

RiverStone Church Statement of Faith

I. ARTICLE - Statement of Faith

Section 1.01 **God:** We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each Person possesses distinct personal attributes, but without division of essence. He is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. He is the Creator, Sustainer, and Governor of everything that has been made. (Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20:2-3; Isaiah 43:1,7,21; Revelation 4:11; 5:9-10)

- (a) *God the Father:* We believe that God the Father reigns with the providential care over His universe and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. (Genesis 1:1; Exodus 3:14; 15:1-20; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6, Ephesians 4:4-6)
- (b) *God the Son:* We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory. (Luke 1:34-35; John 1:1,14; 3:16-18; 5:17-30,36-47; Acts 1:9-11; 2:22-36)
- (c) *God the Holy Spirit:* We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. We believe in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in those who have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. He inspired the Holy Scriptures and enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ, convicts men of sin, calls men to repentance, cultivates Christian character, makes intercession for us, and seals the believer until the day of redemption.

Section 1.02 **The Holy Scriptures:** We accept the Bible, including the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, as the written Word of God. The Bible is the only essential and infallible record of God's self-disclosure to mankind. It leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Being given by God, the Scriptures are both fully and verbally inspired by God. Therefore, as originally given, the Bible is free of error in all it teaches. Each book is to be interpreted according to its context and purpose and in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks through it in living power. All believers are exhorted to study the Scriptures and diligently apply them to their lives. The Scriptures are the authoritative and normative rule and guide of all Christian life, practice, and doctrine. They are totally sufficient and must not to be added to, superseded, or changed by later tradition, extra-biblical revelation, or worldly wisdom. Every doctrinal formulation, whether of creed, confession, or theology must be put to the test of the full counsel of God in Holy Scripture. (Psalm 119:160; John 16:13; 2 Timothy 3:14-17)

Section 1.03 **Mankind:** God made man - male and female - in His own image, as the crown of creation, that man might have fellowship with Him. Tempted by Satan, man

rebelled against God. Being estranged from his Maker, yet responsible to Him, he became subject to divine wrath, inwardly depraved and apart from a special work of grace, utterly incapable of returning to God. This depravity is radical and pervasive. It extends to his mind, will and affections. Unregenerate man lives under the dominion of sin and Satan. He is at enmity with God, hostile toward God, and hateful of God. Fallen, sinful people, whatever their character or attainments, are lost and without hope apart from salvation in Christ. (Genesis 1:26-30; 3:1-24; Romans 1:19-32; 3:23; 1 Corinthians 6:20; Revelation 22:3-5)

Section 1.04 Salvation: Salvation, the free gift of God, is provided by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Christ alone, for the glory of God alone. Anyone turning from sin in repentance and looking to Christ and His substitutionary death receives the gift of eternal life and is declared righteous by God as a free gift. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him. He is justified and fully accepted by God. Through Christ's atonement for sin an individual is reconciled to God as Father and becomes His child. The believer is forgiven the debt of his sin and via the miracle of regeneration liberated from the law of sin and death into the freedom of God's Spirit. (Romans 5:8,12-21; 8:1-11; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-9; James 2:18-26)

Section 1.05 Spirit Baptism: The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the promise of the Father, sent by Jesus after His Ascension to empower the Church to preach the Gospel throughout the whole earth and that an outward visible sign of Spirit baptism is speaking in tongues. Being indwelt by the Spirit and being baptized in the Spirit are theologically distinct experiences. The Holy Spirit desires to fill each believer continually with increased power for Christian life and witness, and imparts His supernatural gifts for the edification of the Body and for various works of ministry in the world. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the church of the first-century are available today, are vital for the mission of the church, and are to be earnestly desired and practiced. These gifts always operate in harmony with the Scriptures and should never be used in violation of Biblical parameters.

With the baptism in the Holy Spirit come such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit, a deepened reverence for God, an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work, and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost. (Hebrews 2:4; Romans 1:11, 12 :4-8; Ephesians 4:16; I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:6-7; I Corinthians 12:1-31, 14:1-40; I Peter 4:10, Joel 2:28-29; Matthew 3:11; Mark 16:17; Acts 1:5,2:1-4, 17, 38-39, 8:14-17, 10:38, 44-47, 11:15-17, 19:1-6).

Section 1.06 Sanctification: The Holy Spirit is the active agent in our sanctification and seeks to produce His fruit in us as our minds are renewed and we are conformed to the image of Christ. As we are led by the Spirit, we grow in the knowledge of the Lord, freely keeping His commandments and endeavoring to so live in the world that all people may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. All believers are exhorted to persevere in the faith knowing they will have to give an account to God for their every thought, word and deed. The spiritual disciplines, especially Bible study, prayer, worship and confession, are a vital means of grace in this regard. Nevertheless,

the believer's ultimate confidence to persevere is based in the sure promise of God to preserve His people until the end. (Romans 5:2; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 13:12)

Section 1.07 Divine Healing: We believe that divine healing is provided for the believer in the atonement. Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures in Isaiah 53:4 which states, "He Himself took our infirmities and carries away our diseases." In addition, the Apostle James encourages the church that if there is anyone within the Body of Christ who is sick, they "must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick..." (James 5:14-15). While God chooses the time and place of healing, believers are encouraged to pray and expect healing in this present age.

Section 1.08 The Resurrection: We believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead after three days. We believe in the resurrection of the saved and the lost; those who are saved to the resurrection of life, and those who are lost to the resurrection of condemnation. (Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-20; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-31; Revelation 20:11-15)

Section 1.09 The Church: God by His Word and Spirit creates the Church, calling sinful men out of the whole human race into the fellowship of Christ's Body. By the same Word and Spirit, He guides and preserves that new redeemed humanity. The Church is not a religious institution or denomination. Rather, the Church universal is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel. The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It also exists to serve Him by faithfully doing His will in the earth. This involves a commitment to see the gospel preached and churches planted in the entire world for a testimony. The ultimate mission of the Church is the making of disciples through the preaching of the gospel. When God transforms human nature, this then becomes the chief means of society's transformation. Upon conversion, newly redeemed men and women are added to a local church in which they devote themselves to teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper and prayer.

All members of the Church universal are to be a vital and committed part of a local church. In this context they are called to walk out the New Covenant as the people of God and demonstrate the reality of the kingdom of God. The ascended Christ has given gift ministries to the church (including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) for the equipping of Christ's body that it might mature and grow. Through the gift ministries all members of the Church are to be nurtured and equipped for the work of ministry. In the context of the local church, God's people receive pastoral care and leadership and the opportunity to employ their God-given gifts in His service in relation to one another and to the world. (Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 4:3)

Section 1.10 Last Things: God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will

receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord. (Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13).