



STATEMENT OF FAITH

First and foremost, we are a church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are committed to contending for the faith through sound and biblically accurate preaching (Jude 1:3). ***The basic doctrines*** represent the core elements of biblical teaching held by the historic Christian faith. These basic doctrines we expect any professing believer at Highland Church to hold and affirm. The basic doctrines are listed first in *italics* for easy reference with more detailed descriptions and Scriptural citations following.

The theological distinctives we hold are separated out and listed as such and reflect what distinguishes the preaching and leadership style of Highland Church from that of other churches that would hold to the same basic doctrines. These distinctives shape the way we teach and preach, disciple others, and bear on our leadership of the church as a whole. We do not expect every person who calls Highland Church their home to embrace all aspects of these distinctives, but they should expect that the distinctives will be maintained in all ministry environments and taught by anyone holding a teaching platform or serving in the office of Elder at the church.

That said, we believe there is a beauty in the unity of diversity within the body of Christ. While each of us as individuals are unique, and our thinking likewise, we are one in Christ. This oneness in Christ is often jeopardized by the temptation to division in pursuit of homogeneity. As Scripture clearly presents, Christ pictured a unified church, therefore this temptation for division over secondary matters must be resisted. Meaning, while we may not sing the same note in unison on all points of Scriptural interpretation, we can harmonize by singing different notes moving together in the same key to produce a more beautiful song: a song that has a beauty in diversity under the oneness purchased for us by the blood of Christ. With that, those who hold to differing perspectives on the *distinctive doctrines* as outlined below, should be fully embraced, welcomed, valued, and given space to serve and flourish here in Highland church.

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

We believe in the one God, Creator of all things, eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that these three are of equal dignity, power, and worthy of worship.

There is one God who eternally exists in three distinct Persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Each Person is distinct and yet of the same essence; therefore, there is one God. Each Person in the Godhead is equally divine, holy, and loving, and exists in perfect, loving, and glorifying relationship with one another. This one true and living God is infinitely perfect both in his love and his holiness. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and is therefore worthy to receive all glory and adoration.

Deut. 6:4; Matt 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; John 14:1-28; 1 John 4:7-21

II THE DOCTRINE OF REVELATION

We believe that the 66 books of the Bible are the inspired and inerrant Word of God. The Bible is the complete revelation of God's will for salvation and the authoritative rule of faith and practice for the Christian life.

The Scriptures are the Holy Spirit inspired words of God, written by human authors contained in the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. Because of the Bible's inspired nature, it is without error in its original manuscripts and authoritative in all it affirms. The Bible is sufficient in all it reveals for salvation and godly living. The chief end of Scripture is to point to Jesus Christ, his life, death, resurrection, and second coming. The Scriptures are only rightly interpreted and understood through the revealing work of the Holy Spirit and stand as the final authority on all matters of faith, doctrine, teaching, and life.

Luke 24:27; 44; John 5:39; 14:1-3; Acts 26:22-23; 3:2; 15:4; 1 Cor 2:10-16; 3:13; 10:11; 2 Tim 3:15-16; Tit 3:15; 1 Pet 1:21; 2 Pet 3:16

III THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

We believe in the full deity and humanity of Jesus Christ; His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit; His virgin birth; His sinless life; His substitutionary death on the cross; His bodily resurrection; His ascension to the right hand of the Father; His personal, bodily, and imminent return; and His triumph over evil.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is fully God and fully man. He is eternally begotten of the Father but not made. He is equal with Him in power, wisdom, and glory, and reveals to us the Father. Through Him, all things came into existence and were created, and in Him, all things hold together by the word of His power. The Son of God humbled Himself and took on flesh, lived a perfect and sinless life, and bore in Himself the punishment of our sin, taking God's wrath on the cross. He suffered and died and was raised bodily again on the third day. He ascended into heaven and is now reigning with God interceding for the saints until his second coming.

Luke 1:30-35; 2:40; John 1:1-2, 14, 18, 29; 3:16; 20:20; Rom 3:25-26; 2 Cor 5:14, 21; Eph 1:22-23; Phil 2:5-8; 3:20-21; Col 1:15-20; 2:9; 1 Pet 3:18; Heb 1:3; 4:15; 7:25; 10:5-14; 1 John 2:1

IV THE DOCTRINE OF HUMANITY

We believe that all humankind was created in the image of God, by and for God, and therefore every human possesses intrinsic dignity, value, and worth.

God created humankind, the pinnacle of His creation, set apart in His image, male (man) and female (woman), and gave them authority to govern the earth under his Lordship. God declares the created order to be very good, distinguishing men and women as his agents to care for, manage, and govern over it. Men and women, equally made in the image of God, enjoy equal access to God by faith in Christ Jesus and are both called to move beyond passive self-indulgence to significant private and public engagement in family, church, and civic life. Adam and Eve were made to complement each other in a one-flesh union that establishes the only normative pattern of sexual relations for men and women, such that marriage ultimately serves as a type of the union between Christ and his church. In God's wise purposes, men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways.

Gen 1:26-28, 31; 2:18-24; Ps 8:3-9; 19:1-2; Isa 43:7; Matt 19:4-9; Mark 10:5-9; John 1:3; 1 Cor 6:3; Eph 5:22-33; Heb 11:3; Rev 4:11

Based on the authority God has woven through his created order within humanity, we believe sexual acts outside marriage are sinful. Humans should resist and refrain from all sexual acts outside of marriage – including but not limited to adultery, fornication, cohabitation (living together while not legally married), and homosexuality. Further, because God created mankind in His image: male (man) and female (woman), sexually different but with equal personal dignity, all people should affirm their biological sex and refrain from all attempts to physically change, alter, or disagree with their predominant biological sex. Likewise, because God created and ordered human sexuality to be expressed exclusively in the permanent, comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” covenant union of one man and one woman, we only rightly affirm the sexual complementarity of man and woman and resist any and all same-sex sexual attractions and refrain from any and all same-sex sexual acts or conduct.

Gen 1:26-28; 2:24; Ex 20:14; Lev 18:7-23; 20:10-21; Deut 5:18; Matt 5:27-28; 15:19; 19:4-6; Mark 10:5-9; Rom 1:26-32; 1 Cor 6:9-13; Gal 5:19; Eph 4:17-19; 5:25-27; Col 3:5; 1 Thess 4:3; Heb 13:4; Rev 19:7-9; 21:2

DISTINCTIVE: Complementarianism

Men and women are intrinsically and absolutely equal in essence, dignity, and value, yet distinct by the divine design of God, a distinction that demonstrates the fulness of the diversity and unity in the Godhead. As part of God's good, created order, men and women are to have different yet complimentary roles and responsibilities in marriage and in the church. As it relates to the church and specifically the governance of the church, men and women are both expected to lead and exercise their God-given gifts, given without distinction; however, the office of Elder and congregational preaching are reserved for biblically qualified men.

(Gen 1-2; 1 Tim 2:12-14; 3; Titus 1)

V THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

We believe that sin has fractured all things, leaving the world in desperate need of salvation.

Through the temptation and deception of Satan, humanity transgressed the command of God and fell from their original holiness and righteousness. Because of this original sin, now the entire human race, Jesus Christ excepted, inherits a corrupt nature that is opposed to God and His law. Therefore, all humans are under condemnation. This corruption is radical, and pervasive. It extends to the mind, will, body, and affections, leaving humanity utterly helpless and unable to save themselves from their present condition under the wrath of God, except through the saving work of Jesus Christ. Unregenerate humanity lives under the dominion of sin and Satan, who is at enmity with God, hostile toward and hateful of God.

Gen 3; Luke 1:68-79; John 3:16-21; Rom 1:18; 2:7-8; 3:9-10, 23; 5:1-6, 12; 1 Cor 15:22; Eph 2:1-3

VI THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

We believe that Christ died for our sins and that all who believe in Him are declared righteous because of His substitutionary death and are, therefore, in right relationship with God, saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

Because all humans by their nature and free will have sinned and earned death, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born again. In love, God commands and implores all people to repent and believe. Therefore, He made a way for salvation by offering his Son in our place. Jesus Christ, through his sinless life, death, and resurrection, has successfully paid the penalty of sin that was not his by substituting his life in exchange for all who believe. Salvation from death

and the wrath of God is only obtained by grace through faith in the finished work of Jesus. Therefore, anyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ through faith is declared righteous by God and becomes a child of God.

Gen 3; John 3:5-8, 16; Rom 3:23; 8:3; 5:12; 1 Cor 6:20; 15:22; 2 Cor 5:21, 23; Eph 2:4-5; Gal 2:20; Tit 2:14; 1 Pet 1:18-19; 2:22; Heb 10:19-25

A person is saved when God's Spirit effectively calls the sinner to belief in Christ's work, then, as Scripture teaches, through regeneration, the Spirit imparts a new nature and new spiritual life, not before possessed, and the person becomes a new creation in Jesus Christ. This new person is given a holy disposition and a new desire to serve God, the dominion of sin is broken, and the heart is transformed from a love of self to a love of God and others. God justifies the sinner, declaring their sins are paid for by the blood of Jesus and imputes the righteousness of Christ to the believer so they have an actual righteous standing before God.

John 3:1-8; Rom 8:1-17, 28-30; 1 Cor 1:23-28; 2 Cor 5:16-21; Eph 2:1-6; Phil 3:8-11; Tit 3:5; Heb 9:12-14

DISTINCTIVE: God's Sovereignty in Salvation

The salvation of humanity is fundamentally the work of God. Before the foundation of the world, in his abundant grace, God elected from eternity past to save a great number of fallen humanity from the consequences of their sin. In love and according to his foreknowledge and sovereign freedom, God predestined His people for adoption, not according to their merit or godliness, but according to the gift of his grace that is given by the mercy and pleasure of God, so that none may boast. God orients the will of the elect toward Himself so that all who are called respond in repentance and saving faith through belief in the Gospel proclaimed about Jesus. Therefore, the church must emphasize and exercise evangelism not only out of obedience to Scripture, but because it is necessary for the salvation of those God has chosen to save.

(John 3:16-21; Rom 3; 5:8; 8:29-30; 9-11; 10:14-15; Eph 1:4-6; 2:1-3; 2 Tim 1:9)

VII THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit indwelling and sealing all believers and thus enabling and empowering the life and ministry of the believer through his gracious gifts.

The Holy Spirit is God; He has eternally existed with and is of the exact same nature as the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son who in turn came to glorify the Father. He was present and active in creation, proceeds from the Father and the Son, gives life, illumines believers' eyes to the truth of Scripture, was the means of the inspiration of Scripture, and is worthy of glory and honor in the same way the Father and Son are worshipped. He is the Comforter and the Helper who seals the believer, indwells the believer, unites the believer to Christ, and keeps the believer, persevering their faith, while He conforms them to the image of the Son through sanctification. Likewise, He empowers the believer, equipping them with spiritual gifts for ministry in the church. The Spirit convicts of sin and gives victory over sin. Finally, the Spirit assures the believer that by either passing from death to life or through the second coming of Christ, that God will glorify the believer, bringing them finally into the fulness of salvation in everlasting life.

Gen 1:2; John 6:63; 10:29; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7, 13-16; Rom 8:1-11, 16; 1 Cor 2:14; 3:16; 6:11, 17; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:6; Eph 1:3, 17; Phil 2:12-13; 2 Tim 1:14; 3:16; 1 Pet 1:2; 1 John 5:12-13

DISTINCTIVE: Continuation of the Spiritual Gifts

The gifts of the Holy Spirit as seen in the New Testament are still active within the church. These gifts did not cease with the close of the New Testament or the death of the apostles. (1 Cor 12:1-11)

VIII THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

We believe in the Church, the assembly of true believers, who Jesus, the head, guides into maturity and unity through the power of His Holy Spirit to reach the world with the gospel.

God, by His Word and Spirit, creates the Church, calling sinful humanity into the fellowship of Christ's body, Christ alone being the head. By the same Word and Spirit, He guides and preserves that newly redeemed humanity. The Church is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel. The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The ministry of the Church is an extension of the ministry of Jesus in the power of the Spirit.

Acts 2; Rom 6:4; 1 Cor 12:12-31; Eph 2:13; 5:21, 23-33

The universal mission of the Church is to bring glory to God by making disciples. We do this through worship, prayer, teaching the Word, observing the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, fellowship, exercising our gifts, and the proclamation of the gospel both in our community and throughout the world.

Matt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; Rom 5:1; 8:29; Eph 4:16; 2:5; Col 3:17; 2 Tim 4:2

DISTINCTIVE: Sanctification

The believer who is baptized into the body of Christ and who regularly participates in weekly gatherings and communion and who regularly practice the means of grace with a yielded heart to the Spirit of God, will grow spiritually in holiness and maturity, being set apart for God, and will progressively become more like Christ, reaching their perfected state when they are finally in the presence of the Lord either after death or Christ's return. The Christian life is therefore one of putting on the new self while killing the old self as we obediently, actively, and intentionally pursue holiness in Christ.

(John 15:1-5; 17:17; Rom 6:1-11; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 5; Eph 4:20-24; Phil 1:6; 2:12-13; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 10:14)

DISTINCTIVE: Unity in Diversity

The unity of the church should reflect the unity of the One God for which the church exists and serves. Our Triune God exists as a unity of essence yet maintains diversity in Personhood and throughout Scripture we find the same is true of the church itself; one body, under one Lord, yet made up of many different and diverse parts. Therefore, the church should strive to maintain unity in essentials while not pressing to uniformity on "disputable" matters. In so doing, the church reflects, and bears witness to the God she serves.

(John 13:35; Rom 14; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4)

DISTINCTIVE: Membership

Membership in the church is made up of everyone who believes in Jesus Christ and who have been baptized into His body. Outside of this public confession, there is no other formal membership process seen in Scripture. Christians throughout the New Testament are referred to as brothers and sisters as they are each a part of the spiritual family with

God as their Father. While the individual members of the body are distinct, they are united together in harmony by the power of the Spirit.
(Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 12:26; Eph 2:20; 4:2-3; Gal 3:26-28)

IX THE DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

We believe in the future, bodily, visible, and imminent return of Christ and the bodily resurrection of everyone who has lived, the everlasting life with God for those in right relationship with God, and the separation from God of those who have rejected God's forgiveness in His Son.

The believer's hope is in the future bodily return of Christ when He comes again to establish His earthly Kingdom, judge the righteous and the wicked, and usher in the eternal state. Both the righteous and the unrighteous will rise bodily from the dead to face judgment for their deeds: the unrighteous to eternal conscious torment and punishment in hell, and the righteous to eternal life in the presence of Christ. Christ will decidedly defeat Satan and his companions and reign eternally in righteousness with no more sickness, suffering, sin, or death. Then the eager expectation of creation will be fulfilled, and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God, who makes all things new.

Isa 2:1-5; 65:17-25; Dan 2:34-35; 7:13; 12:2; Matt 24:30-31; Acts 1:11; Rom 8:19-22; 1 Cor 15:12-58; Tit 2:11-14; 1 Thess 4:16-18; Jude 7; Rev 20; 21:1-5; 22:20