

# Trinity Bible Church Edwardsburg

## Statement of Faith

### OUR CORE DOCTRINE

#### **The Scriptures**

We believe the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments to be the full record of God's self-disclosure to mankind. Different men, while writing according to their own styles and personalities, were supernaturally moved along by the Holy Spirit to record God's very words, inerrant in the original writings. Therefore, those applying themselves to study its literal, historical-grammatical context can accurately understand God's Word. Scripture is fully trustworthy as our final and sufficient authority for all of life (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

#### **The Triune God**

We believe in the one living and true God, eternally (John 17:3) existing in perfect unity as three equally and fully divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20). Each member of the Godhead, while executing distinct but complementary roles in redemptive history, has precisely the same nature, attributes, and being, and is equally worthy of the same glory and honor and obedience (John 1:1-4; Acts 5:3-4).

#### **God the Father**

We believe God the Father created all things for His glory according to His own will (Revelation 4:11), through His Son, Jesus Christ. He upholds all things by the Word of His power and grace, exercising sovereign headship over all creation, providence, and redemption (Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3).

#### **God the Son**

We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son, moved by love in accordance with the will of the Father, took on human flesh (John 1:1, 14, 18). Conceived through the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, He was born of the virgin Mary. He, being fully God and fully man (John 14:8-9), lived a sinless life and sacrificially shed His blood and died on the cross in our place, accomplishing redemption for all who place their faith in Him. He arose visibly and bodily from the dead three days later and ascended into heaven, where, at the Father's right hand, He is now Head of His Body the Church, the only Savior and Mediator between God and man, and will return to earth in power and glory to consummate His redemptive mission (1 Timothy 3:16).

#### **God the Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ during this age. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He draws the unredeemed to repentance and faith, and at salvation imparts new spiritual life to the believer, bringing that person into union with Christ and the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit sanctifies, seals, fills, guides, instructs, comforts, equips, empowers, permanently indwells at salvation, and bestows spiritual gifts to the believer for Christ-like living and service (John 16:8; 13:15; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 1:22; 4:11-12; Romans 8:9-17; 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 12:4-5, 11-13, 19; Galatians 5:25; Hebrews 2:1-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12).

#### **Mankind**

We believe that God created mankind—male and female—in His own image and likeness, free of sin, to glorify Himself and enjoy His fellowship. Tempted by Satan, but in the sovereign plan of God, man freely chose to disobey God, bringing sin, death and condemnation to all mankind. All human beings, therefore, are totally depraved by nature and by choice. Alienated from God without defense or excuse, and subject to God's righteous wrath, all of mankind is in desperate need of the Savior (Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 3:10-19; Romans 1:18, 32).

### **Salvation**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as the substitutionary atonement in our place, and that salvation is found in none other than Jesus Christ. Before Creation, God chose those who would be saved and granted this unearned grace solely based on His sovereign good pleasure. Jesus Christ's death on the cross was the sole and complete payment for sins, fully satisfying God's righteous wrath, for each person who turns from sin in repentance and places their faith in Christ alone by grace alone. At salvation, each person is made a new creation by the Holy Spirit, declared righteous before God, and secured as an adopted child of God forever. Genuine faith continues in obedience and love for Jesus Christ with a life eager to glorify God and persevere to the end (Romans 8:37-39; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

### **The Church**

We believe that upon placing one's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, the believer becomes part of the Body of Christ, the one universal Church, of which Jesus Christ is the Head. The Scriptures command believers to gather locally in order to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, fellowship, the ordinances of baptism and communion, service to the local body through the development and use of talents and spiritual gifts, and outreach to the world to make disciples (Ephesians 1:22-23; Acts 2:42-46; 1 Corinthians 14:26; Matthew 28:18-20). Wherever God's people meet regularly in obedience to this command, there is the local expression of the Church under the watchful care of a plurality of elders. A church's members are to work together in love and unity, intent on the ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ (Ephesians 4:16).

### **The Family**

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church, and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Matthew 19:4-6; Prov. 5:15-20; Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 5:31-32; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; I Cor. 7:1-16; Heb. 13:4).

Men and women are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image (Gen. 1:27; 9:6; Gal. 3:28; James 3:9). While the fall distorts God's design for gender (Gen. 3: 16-19), Jesus makes men and women fellow heirs of God's eternal grace (1 Peter 3:7) who differ in complementary and mutually beneficial ways. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation. (Eph. 5:22-33; I Peter 3:1-7; Psalm 127; 128; Prov. 12:4; 18:22; 24:3; 31:10-31; Titus 2:3-5)

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents. (Eph. 6:1-4; Deut. 6:4-9; Col. 3:18-21; Exodus 20:12; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 139:13-16; Prov. 1:8; 6:20-22; 13:24; 17:6; 22:6,15; 23:13-14)

### **Missions**

We believe it is the aim, duty, and privilege of every believer and local church fellowship to glorify God by responding as active participants in Jesus Christ's Great Commission to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). We believe the primary focus and priority of this call is centered on efforts that establish,

strengthen, and reproduce biblically-based churches, which will then plant churches that plant churches for future generations and God's glory. (Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.)

### **Things to Come**

We believe in and expectantly await the glorious, visible, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The blessed hope of His return has vital bearing on the personal life, service, and mission of the believer (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost. The lost will be raised to judgment and experience eternal wrath in hell. The saved will be raised to eternal joy in the new heaven and new earth in the manifested presence of God (Acts 1:3, 9; Hebrews 7:25-26).

## **WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT**

The statements below are intended to clarify some aspects of our doctrinal statement.

### **Assimilation and Church Membership**

We believe in the importance of serving the body of Christ by offering clear paths for people to develop healthy and growing relationships with others in the church body. We value an intentional plan to help every interested person enjoy godly relationships in the church. Church membership is a byproduct of people who are growing in Christ and who grasp the importance of serving the Lord by using their gifts to serve others in the local church.

### **Baptism and Communion**

Baptism and communion are the two ordinances required in the church. We believe that Christian baptism by immersion in water is a public identification with Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Although baptism is not required for salvation, it is commanded of all believers and is for believers only (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:38, 41; Acts 18:8). Scripture shows that a person was baptized after personally receiving forgiveness of sin through accepting Jesus Christ. The waters of baptism are a symbol of our death, burial, and resurrection to newness of life that happens when we become new creations in Christ (Colossians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:1-4).

Communion is the commemoration by believers of Christ's death, and a reminder—through the bread and the juice—of the Savior's body and shed blood given for us. Communion is to be a time of confession of our sin and should be preceded by careful self-examination according to Acts 4:13; Romans 6:3-6; 1 Corinthians 11:20-29.

### **Spiritual Gifts**

The Holy Spirit empowers every believer with spiritual gifts for the purpose of building up the church. (1 Peter 4:10-11, 1 Corinthians 12:4-7,12)

Much debate surrounds the question of whether certain gifts we read about in the New Testament are still in operation today. We see nothing in scripture that would convince us these gifts have ceased. We believe the spiritual gifts we see on display in the New Testament are still active today in varying degrees.

Unfortunately, we live in an age where spiritual gifts have been abused. When spiritual gifts are not exercised biblically, the church can drift into extreme forms of subjective personal experience that detract from the clarity of the gospel. For this reason, all expressions of spiritual gifts exercised in meetings of Trinity Bible Church are to be characterized by clarity and order.

We also recognize that spiritual gifts are often neglected in the church. We encourage every believer to use their Spirit-given gifts for the upbuilding, encouragement, and consolation of others in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 14:3) while recognizing the God-given role of spiritual leaders to ensure that all things are done decently and in order. (1 Corinthians 14:40)

By God's grace, the application of our various spiritual gifts will not be a source of division. Rather, we will be a church that loves one another as we experience the power of the Holy Spirit on display in people using their spiritual gifts to make disciples to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 13:1-2)

### **Creation, Evolution, and God's Sovereignty**

We believe God created the universe and that, before He created the universe, nothing except God existed (Genesis 1; Exodus 31:17; Psalm 33:6-9; Acts 17:24; Hebrews 11:3; Colossians 1:16).

God chose to create the universe and all that is in it to reveal His glory, divine nature, eternal power, infinite wisdom, and supreme authority (Isaiah 43:7; Psalm 19:1-2; Jeremiah 10:12; Romans 1:20; Revelation 4:11).

We believe that all people are descendants of Adam and Eve, whom God created personally and individually and as complete human beings (Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:7; Genesis 2:21-22; 1 Corinthians 11:8-9). The fall of Adam and Eve infected all people with sin and death, but the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ gives the opportunity to receive God's gift of eternal life (Romans 5:18-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22).

God rules over His creation, upholds the Universe by the word of His power, cares about, and is involved in the lives of individual people (Job 12:10; Acts 17:25; Acts 25:28; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3,13; Ephesians 4:6).

### **Eternal Security of the Believer**

It is God's divine decision to save a person, and it is God's kindness, forbearance, and patience that lead that person to repentance (Romans 2:4). All glory for the salvation and security of every believer belongs to God alone (Romans 3:21-31; Ephesians 1:7-9; Ephesians 2:8-9, Jude 1:24-25). We believe that everyone who is born again by the Spirit through Jesus Christ is eternally assured of salvation from the moment of conversion. This assurance relies on God's decisive grace rather than on the works of the Christian. Obedience, good works, and fruit-bearing do not earn or retain the believer's salvation but rather indicate the reality of the person's love of Christ and profession of faith (Luke 6:46; John 14:21; James 2:17-18). Eternal security in salvation relies on the Lord's guarantee of each believer's adoption as His son or daughter (Galatians 4:4-7), and His seal of the believer by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14), and the conviction that God gives the Holy Spirit to each believer (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). A person who professes genuine faith in Christ immediately becomes His possession (Luke 23:42-43; Acts 2:40-41; Acts 16: 30-34; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20), and nothing can snatch that person out of His hands (John 10:27-29). Having been bought with the price of Jesus Christ's crucifixion as complete payment for sin, Christians are not their own. They are Christ's possession (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). This assurance is absolutely certain, reserved in heaven, protected by God's unlimited power (1 Peter 1:4-5).

### **Process of Sanctification and Maturity**

Mature disciples will experience significant growth in personal sanctification and, therefore, will experience a closer personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and will become "complete in Christ" (Colossians 1:28). We are committed to multiplying the godly characteristics of leaders' lives into others (2 Timothy 2:2). This multiplication of ministry is key to the healthy growth of the church. We believe the disciples of Jesus Christ should minister to one another in the local church, rather than one or a small number of professional pastors bearing total responsibility to care for the entire congregation. God has given spiritual gifts to all of His people to provide mutual ministry in the context of the healthy and strong local church (Ephesians 4:11-12).

### **Spiritual Warfare**

Satan and his demonic servants viciously oppose the work God performs in and through His people (1 Peter 5:8; Genesis 3:1-7; Ephesians 6:12). God, who by His nature is infinitely more powerful than Satan, in due time will have complete and total victory over Satan (1 John 4:4; Revelation 20:1-10).

Although it is appropriate to pray in Jesus' name for protection against demonic activity, the Scriptures do not instruct the Christian to "bind Satan in Jesus' name." Rather, the Scriptures instruct the Christian to combat Satan by:

- Humbly drawing near to God, knowing that He will give grace, mercy, and strength—2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Hebrews 4:15-16; James 4:8; 1 Peter 5:6-10.
- Resisting Satan's temptations—James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9.
- Rightly applying the truth of the Scriptures—Matthew 4:1-11; John 8:44; Ephesians 4:24-27.
- Forgiving offenses—2 Corinthians 2:10-11.
- Putting on the armor of God's truth, righteousness, readiness to share the Gospel, faith, salvation, and prayer—Ephesians 6:11-20.
- Demonstrating faithfulness to the Lord by enduring trials—Revelation 2:10; Revelation 2:13; Revelation 3:9-10.

### **Sufficiency of Scripture**

We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and that they contain all the words of God that we need in order to completely trust and obey Him. The Scriptures are inerrant in their original writings (Psalm 119:97-104; Psalm 119:160; Matthew 5:18; John 5:46-47; John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:15-16), and are infallible in their instruction (Proverbs 6:32; 2 Peter 1:19), eternal in duration (Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:23-25); the final authority and the standard for faith and practice (Matthew 4:4; Psalm 119); and sufficient for counsel in every issue of life (Psalm 19:7-14; 2 Timothy 3:16).

### **Roles of Men and Women in the Church**

We celebrate the equal, yet complementary roles of men and women. Scripture clearly teaches God has made men and women equal, but he has not made them the same. God has given men and women distinct roles in the church and in the home. (Genesis 1:27; Galatians 3:28)

The Scriptures state that a plurality of qualified men are called to serve in the office of Elder. (1 Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:6-9) Women are not to serve in positions in which they exercise authority over men or in which they teach doctrine to men. (1 Timothy 2:12) Qualified women are encouraged to serve in every leadership position in the church that is not specifically reserved for men in the scripture.

Men are called by God to show honor and respect to all women and exercise loving, servant leadership in the home and church. (1 Peter 3:7; Eph. 5:22-33)

### **Worship**

The chief purpose of mankind is to glorify God by loving Him with the entire heart, soul, mind and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5; Isaiah 43:7; Matthew 22:37). All believing men, women and children are to glorify God and thus fulfill the purpose of their existence. Our spiritual act of worship is to offer every aspect of our lives to God and allow Him to transform us (Romans 12:1-2). When we worship God corporately we worship Him through adoration (Psalm 95:6), praise (Psalm 99:5), prayer (Daniel 6:10-11; James 5:16), thanksgiving (Nehemiah 12:46), confession (1 John 1:8-10), reading/listening to God's Word (1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17) and a complete yielding to Him (Romans 12:1). Worship declares His worth, pays Him homage and celebrates Him in a life of devotion. We seek to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth (Exodus 15:1-21; 2 Samuel 6:14-16; Psalm 5:7; John 4:23-24; Revelation 4:11; 5:12).

### **Peacemaking**

We are committed to responding to conflict in the church with biblical peacemaking principles. God calls his people to make every effort to live at peace with others and maintain unity in the body of Christ (Heb. 12:14; Rom. 12:18; 14:19; Eph. 4:3; Col. 3:15). Scripture tells us that our love for one another (or lack thereof) reflects our love for God (Matt. 25:31-46; 1 Cor. 13:1-7; Phil. 2:1-8; 1 Jn. 4:20-21). Jesus told us to reconcile with everyone we have offended before worshipping God (Matt. 5:23-24), and we should forgive others as He has forgiven us (Matt. 6:12-15; 18:21-35).

Anyone in conflict with another believer should first determine if the offense can be overlooked (Prov. 19:11; I Peter 4:8). Secondly, they should prayerfully examine themselves to remove any “logs” from their own eyes (Matt. 7:1-5). Finally, they should follow Christ’s instructions for handling conflict in Matthew 18:15-20. The offended person should first go to the offender alone. If he does not listen, then bring 1-2 others. If he still does not listen, then bring it to the leaders in the church. The church leaders are then responsible to decide how to handle the situation, always with the goal of reconciliation and restoration.

### **FINAL AUTHORITY FOR MATTERS OF BELIEF AND CONDUCT**

The doctrinal statement does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe.