



Doctrinal Statement “What We Believe”

We believe the following statements to be biblically correct; the sound truth of God's Word. We affirm them without hesitation:

1. **SCRIPTURE:** We believe the 66 books of the old and New Testaments alone to be the revealed Word of God. Scripture is inspired by God and in harmony with his character (2 Timothy 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:20,21). The Bible, as originally given (the original autographs), is without error and authoritative for all matters pertaining to the church, Christian doctrine and human conduct (Psalms 19:7-11).
2. **GOD:** We believe there is one God in all the universe (Isaiah 44:6). He is eternal Spirit (1 Timothy 1:17), Creator and Sustainer of all that exists (Hebrews 11:3). God is present everywhere (Psalm 139:7-10) yet exists independently of his creation (Isaiah 66:1,2). Unalterable in his being (James 1:17), God possesses infinite strength (Isaiah 14:27) and knowledge (Hebrews 4:13). He is morally perfect, glorious in holiness (Isaiah 6:3) and is characterized by wisdom, love, truth, justice and mercy (Ephesians 2:4,5).

In his unity, God exists in three distinct Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (John 14:16,17). Each Person of the Godhead is equal to the others in nature and authority (Matthew 28:19), possessing the totality of the divine essence. They exist in perfect harmony of relationship and function.

3. **JESUS CHRIST:** We believe Jesus is the eternal Son of God, co-equal with the Father (John 1:1-3; Colossians 2:9). As such, he possesses the sum-total of the divine essence. He took on human flesh (John 1:14) and nature (Philippians 2:5-7), becoming like every man, except without sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). As such, he is the infinite God-man; his two natures inseparably bound, but never mixed or altered. His incarnation was characterized by his miraculous birth, to a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). His principle mission on earth was to provide salvation from sin for the human race (Galatians 4:4). Christ died for our sins, was buried and three days later was bodily resurrected, this miracle being confirmed by many eye-witnesses (Luke 24:36-46; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8). After his resurrection, Jesus ascended into heaven where he was exalted in glory (Philippians 2:9-11). He will return to the earth visibly and personally (Acts 1:11) at the time appointed for him by his Father (Mark 13:32).
4. **HOLY SPIRIT:** We believe the Holy Spirit is the eternal Spirit of God (Acts 5:3,4), a personal Being (Acts 13:2) possessing the entirety of the divine essence (Psalm 139:7). At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Jesus Christ (John 7:39, Eph 1:13). The Holy Spirit is involved in vital ministries such as convicting of sin (John 16:8), effecting regeneration (John 3:5-8), baptizing (1 Cor 12:13), indwelling believers (1 Corinthians 6:19), sealing their salvation (Ephesians 1:13,14), distributing spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4,7-11), producing godly character (Galatians 5:22,23) and empowerment for Christian service (Acts 1:8). We are convinced that speaking in tongues is not a necessary proof of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:12, 13). Neither do we believe it is a necessary or normal part of the Spirit-filled Christian life (1 Corinthians 12-14).

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5. **MAN & SIN:** We believe God created man in his own image (Genesis 1:26,27): morally pure, rational, thinking and possessing an immortal soul. As such, man is the highest and most glorious part of God's earthly creation (Psalm 8:5-8). Tragically, man willfully rebelled against God and marred the once perfect image of God he bore. This fall first occurred in Adam (Genesis 3). As members of the human race, all men and women are guilty of this original sin (1 Corinthians 15:22). All humans are born as sinners (Psalm 51:5), guilty before God (Romans 5:12,19). As a result, the entire human race is utterly corrupt (Genesis 6:5), able to do no good thing (Jeremiah 17:9), completely surrendered to the sinful nature (Ephesians 2:1-3). Because of original and personal sin, all humans are individually responsible before God, fit objects of his condemnation and judgment (Romans 6:23).
6. **SALVATION:** We believe that God, through infinite love and mercy, decreed to rescue the human race from the effects and consequences of sin (Romans 5:8). This salvation is in harmony with the eternal election of God which he graciously works to his own ultimate glory (Ephesians 1:4-6). The instrument of God's salvation is the substitutionary death of his Son, Jesus Christ (1 John 2:2). Because Jesus is human and divine, perfectly sinless and infinitely precious, God can effectively place the guilt and judgment for all human sin on him (Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 4:10). In his wisdom, God has decreed to apply his gift of salvation to human beings through faith (Ephesians 2:8). When a person trusts in the substitutionary death of Christ alone for forgiveness of sins and eternal life and expresses genuine repentance for sin (2 Corinthians 7:8-11), God transfers their guilt to Christ and Christ's holiness to them (2 Corinthians 5:21). They become justified, legally righteous (Romans 5:21-26), an adopted son or daughter of God (John 1:12,13). This glorious salvation is entirely a work of God's grace, apart from human merit or contribution (Ephesians 2:8,9).

In a forgiven sinner, God creates a new spiritual nature (2 Corinthians 5:17) so that he is no longer in bondage to sin but free to choose righteousness (Romans 8:1-4). As such, the regenerated sinner is able and responsible to live a life of progressive obedience to God, becoming increasingly holy through the Spirit's enablement (Romans 8:5-13; Galatians 5:16). Although growing in grace, regenerated sinners continue to struggle with the sinful nature (Romans 7:7-25). God has promised total and permanent sanctification only when he glorifies his children in heaven (Romans 8:19-21, 29). All those God has saved will be kept as his children, ultimately receiving the eternal inheritance he promised (Romans 8:28,39; Philippians 1:6).

7. **CHURCH:** We believe the Church is the fellowship of all true followers of Christ, those who have trusted in him alone for salvation (1 Corinthians 12:12,13; Ephesians 4:4-6). These are the body of Christ, his bride which will reign with him eternally (Romans 8:17). The universal (or invisible) church is divided into local (visible) congregations of true believers (1 Corinthians 1:2) which meet regularly for worship, instruction, fellowship and prayer (Acts 2:42-47). The Church is God's instrument on earth to communicate his gospel and strengthen his people (Ephesians 4:11-13).

The local church is governed directly by Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12,27; 1 Peter 5:4), accountable to him alone. Because each believer is a priest before God (1 Peter 2:5), all are responsible to and able to serve Christ, the Head (Ephesians 4:11-16). The local church should function as a spiritual entity, relying on the ministry of all who call New Life Community Church their church home for growth and stability. Each member should seek to know, cultivate and use their spiritual gift(s) for the building up of the Body (Romans 12:4-6a; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7). Scripture instructs the local church to function with certain groups of leaders and servants: the leaders are the elders (Titus 1:5) [also called bishops (Acts 20:28)

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or pastors (1 Peter 5:2)] the servants are deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-13). Elders are entrusted with the spiritual oversight of the local church (Acts 20:28-35). They are the spiritual shepherds of God's people, exercising authority in such areas as: teaching and discipline (2 Timothy 4:2), discipleship (2 Timothy 2:2), evangelism (2 Timothy 4:5) and administration (Acts 21:17-19). The Scriptures teach that each member of the Body of Christ identified with the local church is to be in submission to the elders as the recognized biblical leaders under Christ (I Thessalonians 5:12,13; Hebrews 13:17). The role of deacons involves assisting the elders in the other important ministry responsibilities, thus leaving them free to serve more fully as spiritual leaders (Acts 6:1-6).

Scripture teaches that the Church should observe two ordinances: believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is to be by immersion, an action picturing the believer's union with Christ's saving death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3-6). Baptism is to be a public testimony of faith by a true believer (Acts 18:8). As such, it speaks of a prior salvation decision, but does not save. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic portrayal of the body (bread) and blood (cup) of Christ, sacrificed for the forgiveness of sins (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11: 23-29). The Lord's Supper serves as an opportunity for regular remembrance, repentance and worship.

8. **FUTURE STATE & LAST THINGS:** We believe Scripture is explicit concerning the eternal state of man (Luke 16:19-31) and the bodily resurrection of both the wicked and righteous (Acts 24:15). The unsaved will experience conscious, eternal punishment for their sins in hell, forever apart from the grace of God (Matthew 25:45; 2 Thessalonians 1:8,9; Revelation 20:11-15). In contrast, the regenerate will enjoy eternal life in God's presence (2 Corinthians 5:6-8), a joyful existence in heaven forever with Christ (Philippians 1:21; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:3,4; 22:3-5).

We believe the bodily and visible second coming of Christ is a certain promise of Scripture and the Christian's motivating hope (John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 John 3:2,3). Christ's return will occur in two phases: first a “catching-up” or rapture of His Church to be with him in Heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:13-19). This event is imminent (Matthew 24:36-51) and will signal the beginning of the great Tribulation period of God's wrath (Revelation 6-18) during which the Antichrist will exercise influence on the earth (Daniel 9:24-27; 2 Thessalonians 2:3,4). At the end of this seven year period, Christ will return to destroy the Antichrist (Matthew 24:29-31; Revelation 19:11-21) and establish his Kingdom on earth for 1000 years (Revelation 20:1-6). Following this Millennium, Satan, his demons and the unsaved will be judged and cast into the lake of fire forever (Revelation 20:10; 11-15). Heaven and earth will be destroyed and then recreated as the place where the regenerate will live and enjoy the Lord forever (Revelation 21,22).

9. **SATAN & DEMONS:** We believe Satan is a powerful living spirit (Ephesians 6:11,12), created by God but now fallen through willful sin (Ezek 28:12-19; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). He is desperately wicked, utterly opposed to God's will and all that is good (Matthew 4:1-11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 3:8). As such, he is the avowed enemy of Christ, Christians and the gospel. In his destructive work, Satan is aided by myriads of fallen angels, or demons (Mark 5:1-13).