of the old life; and resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. As the pledge of a good conscience toward God, baptism is the event in which a believer makes a public commitment to live a life of obedience to Christ in the fellowship of the Christian community.<sup>B</sup>

(<sup>A</sup>Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 2:41–42; 8:36–38 (verse 27, ESV margin). <sup>B</sup>Acts 22:16; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:11–12; 1 Peter 3:21 (NIV); Acts 2:41–42)

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the covenant sign, instituted by Christ, of inclusion and nurture in the new covenant. By sharing in the bread and cup in a spirit of faith and worship, believers memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate his second coming. Christ gave this sign to his church as a regular act of remembrance and a display of the sacrifice of himself in his death. In the worship of a gathered church, the Lord's Supper is a confirmation of the faith of believers in all the benefits of Christ's death, a token of their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, and a renewal of their promise of obedience made in baptism.<sup>C</sup>

(<sup>C</sup>Luke 22:17–20; 1 Corinthians 10:16–17; 11:17–34)

Both Baptism and the Lord's Supper are significant expressions of salvation, worship, and submission to God for the believer. They function as the God-ordained physical signs that identify the believing community and express the believers' pledge and bond of their fellowship with Christ and each other.<sup>D</sup>

(<sup>D</sup>Matthew 28:19; Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26)

## DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND THE CONSUMMATION

We believe that during the present age, the bodies of those who have died are destroyed and return to the elements. Their souls, however, neither die nor sleep but return to God their creator. The souls of those who are righteous in Christ are made perfect in holiness and are received into paradise. There, with Christ, they behold the face of God and wait for the resurrection of their bodies. The souls of the wicked are cast into hell where they await their final judgment.<sup>A</sup>

(<sup>A</sup>Genesis 3:19; Acts 13:36; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:1–10; Philippians 1:23; Hebrews 12:23; Jude 6, 7; Luke 16:23–24)

We believe that our blessed hope is the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will return to the earth at the end of the age personally, visibly, physically, and suddenly in power and great glory. At that time, he will gather his elect, raise the dead, judge the nations, and establish his kingdom.<sup>B</sup> When Christ returns, he will bring with him those believers who have died. The saints who are then living will not die but will be caught up to meet the Lord when he comes. The bodies of the living and the dead in Christ will then be raised to honor and will again be united to their souls forever. The bodies of the wicked will, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonor. We believe that the righteous will enter into the everlasting joy of their Master, and those who by their unrighteousness suppressed the truth will be condemned to everlasting conscious misery.<sup>C</sup>

(<sup>B</sup>Titus 2:13; Acts 1:9–11; Philippians 3:20–21; 1 Thessalonians 5:2–3; Matthew 24:31; Acts 17:31; Daniel 12:2; 1 Corinthians 15:22–24. <sup>C</sup>1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; Matthew 5:25–29; 25:23, 46)



We believe that Hell is a real place of eternal suffering in separation from God for those whose names are not written in the book of life. There is no intermediate state in which the unsaved can atone for their own sins.<sup>D</sup> We believe that Heaven is a real place that the triune God has prepared for those who have been saved by grace through the shed blood of Christ to share in eternal blessedness and joy with himself.<sup>E</sup>

(<sup>D</sup>Romans 1:18; Matthew 18:8; Mark 9:43–48; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Hebrews 9:27; Jude 13–14. <sup>E</sup>Psalm 16:11; Revelation 21:1–4; 1 Corinthians 2:9)

## THE SPIRIT OF THIS AFFIRMATION

We do not believe that all things in this affirmation of faith are of equal weight; some teachings are more essential to Christian faith, some less. We do not believe that every part of this affirmation must be believed in order for one to be saved.

Our aim in articulating these doctrines is not to discover how little can be believed, but rather to embrace and teach “the whole counsel of God.”<sup>A</sup> Through it, we hope to encourage a hearty adherence to the Bible, to the fullness of its truth, and to the glory of its Author. We believe that Biblical doctrine stabilizes saints in the winds of confusion and strengthens the church in her mission to meet the great systems of false religion and secularism.

(<sup>A</sup>Acts 20:27. <sup>B</sup>Titus 1:1; Psalm 119:129–131; 1 Timothy 4:1; 6:3–5; Ephesians 4:13–14)

We believe that the supreme virtue of love is nourished by the strong meat of the God-centered teachings of Scripture. Christian unity is best served, not by finding the lowest common denominator of doctrine, around which all can gather, but by elevating the value of truth, seeking the unity that comes from the truth, and then demonstrating to the world how Christians can love each other despite their differences, without removing or ignoring them.

(1 Timothy 1:5; Psalm 9:10; 1 Timothy 4:6–10; John 13:34–35; 17:8–11)

## CHURCH LEADERS' ADHERANCE TO THIS AFFIRMATION

In order to preserve the integrity and unity of Grace Church as a gospel-centered church, and to provide a biblical role model to the members of the Church, all those who serve as elders, pastors, ministers, and support staff accept this affirmation of faith as an accurate summary of the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures. We will endeavor to maintain its teachings in our lives and ministries, to promote its understanding and application among those to whom we minister, and to exalt the blessed God whose great salvation is outlined in this affirmation of faith.

## Appendix 1: The Apostles' Creed

Second/Third centuries<sup>5</sup>

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and is seated on the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic (meaning *universal*) church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

## Appendix 2: The Nicene Creed

As approved at the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD<sup>6</sup>

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, visible and invisible.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

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<sup>5</sup> Though the *Apostles' Creed* was not written by the apostles, it evidently grew out of the apostles' writings in the New Testament, particularly those places where the three persons of the Trinity are mentioned together (for example, Matthew 28:18–20; 1 Corinthians 12:4–6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4–6). It was developed during the second century and was in its present form in the third century.

<sup>6</sup> This creed is an expansion of the *Apostles' Creed*. It was written at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD and slightly revised at the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD. It is sometimes referred to as the "Niceno-Constantinoplan Creed" but is generally known as the *Nicene Creed*.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic (meaning *universal*) and apostolic church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## Appendix 3

*The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978)*

### A Short Statement

1. God, who is himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to himself.
2. Holy Scripture, being God's own word, written by men prepared and superintended by his Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.
3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by his inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.
5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the church.

## Appendix 4: The Athanasian Creed

Fourth–fifth centuries<sup>7</sup>

### *First Paragraph*

(1) Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic (meaning *universal*) faith; (2) Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled,

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<sup>7</sup> The *Athanasian Creed* was, for centuries, believed to have been written by Athanasius (ca. 296–373 AD). During the Reformation of the church in the 1500's, it was shown to have been written later than his lifetime. Its accuracy in defining the Trinity and the relationship of the two natures of Christ in a biblical way has been evident to Christians through the centuries. It has been universally accepted by the churches that grew out of the Reformation. The original is not divided into two paragraphs; that has been done simply for the purpose of highlighting the two themes of the confession.

without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. (3) And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; (4) Neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance. (5) For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son and another of the Holy Spirit. (6) But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. (7) Such as the Father is, such is the Son and such is the Holy Spirit. (8) The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated. (9) The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible. (10) The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal. (11) And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal. (12) As also there are not three uncreated nor three incomprehensibles, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible. (13) So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty; (14) And yet they are not three almighties, but one almighty. (15) So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; (16) And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. (17) So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord; (18) And yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord. (19) For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord; (20) so are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say: There are three Gods or three Lords. (21) The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. (22) The Son is of the Father alone; not made nor created, but begotten. (23) The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. (24) So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. (25) And in this Trinity none is before, nor after another; none is greater, or less than another. (26) But the whole three persons are co-eternal, and co-equal. (27) So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. (28) He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.

### *Second Paragraph*

(29) Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. (30) For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man. (31) God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and made of the substance of his mother, born in the world. (32) Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. (33) Equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching his manhood. (34) Who, although he is God and man, yet he is not two, but one Christ. (35) One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God. (36) One altogether, not by the confusion of substance, but by unity of person. (37) For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ; (38) Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead; (39) He ascended into heaven; he sits on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; (40) From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. (41) At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies; (42) And shall give account of their own works. (43) And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire. (44) This is the catholic (meaning *universal*) faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.