

ELDER AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

for

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

1. The Bible

- 1.1 The Bible is God's written revelation to man of all that is necessary for life and salvation. *Psalms 19:7-9; Matthew 4:4; Romans 1:16; Romans 10:17; Hebrews 1:1-3*
- 1.2 By inspiration of God, every word of the Bible was transmitted through human authors by the Holy Spirit, making it true and without error in the original manuscripts of the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament. *Proverbs 30:5; John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21*
- 1.3 The Bible is the standard of all truth, and is the absolute, sole, sufficient authority in all matters of Christian doctrine and practical Christian living. In matters not specifically addressed by the Bible, what is true and right can be determined by the collective wisdom of its teaching. *Psalms 119:9-11; Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:1-4*
- 1.4 By the Holy Spirit's witness we believe the Bible to be the true and living Word of God. By the Spirit we also receive illumination for understanding God's truth, so that no Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation. As God's revelation, the Bible can be understood and is without contradiction, the Bible itself being the greatest tool for interpreting the Bible. *John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:12-16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20*
- 1.5 We affirm the historical Canon of Scripture as the 39 books of the OT and the 27 books of the NT.
- 1.6 God has preserved His Word in the totality of manuscripts so that copies and translations provide us with the pure truth of God's revelation to the extent that they faithfully represent the original text. *Isaiah 55:11; Psalms 119:152, 160; Matthew 24:35; Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 1:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 1:3*

2. Triune God

- 2.1 There is one true and living God, an infinite Spirit Who is perfect in all His attributes. *Deuteronomy 4:39; Isaiah 44:6; Isaiah 45:5-7; John 4:24*
- 2.2 God exists eternally in three distinct persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - each being fully God and equally deserving of worship and obedience. *Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14*
- 2.3 These three persons are one God, without division of nature, essence or being, yet subordinate in role, exercising distinct but harmonious offices in the work of redemption. *Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4; John 1:1; John 5:23; John 14:8-10, 26; Titus 3:4-6*

3. God the Father

- 3.1 God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, as the supreme Sovereign over all creation, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose. *John 3:35; John 5:26, 30; John 6:39; 1 Corinthians 8:6*
- 3.2 He is Father in His designation within the Trinity. *Matthew 28:19; John 10:15*
- 3.3 He is Father to all men as the Creator and Giver of all life. *Ephesians 4:6; 1 Timothy 4:10*
- 3.4 He is the Heavenly Father to all who come to Him through Jesus Christ, making the penitent sinner a child of God by divine adoption. *John 1:12; Romans 8:14-16; 2 Corinthians 6:18*

4. God the Son: Jesus Christ

- 4.1 Jesus Christ is God as the second person of the Trinity, possessing all the divine attributes, coequal in essence and being with the Father. *John 1:14; John 5:20-23; John 10:30, 38; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3*
- 4.2 He is eternally pre-existent and uncreated, yet within the Trinity is subordinate to the Father as the Only Begotten Son. *Matthew 16:16; John 1:1-3; John 5:30; John 20:31; Hebrews 1:1-2*
- 4.3 Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born of a virgin to come to earth as the incarnate Christ, fully God and fully man. In the incarnation, Christ surrendered the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence. *Matthew 1:18-25; John 1:14; Philippians 2:5-11*

- 4.4 He lived a sinless life to accomplish perfect righteousness by satisfying the law's demands for all who would believe. *Romans 8:3-4; Galatians 4:4-5; Hebrews 4:15*
- 4.5 He died an atoning death as the legal punishment for sin and on the cross obtained eternal redemption, the forgiveness of sins and everlasting fellowship with God for all who would believe. *Isaiah 53:4-6; Romans 5:1; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:12; 1 Peter 3:18*
- 4.6 He rose bodily from the dead and ascended into heaven to confirm His role as Savior, to guarantee a future resurrection, to inaugurate the kingdom of God and to make intercession for His people at the right hand of God. *Mark 16:6-7; Acts 1:9; Acts 2:30-31; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 17, 20 & 52; Hebrews 7:25*
- 4.7 He now reigns at the right hand of the throne of God until all His enemies are put under His feet – death itself being the last enemy to be defeated. He will receive the worship of the redeemed for all eternity. *Acts 2:32-35; 1 Corinthians 15:26; Revelation 5:13-14*

5. God the Holy Spirit

- 5.1 The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, possessing all the divine perfections of Deity, one with God the Father and God the Son in essence and being. *Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4*
- 5.2 The Spirit of God convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. *John 16:8*
- 5.3 The Holy Spirit has always been at work in the world; however, when Christ ascended to the throne after the resurrection, He poured out the Spirit upon all believers as promised. *John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:16-17; Acts 2:32-33*
- 5.4 The Spirit regenerates the dead sinner for faith and repentance to salvation and baptizes the believer into the body of Christ. *John 3:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:3, 13; Ephesians 2:1; Titus 3:5*
- 5.5 The Spirit indwells every believer at salvation as the seal of redemption, and desires to fill, control, sanctify, empower and gift each believer for godly living and service. *1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 1:13-14; Ephesians 5:18*
- 5.6 We believe the Spirit, in keeping with his role of pointing to Christ and His teaching, enabled miraculous sign gifts as a special confirmation of the apostles' message and ministry in the beginning days of the 1st century church. We do not see these

miraculous gifts as normative for the church today, as God has preserved His Truth for us in the Canon of Scripture. However, we do not deny that the Spirit may continue to use miraculous gifts to testify to Christ and the power of the Gospel message.

Furthermore, we long to see the clearly miraculous and mighty power of God at work in His church as promised by our Redeemer. *John 14:26; Acts 2:43; Acts 5:12; Acts 14:3; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 2:20*

6. Creation

- 6.1 God created all that exists out of nothing by the power of His word in six literal days, and all creation was without sin, defect or death, and was called “very good.” *Genesis 1:1; Genesis 1:31; Exodus 20:9-11; John 1:1-3*
- 6.2 This creation is for God’s own pleasure and for the display of His glory and does not reflect any necessity or deficiency in the fellowship or satisfaction of the Triune God. *Psalms 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:7; Acts 17:24-25*
- 6.3 God created human life, man and woman equally, in the image of God with dominion over lesser forms of life and over the earth itself, and with the knowledge of God and His law written in their hearts. Creation establishes God’s design of differing and complementary family roles under the headship of the husband as a picture of Christ and His church. *Gen 1:26-28; Psalm 8:6; Romans 2:14-15; Ephesians 5:22-25ff*
- 6.4 While creation reveals the existence and power of God, this general revelation in creation is not sufficient for communicating the gospel for saving faith. *Romans 1:18-21; Romans 10:8-13*

7. Providence

- 7.1 God directs, upholds and governs all creation and all events according to His will and for His glory, by direct act or by the use of means. *1 Chronicles 29:11-13; Psalm 103:19; Proverbs 16:33; Isaiah 46:9-10; Romans 11:33-36; Ephesians 1:9-11*
- 7.2 The sovereign power and unsearchable wisdom of God’s determining counsel include all sinful actions of angels and men including the fall of Adam and Eve; however, all evil proceeds only from the creature and not from God who is perfect in holiness and is not the author or approver of sin. Therefore God never condemns anyone unjustly, and

those who sin are morally accountable to God. *Genesis 18:25; Genesis 50:20; Exodus 4:21, 7:2-5, 9:15-16 with Romans 9:17-21; Deuteronomy 32:4; Acts 2:22-23; Romans 3:19; 2 Timothy 4:1; 1 Peter 1:17*

8. Fall

- 8.1 Adam and Eve were created free from sin, yet willfully transgressed by disobeying God's command. *Genesis 1:31; Genesis 3:6; Ecclesiastes 7:29*
- 8.2 As the representative head of the human race, Adam brought all people into a state of sin, condemnation and death, with a corrupt sinful nature. *Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 5:12ff; 1 Corinthians 15:22*
- 8.3 Thus every sinner is totally depraved from conception, meaning that every aspect of his person (physical, mental, emotional, volitional, spiritual, and otherwise) is completely and hopelessly ruined by sin. Sinners are alienated from God, enslaved to sin, and do not have the desire or ability to love God, to seek God, to keep his law, or to repent and believe the gospel. *Psalms 51:5; Romans 3:10-11,23; Romans 6:20; Romans 8:7-8; 1 Corinthians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:1-3; 2 Timothy 2:25-26; Titus 3:3*
- 8.4 Apart from grace, sinners will continue in willful sin, will fall under just condemnation to eternal ruin, and will be without defense or excuse. *Romans 3:11; Romans 6:23; Romans 1:20*
- 8.5 Because man is dead in his sin and unable to choose or respond to God's redemption, he is totally dependent on the grace of God for salvation. *John 3:3, 19-20; John 6:44; 1 Corinthians 1:18,23-24*
- 8.6 As a result of the fall, God has subjected the whole of creation to the futility of sin's ruin, and all mankind is subject to suffering, calamity, decay and death. All such suffering and disaster is a reflection of the complete evil of moral depravity in the heart of man. Anything less than complete and final judgment by God is the result of His longsuffering mercy to lead men to repentance. *Genesis 2:16-17; Romans 8:20-23; Romans 2:4*

9. Election

- 9.1 Since all people have sinned against God, He would not be unjust to leave sinners under the curse and to judge them for their sin. *Genesis 2:16-17; Romans 1:18; Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23*
- 9.2 By God's decree and for His glory, a great multitude of people were predestined to eternal life through Jesus Christ to the praise of His glorious grace; while others are left to act in their sin and face its condemnation to the praise of His glorious justice. *John 10:25-28; John 17:1-2; Acts 13:48; Romans 9:17,22; Ephesians 1:3-9*
- 9.3 This election took place according to the good pleasure of God's will and not on the basis of any foreseen faith, work, decision or merit. God unconditionally foreknew people and chose to set His love on them when they had no hope of virtue. *Deuteronomy 7:6-9; Romans 9:11-16; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:2*
- 9.4 Those who are predestined to eternal life, God chose as objects of His love before the foundation of the world, in Christ Jesus, according the good pleasure of His will, for the praise of His glory which results in their calling, justification, sanctification and glorification. *Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4,11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13*
- 9.5 Election magnifies the mercy of God, but in no way removes the responsibility of all sinners to repent and believe the gospel in order to escape a just judgment for their sin. *Ezekiel 18:23,32; Luke 13:3; John 3:16,36; Romans 9:15*

10. Regeneration

- 10.1 Because sinners are dead in sin, they must be regenerated or born again in order to respond in repentance and faith. *John 3:3; Ephesians 2:1-4; James 1:18*
- 10.2 Those whom God predestined, He is pleased to call effectually by His Spirit and His Word out of the state of sin and death, opening their eyes to the light of Christ, and drawing them irresistibly to salvation. *John 3:5-8; 1 Corinthians 1:23-24; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:22-23*
- 10.3 This effectual call, drawing, quickening, regeneration or new birth of the once dead soul, enables the sinner to respond to God's call in the voluntary, willful obedience of repentance and faith. *Mark 1:14-15; John 6:44, 65*

11. Repentance

- 11.1 Repentance and faith comprise our definition of conversion - the turn of one's heart from sin and to faith in God. Like two sides to one coin, repentance and faith are one turn: from sin (repentance) and to Christ (faith). *Mark 1:15; 1 Thessalonians 1:9*
- 11.2 Repentance is a gift of God's grace whereby the Spirit convicts of sin and enables the sinner who was dead in trespasses and sins to choose freely to turn from the evil and ruin of their sin in godly sorrow, in order to live in righteousness. *Acts 11:18; 2 Corinthians 7:10-11; 2 Timothy 2:25*

12. Faith

- 12.1 The grace of faith is the work of the Spirit that enables the elect to believe the promise of God in Christ as sufficient for eternal life. *John 3:8, 12, 15; John 8:46-47; Acts 16:14*
- 12.2 Faith is the gift of God's grace whereby the repentant sinner abandons all self-reliance and works of self-righteousness, and trusts solely and completely in the substitutionary work of Christ's righteous life, atoning death, and bodily resurrection. *John 6:64-65; Romans 4:5; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:29*
- 12.3 This gift of faith, though it may be different in degrees, though it is weak or strong, though it is at times attacked or weakened – it gets the victory and grows into a full assurance having as its object, Christ, the author and finisher of our faith. *Hebrews 10:21-23; Hebrews 10:38-39; Hebrews 12:1-2*

13. Justification

- 13.1 The elect are declared righteous by God based on their faith in the meritorious work of Christ, and receive the pardon of sin, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, peace with God and the promise of eternal life. *Romans 1:4; Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 5:1, 21*
- 13.2 Justification is never a response to any human effort, works, or merit, and it is not a result of any infusion of Christ's righteousness. Believing sinners are justified fully, instantaneously and permanently at the instant of faith in Christ's work for them. *Acts 13:38-39; Romans 3:20, 27-28; Philippians 3:9; Hebrews 10:14*
- 13.3 Justification is by faith alone in the work of Christ alone. *Galatians 2:16*

14. Sanctification

- 14.1 When a believing sinner is justified by God, he also receives a positional sanctification, whereby he is permanently set apart from sin and to God and therefore identified as a saint. *Acts 26:18; Romans 6:6; Hebrews 10:10,14; Romans 1:7*
- 14.2 According to God's good purpose and faithful promise, the believer also experiences a progressive sanctification by which he is increasingly conformed to the image of Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit and through the power of the Word of God. *Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; John 17:17*
- 14.3 Sin and its allure are not eradicated for the believer, but provision for victory is made through the work of Christ and the indwelling Spirit. True believers will cooperate with the Spirit in the conflict with the remnant of the flesh by reckoning themselves dead to sin and alive to righteousness. *Romans 7:24-25; Galatians 5:16-18; Romans 6:11; 1 Peter 2:11*
- 14.4 Sanctification is by faith in the perfect righteousness of Christ and cannot be accomplished in human effort. *John 15:5; Colossians 2:20-23; Galatians 3:2-3*

15. Perseverance

- 15.1 All those who have been chosen, predestined, called, and justified will never fall away from grace but will continue in the faith to the end, saved and kept by the power of God. *Romans 8:30-31; Ephesians 1:13-14*
- 15.2 Perseverance is not a human accomplishment, but rather it is the promise and work of God in the New Covenant obtained by the blood of Christ. *John 6:37-40, 44; Philippians 1:6; Jude 24*
- 15.3 Salvation is the work of God on behalf of the elect and cannot be lost, making the believer eternally secure in Christ. Therefore, one is not saved because he perseveres, but rather, one perseveres because he has been saved. *John 10:27-30; 1 Corinthians 1:8-9; Hebrews 3:14; 1 John 2:19*
- 15.4 Though a believer may fall into grievous sin, though he be plagued by storms of doubt, and though his faith may seem at times to be insufficient to hold fast to the faith, assurance is found in the truth that God's Spirit will renew him to repentance and that

God's covenant love holds fast to him so that nothing can separate him from the love of God in Christ. *Luke 22:31-32; Hebrews 12:6-7; Romans 8:34-35; 2 Timothy 1:12; 1 Peter 1:5*

16. The Church

- 16.1 All who have been brought to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the Church – the bride of Christ. *John 10:16; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:3-4*
- 16.2 Jesus Christ is to the church the redeeming Savior, the founding Cornerstone, the authoritative Head, the exemplary standard, and the blessed Hope. *Ephesians 5:23; Ephesians 2:19-20; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 4:13; Titus 2:13*
- 16.3 The universal or invisible church is manifested through the local or visible churches as believers associate themselves with geographically local assemblies. While we support the autonomy of the local church, we also recognize the privilege and duty to fellowship and cooperate with other true, gospel churches for the sake of the kingdom of God. *Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:1; John 17:21-23*
- 16.4 The church is served by two offices that function under the authority of Christ. Elders (also called bishops, pastors) lead the church with spiritual authority, and deacons serve the church. The congregation is to submit to the leadership of the pastors and cooperate with the service of the deacons. *Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17,28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Timothy 3:13; Hebrews 13:7*
- 16.5 Believers in a local body should assemble faithfully for worship, prayer, instruction, fellowship and observance of the ordinances. Furthermore, believers are bound by the “one another” imperatives of the New Testament that call for: love, accountability, discipleship, service, encouragement, confrontation, church discipline, dispute resolution, hospitality, forgiveness, and more. *Acts 2:41-42; 1 Corinthians 11:18a; Hebrews 10:24-25; Romans 12:10; John 13:34-35; Ephesians 4:32*
- 16.6 The Holy Spirit dispenses spiritual gifts to every believer for the purpose of edifying the body of Christ. Thus every believer is commissioned to service for the growth of the church and for the glory of God. *1 Corinthians 12:6-7; Ephesians 4:16*
- 16.7 Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances committed to the local church by Christ. *Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:24-26*

- 16.8 The church is designed to glorify God by celebrating the gospel's power to redeem and change sinners. *Matthew 5:13-16; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 3:10, 20-21*

17. Baptism

- 17.1 Baptism serves as a believer's public testimony of his faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior, his union with Christ in death to sin and resurrection to new life, and his fellowship and identification with the church. *Acts 2:40-41; Romans 6:4-5*
- 17.2 As a sign of cleansing from sin, baptism is administered to those who demonstrate repentance from sin and a credible profession of faith in Christ. *Ephesians 5:26; Acts 19:3-5; Acts 16:31, 34*
- 17.3 We practice baptism by immersion as the clearest picture of our union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. *Matthew 3:16; Romans 6:4*

18. Lord's Supper/Communion

- 18.1 The Lord's Supper is the believer's remembrance and proclamation of the Lord's death and his participation in the New Covenant. *Matthew 26:26-28; Hebrews 8:6*
- 18.2 The elements of bread and drink are only representative of the body and blood of Christ; they are in no sense a sacrifice. *1 Corinthians 11:26; Hebrews 9:12, 28*
- 18.3 By eating and drinking, believers confess their faith in the sufficiency of Christ's atoning death, their unity with other believers in Christ, and their willingness to separate from the world. This solemn declaration and worship merits a preceding self-examination. *1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 1 Corinthians 11:17-18, 26, 28*

19. New Covenant in Christ

- 19.1 The New Covenant through the blood of Jesus Christ replaces the Old Covenant, with the Law of Moses as its core, which was revealed to the nation of Israel. *Romans 8:3; Hebrews 7:18-19; Hebrews 8:6; Exodus 24:3-8*
- 19.2 The Old Covenant with its law was not designed to offer eternal life, but rather to govern the life and worship of the Old Testament nation of Israel (didactic use), to restrain man's depravity (civil use), and to foreshadow Christ and the New Covenant

(pedagogical use). *Galatians 3:21; Romans 3:1-2; Deuteronomy 4:5-6; Deuteronomy 11:26-28; Galatians 3:19; Galatians 3:24-25*

- 19.3 Christ fulfills the Old Covenant, and He establishes the better New Covenant by His redemptive work to provide eternal blessings that are acquired by grace through faith. *Matthew 5:17; Hebrews 8:6, 13; Matthew 26:28; 1 Corinthians 1:19-20; Ephesians 2:6-9*
- 19.4 God's revelation given through Christ and His New Testament apostles is the authority concerning Christian conduct and the interpretive lens through which the Old Testament must be understood and applied. *Luke 24:44; John 1:14, 17; John 13:34-35; Hebrews 10:1*

20. Last Days

- 20.1 We believe death to be the direct result of man's sin. We believe that at the moment of physical death the soul of the believer is present with the Lord in joyful fellowship while the soul of the unbeliever at death is kept under punishment until the resurrection and judgment of all men. *Genesis 2:17; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Revelation 20:13*
- 20.2 We await the sudden, visible, personal, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth according to His promise. *John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Titus 2:13*
- 20.3 Christ's kingdom will conquer all earthly kingdoms, and He will continue to reign on His throne forever. *Psalms 110:1-2; Daniel 2:44; 1 Corinthians 15:24-26*
- 20.4 God will raise all men - the saved to everlasting life and the lost to everlasting damnation. *John 5:28-29; Acts 24:14-15*
- 20.5 Every individual will stand before Christ in judgment to give an account of his life. *Matthew 25:31-34; Acts 17:31; Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:11-15*
- 20.6 The soul of man will live forever after the judgment. The believer will live in the state of eternal joy in heaven with Christ, while the unbeliever will live in the state of eternal judgment and wrath. *Matthew 25:46; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:9-10*