

## Grace Community Church Statement of Faith

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In all of our essential beliefs, we aspire to unity.

*"There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:4-6).*

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In beliefs which are gray or uncertain, we encourage liberty.

*"Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose for passing judgment on his opinions. .... Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls.... So then, each one of us will give an account of himself to God.... The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God...." (Romans 14:1,4,12,22).*

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In all our beliefs we show love.

*"...and if I know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2).*

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**GOD:** We believe that God is the creator, sustainer, redeemer and ruler of the universe, and that He has eternally existed in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God. Though each person of the Godhead possesses the same nature, each functions differently in respect to God's dealing with humankind (Gen. 1:1, 26; Deut. 6:4; Matt.28:19-20; John 4:24; II Cor. 13:14).

**GOD THE FATHER:** The first person of the Trinity orders and directs all things according to his own purpose, pleasure and grace. He created the universe apart from any preexisting materials and without any other means other than his power. As an infinitely loving father, He graciously involves himself in the affairs of men and women, longing for their salvation and spiritual growth. (Matt. 6:9; John 5:19-24; Eph. 1:3-6; Gal. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:3-5)

**JESUS CHRIST:** We believe that Jesus Christ is God's only Son (John 3:16) and our sole mediator (I Tim. 2:5). We believe in His pre-existence (John 1:1), His incarnation (John 1:1-14), His virgin birth (Matt. 1:23-25), His sinless life (Heb. 4:15), His example of ministry (John 13:14-15), His substitutionary atonement (Rom. 3:23-25), His bodily resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:24-27), His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Acts 1:9-11), and his bodily return from heaven (Titus 2:13).

**THE HOLY SPIRIT:** We believe that the Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make people aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding the truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives every believer a spiritual gift when they receive Christ. As Christians, we seek to enjoy his presence and live under his control daily. (Matt. 28:19; John 3:3-7; Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 2:12, 6:19, 12:13; Eph. 4:30; Titus 3:5).

**THE BIBLE:** The Bible is God's word to us. We believe that the Bible contains truths that can powerfully change our lives; and therefore, we center all our ministry around it, and we encourage regular Bible reading and study. Even though it was written by human authors, we believe that every word in the original manuscripts of the Holy Scriptures is inspired of God, complete, unified and without error (Matt. 5:18; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21). Therefore, we believe that it is the final standard of faith and practice for the believer in Jesus Christ and for His Church.

**HUMANITY AND SIN:** We believe that people are spiritual beings, created in the image of God, and designed to be like him in character and conduct. We believe that humankind sinned in Adam, and that people are now sinners by nature and by choice, yet mankind remains in God's image even though fallen (Gen. 1:26-27; 3:1-6; Rom. 5:12-14; James 3:9).

**ABOUT MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY:** We believe that marriage is the comprehensive and lifelong union of two people, male and female, in a monogamous committed relationship (Gen. 2:18-25). Moreover, we believe that marriage points beyond itself: 1) God intended that this institution exemplify His very nature as Triune God (Gen. 2:18-25), and 2) that this institution illustrate the loving interaction between Christ and His church (Eph. 5:22-33; Rev. 19:6-9). Consequently, the sexual relationship is holy and should be reserved for marriage. All intimate sexual activity outside the marriage relationship, whether heterosexual, homosexual or otherwise is immoral and therefore sin (Exo. 20:14, 17; 22:19; Lev. 18:22-23, 20:13, 15, 16; Matt. 19:4-6; Rom. 1:18-31; 1 Cor. 6:9-10, 15-20; 1 Tim. 1:8-11; Jude 7). At the same time, our congregation is committed to being an agent of healing when people fall short of this ideal (John 1:14).

**SALVATION:** We believe that Jesus died in our place on the cross so that we might have eternal life with God in heaven. Salvation is God's free gift to us, but we must personally receive it by faith. Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, apart from human merit, works or ceremonies (Acts 4:12; 16:31; Eph. 2:8-9).

**SECURITY:** We believe that once a person has placed their faith in Jesus Christ, God guarantees through the Holy Spirit that he will take that person to heaven. Their assurance of salvation is based upon, 1) the promises of God (John 5:24); 2) The payment of Christ (Col. 2:13-14); 3) The power of Christ to keep us (John 10:28-29); and 4) The presence of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:3).

**THE CHURCH:** We believe that the Church is the spiritual body of Jesus Christ. He is the head. We also believe that there is a two-fold aspect to the church: The universal church consists of all believers worldwide. The local church consists of believers in a specific location who seek to experience their relationship with Christ together under a common vision (Eph. 1:22-23; Phmn. 2; I Thess. 1:1). We seek to be supportive to para-church groups as they too seek to advance God's great commission.

**SPIRITUAL GIFTS:** We believe that every believer has at least one spiritual gift (I Cor. 12:7, 11). God, the Holy Spirit, sovereignly bestows the gift(s) to each believer. When each believer utilizes his gift, he contributes to the working and maturing of the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:3-8; I Cor. 12:4-31; Eph. 4:1-16).

**THE GREAT COMMISSION:** We believe that Christians are sent into the world by the risen Christ, even as Jesus was sent by the Father (John 20:21). Our mission is to be ambassadors who go into the world telling others about Christ, and making disciples. (Matt. 28:18-20; John 15:8, 17:18, 20:21; 2 Cor. 5:20).

**ABOUT ETERNITY:** We believe that people were created to live forever (Ecc. 3:11). They will exist eternally either separated from God by sin, or they will exist eternally united with God in heaven. To be eternally separated from God is hell; to be eternally in union with God is eternal life. Heaven and hell are real places of real eternal existence (John 5:25-29; 11:25-26; I Cor. 15:51-57; II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11-15).