

Statement of Belief

GOD

We believe in one¹ eternal,² omnipresent,³ unchanging,⁴ personal⁵ God; perfect in holiness,⁶ wisdom,⁷ love,⁸ power,⁹ and justice¹⁰ without preceding cause or beginning;¹¹ creator¹² and preserver¹³ of all things, visible and invisible.

He exists as one divine being and yet as a trinity of three distinct persons, identical, inseparable, and equal in divinity, power and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.¹⁴

God revealed Himself in the past in many and various ways, though supremely in the person of Jesus Christ.¹⁵ He continues to reveal Himself today through His creation,¹⁶ the Holy Scriptures,¹⁷ and the workings of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of people.¹⁸

He alone is worthy of our worship, honor, praise and thanksgiving, now and forevermore.¹⁹

JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ, the Word who was with God and was God,¹ is the only begotten Son of God.² He was conceived by the Holy Spirit³ and born of the Virgin Mary⁴ and is the express image of the invisible God.⁵ He combines within Himself both the divine nature of God and human nature in one perfect indivisible personality, the God-man.⁶

He lived and suffered in the world to show the Way of Life.⁷ He was crucified and died as the atonement for the sins of the whole world,⁸ making the only provision whereby people can find forgiveness of sins and cleansing from all unrighteousness.⁹

He died in our place¹⁰ and was raised the third day for our justification;¹¹ He ascended into heaven¹² and sits at the right hand of God, ever living as our only Mediator and High Priest making intercession for us,¹³ and from there will return again to receive His church unto Himself¹⁴ and to judge the world in righteousness.¹⁵

THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit, not as an impersonal principle or influence, but as a divine person,¹ and though distinct from the Father and Son, proceeding from both,² with whom He is equal in authority, power, glory, and titles.³

He is the divine agent in conviction of sin,⁴ regeneration,⁵ sanctification,⁶ and the believers' assurance.⁷

He is given as an indwelling Presence to every believer to be a teacher,⁸ guide,⁹ and source of comfort.¹⁰ He purifies the heart of the believer¹¹ and imparts at His own choosing spiritual gifts for service and the building up of the body of Christ.¹² He produces in believers the fruit of the Spirit¹³ so that they may conform to the image of Christ.

HOLY SCRIPTURE

As with early Friends, we believe that all Scripture,¹ both of the Old and New Testaments, is given by inspiration of God, without error in all that it affirms,² and is the only infallible rule of faith and practice.³ It is fully authoritative and trustworthy, fully sufficient for all believers now and always,⁴ and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.⁵

Thus, the declarations contained in it rest on the authority of God Himself,⁶ and there can be no appeal from them to any other authority whatever. They are the only divinely authorized record of the doctrines which we are bound as Christians to believe,⁷ and of the moral principles which are to regulate our behavior.⁸ Only such doctrines as are contained in the Scripture can be regarded as Articles of Faith.⁹ The Holy Spirit, who inspired the Scripture, must ever be its true interpreter.¹⁰ Whatever any person says or does which is contrary to the Scripture, though under profession of the guidance of the Spirit, must be reckoned and accounted a delusion.¹¹

The Scripture demands of believers complete obedience¹² and is made increasingly open to those who study and obey it.¹³

CREATION

We believe creation to be that free act of the triune God,¹ the Father,² Son,³ and Holy Spirit,⁴ by which in the beginning and for His own glory⁵ God made, without use of pre-existing material,⁶ the whole visible and invisible universe.⁷

SATAN

We believe in the existence of the Evil One, —that old serpent which is the Devil, and Satan,¹ the old deceiver who by his own choice rebelled against God² and became evil, who tempted our first parents to sin,³ and who through their disobedience brought about the fall of the human race,⁴ with all its attendant degeneracy, unhappiness, and misery.⁵

Satan demonstrated his evil character and purpose in his perpetual opposition to Christ by the temptations in the wilderness,⁶ and to His people and to His kingdom.⁷ But Satan's power is limited,⁸ and in God's own time he will be chained and finally cast into the lake of fire.⁹

While Satan is active in this world, Christians through the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them are able to resist Satan's temptations and have victory over him.¹⁰

HUMANITY

The Creation: We believe that by a definite act God created man and woman in His own image, holy and capable of knowing and obeying God's will, in order to glorify God and enjoy His fellowship forever.¹

The Fall: We believe that Adam and Eve fell from this original state by a voluntary act of disobedience,² thus suffering the immediate loss of a perfect relationship with God³ and making self the center of their lives. By this act, they suffered spiritual death, and sin entered the world and death by sin, so that death passed upon all.⁴

We further believe that as a consequence of the Fall, all people are born with a nature which is thoroughly sinful⁵ and not subject to the law of God, so that only through the operation of the grace of God can they repent and call upon Him. However, by God's grace infants are not under condemnation but are heirs of salvation.⁶

SALVATION

We affirm the truth of John 14:6 that salvation can only be found through faith in Jesus Christ. We believe that by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,¹ through the direct and immediate agency of the Holy Spirit,² persons may be reconciled to God and recovered from their fallen state through justification,³ regeneration,⁴ sanctification,⁵ and ultimately the resurrection of the body.⁶

Justification: In response to sinners' repentance, surrender of themselves, and sincere faith in the power and sufficiency of Jesus' atoning death and shed blood,⁷ God pardons them from past sins and declares them righteous, not for anything they have done but because of the obedience and atoning death of Christ.⁸

Regeneration: In response to sinners' repentance, surrender of themselves, and sincere faith in the power and sufficiency of Jesus' atoning death and shed blood, God also by His gracious power makes them new creatures.⁹ By the Holy Spirit they are born again into the family of God¹⁰ to a new life of love to God and to people.¹¹ Their minds are enlightened to understand His truth,¹² and their wills are renewed to do His will,¹³ as He begins to conform them to His image. The evidence of this regeneration of the believer is the fruit of the Spirit.¹⁴

Sanctification: We believe that children of God at the moment of their conversion do receive the Holy Spirit.¹⁵ As they trust in Him and obey His will, they manifest more and more of the fruit of the Spirit, conform more and more to the likeness of God, and thus are being continuously sanctified.¹⁶

It is also the will of God that believers receive the fullness of the Spirit,¹⁷ which He will graciously grant in response to their full consecration to His will and their faith in Christ's promises and in His atoning death.¹⁸ Sanctification is thus a process in which the Holy Spirit continuously disciplines the believer into paths of holiness and an act in which He cleanses the heart from an imperfect relationship and state.¹⁹

We further believe that the fullness of the Holy Spirit does not make believers incapable of choosing to sin, nor even from completely falling away from God, yet it so cleanses and empowers them as to enable them to have victory over sin, to endeavor fully to love God and people, and to witness to the living Christ.²⁰

THE CHURCH

We believe that the church is made up of all those from the apostles until now,¹ both the triumphant dead and the living,² who through response to God's gracious offer of salvation³ by repentance of their sins⁴ and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior⁵ have been born again⁶ as new creatures in Christ.⁷ This church is spiritual in nature,⁸ universal in scope,⁹ holy in character,¹⁰ and redemptive in its life and purpose.¹¹

Its purposes are to make disciples of all nations by its witness to the grace and love of God¹² and to live as a loving fellowship who build up one another in the grace and knowledge of God.¹³

The church accomplishes these purposes by its existence as particular local congregations gathered out of the world¹⁴ and as associations of congregations in larger organizations¹⁵ under the leadership and service of those called and gifted to such service.¹⁶ It worships in prayer,¹⁷ thanksgiving,¹⁸ and song;¹⁹ diligently studies the Word of God;²⁰ witnesses to and proclaims the gospel of God's Son;²¹ exercises the gifts of the Spirit;²² administers discipline;²³ and performs works of blessing and service both physical and spiritual to its members and to all in need.²⁴

LAST THINGS

We believe that upon death the mortal body returns to the dust from which it came.¹ The spirits of the righteous will experience joy and life in the presence of God, but the unrighteous will be separated from His presence in the darkness and torment of their evil.²

We believe in the literal and personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth at a time not revealed.³ At His return the righteous dead will be raised and the righteous living will be changed to their glorification in bodies like their Lord's glorious resurrected body – bodies which they possessed in earthly life but now with glorified, heavenly qualities. The unrighteous will also be resurrected for the final judgment.⁴

We believe that Christ will consummate His kingdom over all people and nations by His final triumph over Satan.⁵

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will finally judge all persons of their belief in Him as demonstrated by commitment of their lives to the way of the cross; the lost to everlasting punishment and the redeemed to eternal blessing and life.⁶

ENDNOTES

GOD

- 1Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29
- 2Psalm 90:1-2; Romans 1:20
- 3Psalm 139:7-12
- 4James 1:17; Malachi 3:6
- 5John 14:9
- 6Isaiah 6:3; I Peter 1:15-16
- 7Romans 11:33
- 8I John 4:8
- 9I Chronicles 29:11-12; Isaiah 40:26-28; Ephesians 1:18-20
- 10Psalm 89:14; Romans 3:26
- 11Psalm 93:2
- 12Genesis 1:1; Romans 11:36
- 13Psalm 104:27-30; Colossians 1:16-17
- 14Matthew 28:19; John 14:16, 18, 23; II Corinthians 13:14
- 15Hebrews 1:2; John 1:18
- 16Romans 1:19-20
- 17II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:21
- 18Acts 8:29; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6-10
- 19Galatians 1:5

JESUS CHRIST

- 1John 1:1-2; Colossians 1:16-17
- 2John 1:18; I John 4:9
- 3Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:35
- 4Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:34
- 5Colossians 1:15
- 6John 1:14; Colossians 2:9
- 7John 14:6; Romans 5:10; Ephesians 5:2; I Peter 2:21
- 8Romans 3:23-25; I John 2:2
- 9Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:13-14; Titus 2:14
- 10I Corinthians 15:4; I John 4:10
- 11Romans 4:25; I Corinthians 15:4
- 12Acts 1:9; Ephesians 4:8
- 13Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:24
- 14I Thessalonians 4:15-17
- 15Romans 2:16; II Timothy 4:1

THE HOLY SPIRIT

- 1John 14:16-17, 26; 16:13-14
- 2John 15:26; 16:7
- 3Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14
- 4John 16:8
- 5John 3:5
- 6I Corinthians 6:11
- 7Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 4:6
- 8John 14:26
- 9John 16:13
- 10Acts 9:31
- 11Acts 15:9; I John 1:9
- 12I Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:7-13
- 13Galatians 5:22-23

HOLY SCRIPTURE

- 1II Timothy 3:16
- 2Psalm 19:7-11
- 3Psalm 119:4, 105
- 4Psalm 119:89; I Peter 1:25
- 5II Timothy 3:16-17
- 6I Thessalonians 2:13
- 7Romans 1:16-17
- 8Psalm 119:9
- 9John 17:17
- 10John 14:26; 16:13; II Peter 1:21
- 11II Peter 1:20; I John 4:1
- 12Psalm 119:4; I Corinthians 4:2
- 13I Corinthians 2:4-5, 12

CREATION

- 1Genesis 1:1; Genesis 1:26-27
- 2Hebrews 1:2
- 3Colossians 1:16
- 4Job 33:4; Psalm 104:30
- 5Psalm 19:1; Colossians 1:16
- 6Hebrews 11:3
- 7Nehemiah 9:6; John 1:3

SATAN

- 1Revelation 20:2
- 2Revelation 12:7-9
- 3Genesis 3:1-6; II Corinthians 11:3
- 4Romans 5:12, 15-19
- 5Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 8:18-22
- 6Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-15
- 7II Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2
- 8Job 1:12; 2:6; I Corinthians 10:13
- 9Revelation 20:1-3, 10
- 10I Corinthians 10:13; I Peter 5:8-11; I John 4:4

HUMANITY

- 1Genesis 1:26-27, 31; 2:7; James 3:9b
- 2Genesis 3:6-24
- 3Genesis 2:17
- 4Ezekiel 18:19-20; Romans 5:12-14, 17-19; 6:23a; Psalm 51:5; 58:3
- 5Isaiah 53:6
- 6Matthew 18:3

SALVATION

- 1Galatians 1:3-5; Ephesians 2:8-9
- 2John 3:5; Romans 5:5
- 3Romans 4:25; 5:1; Titus 3:7
- 4Colossians 3:9-11; Titus 3:5
- 5II Thessalonians 2:13; I Peter 1:2
- 6I Corinthians 15:20-22 [see #191 and 192]
- 7Ephesians 1:7; I John 1:8-2:2
- 8Romans 3:23-26; II Corinthians 5:20-21
- 9II Corinthians 5:17
- 10Romans 8:14-16
- 11John 3:3; I John 4:7-21
- 12John 16:12-15; Romans 12:1-2
- 13I John 2:17
- 14Galatians 5:22-23
- 15John 3:5-8; Romans 8:14-17; I Corinthians 12:13
- 16Galatians 5:22-25
- 17Acts 2:38-39; Ephesians 3:14-19; 5:18; I Thessalonians 5:23-24
- 18Romans 8:5; 12:1-2
- 19John 17:17; Romans 6:1-2, 22-23; Acts 15:8-9
- 20II Corinthians 7:1; II Peter 2:20-22; Acts 1:8

THE CHURCH

- 1Matthew 16:18
- 2I Thessalonians 4:14-17
- 3Ephesians 2:8-9
- 4II Chronicles 7:14; Mark 1:14-15; Acts 2:38
- 5John 1:12; Romans 5:1
- 6John 3:3
- 7II Corinthians 5:17
- 8John 4:23-24; I Peter 2:5
- 9I Corinthians 12:12-27; Hebrews 12:22-24
- 10Psalm 24:3-4; Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:7-8
- 11Luke 24:46-48
- 12Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8
- 13Acts 2:41-47; Ephesians 4:11-16
- 14I Corinthians 1:2; Acts 11:22; I Thessalonians 1:1
- 15Romans 16:4, 16; I Corinthians 16:19; II Corinthians 8:1; Galatians 1:2, 22-23
- 16Ephesians 4:11-13; Hebrews 13:17
- 17Isaiah 56:7; Luke 19:45-46; I Thessalonians 5:17; James 5:13-16
- 18Psalm 100:1-4; Philippians 4:6; I Thessalonians 5:18
- 19Psalm 100:2; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16
- 20Acts 17:10-11; Colossians 3:16; I Peter 2:2-3
- 21Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8
- 22I Corinthians 12:7-11; Ephesians 4:11-13; II Timothy 1:6
- 23Matthew 18:15-17; II Corinthians 2:5-8; Galatians 6:1
- 24Matthew 25:34-40; John 13:12-17

LAST THINGS

- 1Genesis 3:19; Psalm 103:14-16; Ecclesiastes 12:6-7
- 2Luke 16:19-31; 23:39-43
- 3Matthew 24:42-44; John 14:3; I Thessalonians 4:15-18
- 4Romans 6:5; Philippians 3:21; John 5:28-29; Revelation 21:1-8
- 5I Corinthians 15:20-26; Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 20:10-15
- 6Matthew 25:31-46; II Corinthians 5:10