

GRACE COMMUNITY CHAPEL

DOCTRINAL GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS & LEADERS

REVISION 1.2

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RECORD OF CHANGES

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1.1 / September 17, 2013	Baseline of document in GCC standard.
1.2 / March 13, 2017	III Man: Added item 5 to address human sexuality issues. X Marriage: Added

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PREAMBLE

Any doctrinal statement is but a fallible human attempt to summarize and systematize the riches of an infallible divine revelation. But this in no way detracts from the importance of such a statement. The elders of Grace Community Chapel have determined the need and application for two versions of our doctrinal statement:

- A short version called the Statement of Faith, which is contained in the Constitution and Bylaws of Grace Community Chapel, provides a basic agreement for applicants to become members at Grace Community Chapel. These eight statements are foundational and non-negotiable to our faith and worship at Grace Community Chapel.
- The affirmations of the long version, which follow, called the Doctrinal Guidelines for Teachers and Leaders, carefully specify our position with regard to the major biblical doctrines, and thus provide a framework for our ministry. They also provide an anchor to protect our ministry against theological drift. The elders realize that there is more than one interpretation for many of the subject areas. However, basic agreement with the interpretations listed in the Doctrinal Guidelines is required of any member being considered to serve as an elder or anyone being considered for ministry staff at Grace Community Chapel.

Secondarily, this document serves as the teaching guideline for all Sunday school teachers, adult teachers and elected or appointed leaders. Teachers may present other doctrinal views, but they must present, and not contradict, the view delineated in the Doctrinal Guidelines as the standard for Grace Community Chapel.

DOCTRINAL GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS AND LEADERS

I. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

1. We believe that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the 66 books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-14; 2 Peter 1:20, 21).
2. We believe that the Word of God is an objective revelation (1 Corinthians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:13), inspired in every word (2 Timothy 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed.
3. We believe in the literal, grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture, which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Genesis 1:31; Exodus 31:17).
4. We believe that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12, 13; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20, 21).
5. We believe that God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual authorship. The Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's Word to man (2 Peter 1:20, 21) without error in the whole or in the part (Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16).
6. We believe that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians. 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20).

II. GOD

We believe that there is but one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4), an infinite, all-knowing Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Isaiah 11:1-2) – each equally deserving worship and obedience.

A. GOD THE FATHER

We believe that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psalms 145:8, 9; 1 Corinthians 8:6). He is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9; Exodus 20:11). As the only absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalms 103:19; Romans 11:36). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men (Ephesians 4:6), but He is Spiritual Father only to believers (Romans 8:14; 2 Corinthians 6:18). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chronicles 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (Habakkuk. 1:13), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Peter 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Ephesians 1:4-6); He saves from sin all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Hebrews 12:5-9).

B. GOD THE SON

1. We believe that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine essence and attributes, and in these He is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father (John 10:30; 14:9).
2. We believe that God the Father created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence. (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2).

3. We believe that in the incarnation (God becoming man) Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. In His incarnation, the eternally existing second person of the Trinity:
 - a. Accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-man, yet without sin (Philemon 2:5-8; Col 2:9; Hebrews 4:15).
 - b. Laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of co-existence with God, and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes (Philemon 2:5-8).
4. We believe that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible union (Micah 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9, 10; Colossians 2:9).
5. We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ was born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23, 25; Luke 1:26-35); that He was God incarnate (John 1:1, 14); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (Psalms 2:7-9; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:29; Philemon 2:9-11; Hebrews 7:25, 26; 1 Peter 1:18, 19).
6. We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (John 10:15; Romans 3:24, 25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24).
7. We believe that on the basis of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin; and that he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God (Romans 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18).
8. We believe in the literal, physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and that He ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High Priest (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Romans 4:25; 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).
9. We believe that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that God has accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross. Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future bodily resurrection for all believers (John 5:26-29; 14:19; Romans 4:25; 6:5-10; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23).
10. We believe that Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is His body, unto Himself and, returning with His church in glory, will establish His millennial kingdom on earth (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20).
11. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One through whom God will judge all mankind (John 5:22-23):
 - a. Believers for rewards (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10);
 - b. Living inhabitants of the earth (believers and unbelievers) at His glorious return (Matthew 25:31-46); and
 - c. Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15).
12. As the mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5), the head of His body the church (Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18), and the coming universal King who will reign on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6, 7; Ezekiel 37: 24-28; Luke 1:31-33), He is the final Judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Matthew 25:14-46; Acts 17:30, 31).

C. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity, including intellect (1 Corinthians 2:10-13), emotions (Ephesians 4:30), will (1 Corinthians 12:11), eternity (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (Psalms 139:7-10), omniscience (Isaiah 40:13, 14), omnipotence (Romans 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13). In all the divine essence and attributes He is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3, 4; 28:25, 26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; and Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 10:15-17).
2. We believe that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind. We recognize His sovereign activity in creation (Genesis 1:2), the incarnation (Matthew 1:18), the written revelation (2 Peter 1:20, 21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7).

3. We believe that a unique work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16, 17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the body of Christ. His activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ, and transforming believers into the image of Christ (John 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22).
4. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, and empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Romans 8:9-11; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30).
5. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher who guided the apostles and prophets into all truth as they recorded God's revelation, the Bible (2 Peter 1:19-21).
6. Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation, and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (Romans 8:9-11; Ephesians 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27).
7. We believe that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up and perfecting believers in the most holy faith (John 16:13, 14; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

III. MAN

1. We believe that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Genesis 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9).
2. We believe that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God and rule over the earth (Gen 1:28; Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11).
3. We believe that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence and incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death. Man is dead in sin and under the wrath of God. Man's salvation is wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 2:16, 17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 2:13, 14; 1 John 1:8).
4. We believe that Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. Thus, all men are sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Psalms 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).
5. Human Sexuality – This church affirms God's original design to create two distinct and complementary sexes, male and female, to glorify Him. (Genesis 1:27; Isaiah 43:7; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6). Marriage is rooted in this created order, uniting one man and one woman in an exclusive covenant commitment for their joint lifetime. (Genesis 1:28, 2:19-24; Malachi 2:13-16; Mark 10:11-12). God graciously designed the sexual relationship for marriage to make procreation possible (Genesis 1:27-28) and to bless and unify the husband and wife (Genesis 2:24-25). Sexual intercourse outside of the marriage relationship is forbidden throughout Scripture, such as fornication, adultery, homosexual sex, incest, and bestiality (Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, and 15-20; Romans 1:18-27).

The Bible teaches that we are God's creation, and that God shapes and forms us in the womb from conception. The assignment of biological sex at conception is a gift of God and part of God's glory in creation. (Psalm 139:13-16)

The Fall of Man into sin and God's subsequent curse have introduced brokenness and futility into God's good creation (Genesis 3:1-24; Romans 8:20). We extend love and compassion to those whose experience of this brokenness includes a perceived conflict between their biological sex and their gender identity (Romans 8:22-23). We affirm God's good design that gender identity should be determined by biological sex and not by one's self-perception—a perception which is often influenced by fallen human nature in ways contrary to God's design. (Ephesians 4:17-19). We believe that efforts to live contrary to birth sex, whether by behavior, attire, cosmetics, or even medical or

surgical therapy, are resisting or rebelling against the gift of God and a central dimension of His will for that person, and therefore such behavior is sinful (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). We condemn efforts to alter one's bodily identity (*e.g.*, cross-sex hormone therapy, gender reassignment surgery) to bring it into line with one's perceived gender identity.

We love our gay, lesbian, and transgender neighbors, seek their good always, welcome them into our congregations as they repent and believe in Christ, and spur them on to love and good deeds in the name of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 5:14; Hebrews 10:24). We continue to oppose steadfastly all efforts by any court, or legislature or policymaker to validate same-sex marriage or transgender identity as morally good, right or praiseworthy (Isa. 5:20). We commit ourselves to make decisions about membership, personnel, facilities use, and other church matters based on this biblical perspective of human sexuality.

IV. SALVATION

We believe that salvation of man is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:4-7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18, 19).

A. ELECTION

1. We believe that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously saves and sanctifies (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1, 2).
2. We believe that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18, 19, 36; 5:40; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17). All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; James 4:8).
3. We believe that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any works of their own part, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Ephesians 1:4-7; Romans 9:11, 15-16; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:2).
4. We believe that God exercises His sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Romans 9:11-16). This sovereignty is consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:25-28; 2 Timothy 1:9-10).

B. REGENERATION

We believe that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which those who were spiritually dead are given eternal spiritual life (John 3:3-8; Ephesians 2:4, 5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God (John 5:24), when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation. Regeneration results in signs of genuine spiritual life. (Romans 6:4-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 2:3-6; 1 John 3:14) Obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). Such a conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:29-30; 1 John 3:2, 3).

C. JUSTIFICATION

We believe that justification is God's declaration that a guilty sinner is righteous (Romans 3:23; Romans 4). This justification is by faith alone in Christ apart from any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20; 4:6). God has placed our sins on Christ (Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24) and has imputed Christ's righteousness to us (1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Corinthians 5:21). The foundation for this work of God on our behalf is the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:24-26).

D. SANCTIFICATION

1. Past. We believe that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and is identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. This sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14; Hebrews 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2).
2. Present. We believe that there is also by the work of the Holy Spirit a progressive sanctification by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the likeness of Christ. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17, 19; Romans 6:1-22; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4; 5:23). In this respect, we believe that every believer is involved in a daily conflict (the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh), but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philemon 3:12; Colossians 3:9, 10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).
3. Future. The process of sanctification will be completed only when the believer is glorified in the presence of Christ (1 John 3:2; Romans 8:30).

E. CHRISTIAN LIVING

We believe that out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us and because our glorious God is so worthy of our total consecration, all the saved should live in such a manner as to demonstrate our love to God and so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior (Romans 12:1, 2; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 1 John 2:15-17). We believe that separation from sin to God is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments (2 Corinthians 6:14 -7:1). We affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedience and a pursuit of holiness (Hebrews 12:14; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 2:3-6).

F. SECURITY / ASSURANCE

1. We believe that all genuine believers are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9, 10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:8, 9; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:4, 5; Jude 24).
2. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of the Holy Spirit and of God's Word (Romans 8:14-16; 1 John 5:11-13). However, God's word clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an excuse for sinful living and carnality (Romans 6:15-22; 13:13, 14; Galatians 5:13, 16, 17, 25, 26; Titus 2:11-14).

V. THE CHURCH**A. UNIVERSAL BODY OF CHRIST**

1. We believe that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:12, 13), the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7, 8), of which Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18).
2. We believe that the formation of the church, the body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the Rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
3. We believe that the church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Ephesians 2:11-3:6). The church is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6; 5:32).

B. LOCAL

1. We believe that the existence of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Galatians 1:2; Philemon 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1), and that the members of the one spiritual body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).
2. We believe that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18) and that leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship in the church are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures.
3. Biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (who are also called bishops, overseers, pastors, and pastor-teachers, Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11) and deacons who assist them (Acts 6:1-6) both of whom must be men who meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5). These leaders lead or rule as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17-22; Hebrews 13:7, 17).
4. We believe in the importance of discipleship (Matthew 28:19, 20; 2 Timothy 2:2), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matthew 18:15-17), as well as the need to discipline members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matthew 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:19, 20; Titus 1:10-16).
5. We believe that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Local churches, however, through their leaders and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of their cooperation (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 13; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
6. We believe that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21) by worshipping, by being built up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), by instruction in the Word (2 Timothy 2:2, 15; 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42) and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8).
7. We believe in the calling of all saints to the work of service (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; Revelation 22:12).

C. SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. We believe that a Spiritual gift is a unique ability given supernaturally by God through His Spirit at the time of salvation to enable an individual believer in the service of Christ's body, the Church (1 Corinthians 12). Believers in Jesus Christ have at least one gift, or quite possibly more, given for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:7) and equipping of the saints for the work of service in the building up of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:16).
2. The spiritual gifts identified (1 Corinthians 12:8-12, 28; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11) fall into two categories: those which equip believers for the ministry of the Word, and those which equip them for practical service (1 Peter 4:10-11). A gift is given by the Spirit to each believer as He wills individually (1 Corinthians 12:8-11) and God places each believer in the body as He desires to exercise those gifts (1 Corinthians 12:18-24) according to the proportion of his faith (Romans 12:3-8) for the purpose of equipping the saints for service and to build up the body (Ephesians 4:11, 12).
3. At Grace Community Chapel we recognize that all things are available to God to use as He wills, when He wills, and through whomever He wills. We also recognize that a degree of controversy surrounds some spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues. We are not a charismatic church but are not "anti-charismatic" and know that godly Christians are on both sides of this issue. However, for the sake of unity of the body, we do not speak in tongues in any of our church meetings or promote it to others. For this reason, as Paul wrote, we should walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which we have been called (Ephesians 4:1) and value love more than any of the spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13).

VI. ORDINANCES

1. We believe that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42). While we accept other modes of baptism, we practice immersion of those who have accepted Christ as their savior. Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Romans 6:1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ (Acts 2:41, 42).
2. We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should always be preceded by solemn self-examination and confession of sin (1 Corinthians 11:23-32; 1 John 1:9). We also believe that whereas the elements of communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual Communion with the risen Christ who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people (1 Corinthians 10:16).

VII. ANGELS

A. HOLY ANGELS

We believe that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshiped; they were created to serve God and to worship Him (Luke 2:9-14; 1 Corinthians 6:3; Hebrews 1:6, 7, 14; 2:6, 7; Revelation 5:11-14).

B. FALLEN ANGELS

1. We believe that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1-15).
2. We believe that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isaiah 14:13, 14; Matthew 4:1-11; Revelation 12:9, 10), the prince of this world who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20) and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

VIII. LAST THINGS (ESCHATOLOGY)

A. ETERNAL STATE (DEATH)

1. Believers. We believe that at death the spirits and souls of those who have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation pass immediately into His presence (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philemon 1:23) and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the glorified body when Christ comes for His own (1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54; Philemon 3:21), whereupon soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in glory (2 Corinthians 5:8).
2. Unbelievers. We believe that at death the spirits and souls of the unbelieving remain after death conscious of condemnation and in misery until the final judgment of the Great White Throne at the close of the millennium, when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting destruction absent from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power (Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Revelation 20:11-15).

B. THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

We believe in the imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ to translate His church from this earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:11). The bodies of the dead in Christ will rise before the living Christians are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. The basic idea of the rapture is drawn from the Latin term *rapturo* for "caught up". It means that the church of Jesus Christ, those who have trusted in Christ as their Savior, will literally be transported from earth to heaven in an instant. There will be no death

for those who are raptured. They will be taken – caught up – in the air to be with Jesus Christ forever. The major discussion among Christians today concerns the point in time that the rapture will take place in relation to the tribulation (the 70th week of Daniel). Any theory consistent with Scripture may be taught at Grace Community Chapel. Believers are encouraged to study the scriptures on this point and hold their own belief with compassion and love for others.

C. THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

We believe that following the removal of the church from the earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world (Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 16), and that these judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth (Matthew 24:27-31; 25:31-46; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12). This period is the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24:15-31; 25:31-46).

D. THE SECOND COMING AND THE MILLENNIAL REIGN

1. We believe that after the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:32, 33; Acts 1:10, 11; 2:29, 30) and establish His messianic kingdom for a thousand years on the earth (Revelation 20:1-7). During this time the resurrected saints, both Old Testament and New Testament, will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Ezekiel 37:21-28; Daniel 7:17-22; Revelation 19:11-16). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world (Daniel 7:17-27; Rev 19:20; Revelation 20:1-6).
2. We believe that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-17) to restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:1-26) but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32; Romans 11:25-29).
3. We believe that this time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Isaiah 11; 65:20-23; Ezekiel 36:33-38), and the millennium will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Revelation 20:7).

DI. THE JUDGMENT OF THE LOST

1. We believe that following the release of Satan after the thousand year reign of Christ (Revelation 20:7), Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints and the beloved city, at which time Satan's army will be devoured by fire from heaven (Revelation 20:9). Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10) whereupon Christ, who is the Judge of all men (John 5:22), will resurrect and judge the great and small at the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15).
2. We believe that this resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment (John 5:28, 29), they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15).

DII. ETERNITY

We believe that after the closing of the Millennium and the judgment of unbelievers (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:7-15), the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved (2 Peter 3:10) and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells (Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 20:15, Revelation 21, 22). Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven (Revelation 21:2) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another (John 17:3; Revelation 21, 22). Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:23-28) so that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Corinthians 15:28).

IX. QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDER, DEACON, AND DEACONESSES

1. We at Grace Community Chapel accept as candidates for elder, deacon, and deaconess all those who have professed faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and whose lives reflect the truth of that faith. The lives of elders should reflect the character described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9; lives of deacons the character described in 1 Timothy 3:8-10 and 12, 13; and lives of deaconesses the character described in 1 Timothy 3:11 and Titus 2:3-5. These words project faithfulness to one's spouse, to one's family, and to the commands of the Lord. We consider the phrase, "husband of one wife", i.e., a one-woman man, or "wife of one husband", i.e., a one-man woman, to reflect faithfulness to one's spouse, if married. Also, these passages speak of a person's character as being "above reproach" or "blameless" and of the fidelity of the person's marriage rather than a focus on previous divorce. Thus, in considering a person's current character, divorce in the past should not be considered an automatic disqualification. But, if the divorce was recent, or if there is any question of a person's relationship with their current spouse, the person should not be considered qualified. The same is true for any of the other character traits listed in the scriptural texts.
2. We require candidates for elders, deacons and deaconesses to have been members of Grace Community Chapel for one year before being elected to these offices. It is also recommended that these candidates, and their spouses, should have demonstrated a walk with the Lord in harmony with scriptural qualifications for five years or more before being considered a candidate for such offices.

X. MARRIAGE

This church affirms the biblical truths that marriage is the first divine institution, essentially rooted in the created order, uniting one man and one woman in an exclusive covenant commitment for their joint lifetime, for their good and for the welfare of any children of the marriage. Marriage is based on the truth that men and women are complementary, the biological fact that reproduction depends on a man and a woman, and the lived experience that children need both a mother and a father. Re-defining marriage to fit popular norms rejects these truths. By encouraging the norms of true marriage – man-woman monogamy, sexual exclusivity, and permanence – the state strengthens civil society and promotes human flourishing, including the well-being of children.

Christian marriage is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His Church, as illustrated by the wedding of a Christian man and woman in this exclusive and permanent covenant relationship. (Ephesians 5:22-33; Matthew 19:3-9) As such, this Church believes that Christian wedding ceremonies on Church property are spiritual observances of worship of God who created this divine institution. As worship services, weddings on Church property shall be officiated by one or more ordained ministers of the gospel approved by the pastor.

The Church shall decline to make its facilities or ministers available for any wedding if it is determined that one or both of the parties are not biblically qualified to marry. Such determination shall be made by the pastor or his designee, in their sole discretion.

The Church shall also decline to participate in or recognize in any manner any marriage, so-called marriage, civil union, commitment ceremony or other activity which may, directly or indirectly affirm, approve or communicate behavior or beliefs which are contrary to the Church's beliefs about biblical morality. Such actions would violate the religious conscience of this Body and its members. We must obey God, who is Lord of our conscience.