

Trinity Life Church's Doctrine

In essential beliefs, we have unity

"There is one Body, and one Spirit ... there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of us all" (Ephesians 4:4-6)

In non-essential beliefs, we have liberty

"Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters ... Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his master he stands or falls ... So then each of us will give an account of himself to God ... So whatever you believe about these things, keep between you and God."
(Romans 14:1,4,12,22)

In all beliefs, we have charity

"... If I hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but also the very secrets of God, and if I have the faith that can move mountains, but have no love, I amount to nothing at all." (1 Corinthians 13:2)

In addition to the statement below, we affirm the historic teachings of Christian orthodoxy as it is confessed in the Apostle's Creed and Nicene Creed.

(Note: Church membership must agree with all bold print.)

THE GOSPEL

We believe the gospel is the good news that the triune God has poured out his grace in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that through his work we might have peace with God. Every person is lost in sin apart from Christ and in need of a Savior. Christ died in the place of sinners, absorbing the wages of sin, so that those who entrust themselves to him also die with him to the power, penalty, and (eventually) practice of sin. Christ was raised the firstborn of a renewed and restored creation, so that those whom the Spirit unites to him in faith are raised up and created a new humanity in him. One with Christ and made alive in him, who is the only ground of salvation, sinners are reconciled with God – justified, adopted, sanctified, preserved and eventually glorified. The Gospel is personal in its content and cosmic in its scope; together with renewed humanity, the Gospel is God's promise to one day renew all of creation.

(John 1:12, 3:16; Acts 4:12, 13:38-39, Romans 3:23-24, 5:1, 6:23; Ephesians 1:3-14, 2:8-10, 15; Titus 3:5, 1 John 2:2)

THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, infallible and without error in the original manuscripts, written by men under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The Bible, comprised of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is Holy Scripture, accessible and sufficient for understanding and believing the message of salvation it discloses, and is absolutely trustworthy with regard to everything it communicates. The Bible is to be interpreted in a normal and literal way. This means that history, grammar, and context are the guidelines for proper interpretation. Ultimately, the criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.

(Mark 13:31; John 5:39, 8:31-32; 20:31; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

THE TRIUNE GOD

We believe in only one living and true God, eternally existing in three equal persons - God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three are identical in essence, equal in power and glory, and possess precisely the same attributes. However, they are distinct in office and activity. God is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being. He is the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. To Him we owe the highest love, admiration and obedience.

(Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2)

GOD THE FATHER

We believe God the Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of human history according to His purpose and grace. In His nature He is, among other things, completely holy, all-powerful, all-knowing, omnipresent, eternal, transcendent, immutable, self-sufficient, self-existent, wrathful, just, gracious, good, merciful and loving. He is totally sovereign in all that has or shall come to pass. This in no way causes Him to be the author and approver of sin, or to abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures. He is the begetter and sender of His only Son, Jesus Christ. As a good Father, He cares for, provides for, nourishes, disciplines and sustains His Church.

(Psalm 139:1-18, 145:8-9; Isaiah 40:18-31; Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 3:17, 6:30-32; John 3:16; Acts 17:2; Romans 1:18, 3:26, 11:33-36; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 1:3-6; Hebrews 12:5, 13; 1 John 1:5)

GOD THE SON

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God who became human for us and our salvation, the only Mediator between God and humanity born of the virgin Mary, the Son of David and servant of the house of Israel, one person with two natures, truly God and truly man, in order that He might reveal God to man and redeem sinful man. He lived a fully human life, having entered into the disorder and brokenness of fallen existence, yet without sin, and in his words, deeds, attitude, and suffering embodied the free and loving communication of God's own light (truth) and life (salvation). He accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice. Our redemption and salvation is guaranteed by His literal, bodily resurrection from the dead. The Lord Jesus Christ is now in heaven, exalted at the right hand of God the Father, where, as High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of intercession and advocacy for His people. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission.

(John 3:17; Romans 1:3, 3:23-25, 4:52, 15:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Hebrews 1:3, 3:1, 7:23-25; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 2:1-2)

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that God, the Holy Spirit, is that person of the trinity who illuminates the hearts of men to the truth of God, unites believers to Christ, regenerating them and making them new creatures. The Spirit indwells those whom he makes alive with Christ, incorporates them into the body of Christ, and conforms them to the image of Christ so that they may glorify him as they grow in knowledge, wisdom, and love into Christ-likeness. He indwells them permanently and seals them unto the day of redemption. As they are yielded to Him, He overcomes the power of the sin nature, beautifies their character with the fruit of the Spirit, and empowers them for service to God, in the church and for the good of the world. He also helps believers to pray, interceding for them in time of need.

The Holy Spirit is displayed through different spiritual gifts to build up the church, reveal the truth of the resurrection, and prove the gospel's power. We believe that all of the spiritual gifts listed in the Bible are active today and that Scripture commands all believers to earnestly desire the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts should operate in accordance with biblical guidelines.

(John 3:8, 7:37-39, 14:12, 16:1-17, 16:7-11; Romans 1:11, 8:1-13, 26-27, 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, 14:1-40; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:13-16, 5:18, 2 Timothy 1:5-16, 4:14; Hebrews 2:4; 1 Peter 4:10)

CREATION & HUMANITY

We believe that all things in heaven and on earth were created by God and exist by His power and for His glory. We believe that humankind was created innocent, and in the image and likeness of God. All humanity bears in the image of the Triune God. Because of this, all human life is precious and has worth. Every human being, born and unborn, possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love. We affirm that life begins at conception.

God created man and woman equally in the image of God, fully complementing each other in marriage and in the life of the Church. Therefore, marriage is understood as being one man united to one woman, and human sexual expression is understood as a gift reserved for marriage. In marriage, by God's good design, men and women are united as one - for the glory of God and the flourishing of creation - as they seek to fulfill the creation mandate. In the life of the Church, by God's good design, God calls men and women to work and worship together as they seek to fulfill the Great Commission and live according to the Great Commandment.

God created all people in his own image and as one human race. Even though society may divide people groups by natural categories (e.g. race), there ultimately exists no such thing as "others;" only human beings bearing the image of their Creator. Therefore we reject any and all forms of hierarchies, whether personal or systemic, that place one type of people in the place of superiority over another type of people. Sin propels people towards favoring others who are more like them and diminishing the value of people who are not. Christ came to heal such sin, to tear down barriers and bridge the divide between people whether that be based upon race, ethnicity, socio-economic standing or age. God's people are to proclaim the gospel through action by working towards bringing about reconciliation and pursuing Christ in unity.

(Genesis 1:1,27-28, 2:15, 18-25; Exodus 21:22-24; Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:1-4; Matt. 19:4-6; Acts 17:26; 2 Corinthians 5:16-17; Ephesians 2:14-18, 5:22-33; Colossians 1:16-17, Revelation 7:9-12)

THE FALL

We believe that man was originally created innocent and in the image and likeness of God, but that he sinned, bringing both physical and spiritual death to himself and to his posterity. As a result, all humanity is alienated from God and all creation groans under the weight of sin, death, and brokenness. The supreme need of all humanity is to be reconciled to the God under whose just and holy wrath we stand; the only hope of all humanity is the undeserved love

of this same God, who alone can rescue us and restore us and all of creation to himself through the sacrifice of His Son and the power of His Spirit.

(Genesis 1:27, 2:17, 3:19; Romans 3:10-12, 5:12, 17-19)

PERSONAL SALVATION

We believe that every person is lost in sin apart from Christ and in need of a Savior. Jesus Christ died as a full and sufficient payment for the sins of the world, and as our substitute. Christ's shed blood is the only provision by which an individual may be delivered from the wrath of God. We believe that salvation is a gift of God and is received by man only through personal faith in Jesus Christ. We believe that all true believers, once saved, are kept secure in Christ forever. True faith is more than mental assent. It involves trust, and is evidenced by repentance, newness of life (regeneration), and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We believe that man is justified by grace through faith alone, apart from human merit, works, or ceremonies.

(John 1:12, 3:16, 36, 6:37, 10:27-30; Acts 4:12, 13:38-39, Romans 3:23-24, 6:23, 8:1, 29-30; Ephesians 1:3-14, 2:8-10; Titus 3:5, Philippians 1:6; 1 John 2:2, 5:13)

SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification is positional, progressive, and ultimate. Positionally, it is already complete, since the believer is in Christ and is set apart to God as Christ is set apart to God. Since the believer retains his sinful nature, however, there is need for progressive sanctification (or spiritual growth) whereby the Christian matures in grace by the power of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, the process of sanctification will be completed when the child of God is brought into fullness in the presence of Christ at His return.

We believe it is through the Spirit's enlivening power that we live in imitation of Christ as his disciples, individually and corporately. We are called to offer our bodies as spiritual sacrifices in right worship to God and service to the world through works of love, compassion for the poor, and justice for the oppressed. In doing so we are always, everywhere and to everyone called to bear wise witness to the way, truth, and life of Jesus Christ.

(John 17:17; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:18, 5:17; Ephesians 5:25-27; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 10:10, 14; 1 John 3:2-3)

THE CHURCH

We believe that the universal church, the Body and Bride of Christ, is made up of all true believers of this age. We believe that the church began at Pentecost and that a believer is placed into the church by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit. We believe that the local, visible church is an assembly of professing believers in Jesus Christ who are voluntarily joined together in one locality for the purpose of worship, study of the Word of God, observance of the ordinances, Christian fellowship, and prayer, thereby to be equipped for Christian service and evangelism. Every believer is a servant for the sake of the gospel and for the building up of the church. There is no justification for a clergy and laity distinction.

According to the New Testament, we believe that the local church is to be led by a team of godly male servant leaders (elders) who willingly take responsibility before the Lord for leading, feeding, caring for and overseeing the church. The Bible tasks those leaders with upholding the doctrine, discipleship and direction of the local body. The qualifications for such an office have to do with character qualities as they relate to the community at large, the church, family, self, and God. Their leadership is to be chiefly characterized by the humility of servanthood rather than acting as a lord, ruler or boss over those placed in the church's care. The New Testament always speaks of a plurality of elders as opposed to the church being governed by one leader. The lead pastor serves as an elder, one among the many, with no higher rank than the rest of the elders. All elders are under-shepherds of Jesus Christ. Each elder stands as an equal in authority with the others so as to provide accountability and prevention against overreaches of power, greed, self-interest or any form of authoritarianism.

(Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:1-4, 42-47, 11:16-17; Romans 11; 1 Corinthians 10:32, 12:12-13; Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:11-16, 5:25-27; 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 2:5-9, 5:1-5)

BAPTISM & THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordained by the Lord Jesus himself. Together they are simultaneously God's pledge to us, divinely ordained means of grace, our public vows of submission to the once crucified and now resurrected Christ, and anticipations of his return and of the consummation of all things. They are tangible expressions of the gospel insofar as they vividly depict our dying, rising, and incorporation into Jesus' body, truly presenting Christ and the reconciliation He achieved on the cross. Baptism and the Lord's Supper strengthen the faithful by visibly recalling, proclaiming, and sealing the gracious promise of forgiveness of sins and communion with God and one another through the peace-making blood of Christ.

We believe Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience publicly announcing and symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's

death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It also signifies our commitment and inclusion in Christ's body, the church, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the solemn celebration of Christ's completed work on the cross. The Lord's Supper looks back in remembrance at Christ's death and resurrection, and it looks forward with hope to his promised return. As believers partake of the bread and wine in obedience to the Scriptures, they commemorate and participate in their union with Christ. As such the Supper should be observed regularly, corporately, joyfully, and with self-examination.

(Matthew 26:26-29, Acts 8:36-38, Romans 6:3-5, 1 Corinthians 11:20-34, Colossians 1:20)

COMMON GRACE

We believe that God has bestowed common grace on all people, by which He dispenses innumerable blessings on Christians and non-Christians alike, regardless of their moral standing before him. Music, art, creativity, medicine, food, drink, physical health, marriage and family, scientific studies, government, education, and nonprofit organizations can all serve as evidences of God's common grace on humanity. Furthermore, through the common grace of God, every human has the potential to do good works and perform wonderful acts of service that directly benefit society. In no way does the common grace of God, or the good that comes from it, produce any right or moral standing before God; nor does common grace cover any of our sin. We are wholly unable to save ourselves or to contribute in any way toward our acceptance with God. Therefore, common grace exists, foremost, for the glory of God and the good of humanity.

(Genesis 39:5; Psalm 145:9, 15-16; Ezekiel 33:11; Matthew 5:44-45; Acts 14:16-17; Romans 1:19-21, 2:14-15; 13:1-7; I Timothy 2:1-4, 4:10)

ANGELS & SATAN

We believe that angels are powerful spiritual beings who were created in a sinless state to glorify God and do his work. They presently exist in both fallen (Satan and his demons) and not fallen (angels) states. We believe that God's angels aid his Church and do his work. Satan and his demons seek to rob God of glory and deceive and destroy God's Church. Satan and his demons' defeat began at Christ's resurrection and ascension, and will be brought to completion and fullness when Christ returns.

(Genesis 3:1-19; Isaiah 14:12-14; Daniel 10:12-14; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 1:26-28; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:11-12; Hebrews 1:13-14, 2:14; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 2:4, 1 John 5:19; Revelation 7:11-12, 18:1, 2:10)

LAST THINGS

We believe that in God's own time and way, Jesus will return to earth one final time to fully lift the curse of sin off of the earth and consummate God's purpose for the whole cosmos through his victory over death, the devil and all dark forces. Heaven will come down to earth, God will make his dwelling among the saved and He will make all things new. There will be no more pain, sorrow, sin, or death. He will judge the world, giving up any who persist in unbelief to an everlasting fate apart from him, where his life and light are no more. Yet He will prepare his people as a bride for the marriage supper of the Lamb, giving rest to restless hearts and life to glorified bodies as they enjoy deep fellowship with their Savior and delight in the new heaven and the new earth. There they shall reign with him and see him face to face, forever fascinated in wonder, love, and praise.

(Matthew 16:27; Acts 1:11, 3:20-21; I Corinthians 13:12, 15:12-26, 51-57; Philippians 3:20-21; I Thessalonians 4:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; 2 Timothy 2:12, 4:1; Titus 2:13; Revelation 19:7-9, 20:1-15, 22:1-20)