

Doctrinal Statement GracePoint Fellowship

**"The doctrine which is to call forth life can be born of life alone."
J.J. Van Oosterzee, New Testament Theology, p. 428**

Introduction:

The faith community of GracePoint Fellowship has constructed and affirmed the following doctrinal statement through prayer, reflection, the searching of Scripture, and dialog within our faith community. This statement is considered to be our confession of what we believe to be true while recognizing that we are limited in our understanding of such great mysteries. We consider this statement to be an integrated whole that reflects our confession in word and in deed, that is to say, it is a living and dynamic confession of what we hold to be as essential to our lives lived through thought, word, and action. We desire that our statement will be judiciously reviewed in the light of Scripture and spiritual illumination as occasion calls. These things being said, we commend this doctrine to you having done the best that we were able before God the Father, in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and through the help of the Holy Spirit.

I. On God's Revelation

We believe that God has revealed Himself in nature¹, in history², and in the heart of man³; that He has been graciously pleased to make clearer the revelation of Himself to His servants who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit⁴; and that in the fullness of time He has perfectly revealed Himself in Jesus Christ⁵, the Word made flesh⁶. We believe in the inspiration⁷ of the sixty-six books of Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testament, given by God through His servants. These contain the only infallible rule for faith and life, and are a faithful record of God's gracious revelations, understood through the illumination of the Holy Spirit⁸; further, they are the only sure and accurate witness to the Lord Jesus Christ and His teachings.

(¹Psalm 19:1ff; Job 38-42; ²Hebrews 1:1; ³Romans 1:19-20; Romans 2:15; Ecclesiastes 3:11; ⁴2 Peter 1:19-21; ⁵Hebrews 1:2-3; ⁶John 1:14; ⁷2 Timothy 3:16; ⁸John 14:26; Ephesians 1:17, 3:16)

II. On God

We confess, believe in, and worship one¹ ever-living almighty God², existing in an inscrutable tri-unity³ (three-in-oneness), whose essence is described by human language as immutable, invisible, indivisible, incomprehensible, yet knowable, personal, spirit-being⁴ who has will, intellect, and emotions. We believe God is infinitely intensive, self-existent, self-conscious personal being. We believe that through the expression of His nature He purposed, foreordained, and decreed according to the counsel of His will all which comes to pass with the ultimate intent of His glorification only⁵. We believe His decree is sovereignly executed in creation, where He sustains all that is created.⁶ We worship Him, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons in 'essentially one Godhead, one in substance and equal in power and glory⁷. (¹Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5,6; ²Isaiah 40:18-28; ³Genesis 1:26-27; Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2; ⁴John 4:24; ⁵Ephesians 1:3-11; ⁶Psalm 104:29-30; ⁷John 10:30)

III. On God, the Father

We believe in and confess the eternal first person of the tri-unity, God the Father¹, as holy and without defect². He as God is one essence with Jesus Christ³ and the Holy Spirit⁴. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, although one in essence with the Father, are economically subordinate to Him⁵ (Jesus Christ was sent forth incarnate to reveal the Father⁶ and the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son to illuminate the hearts of humanity that they might know the Father through the Son⁷). The Father is the source, as well as, the omnipotent originator, creator, and sustainer of the heavens, the earth,⁸ of all humanity⁹ and is the giver of every good and perfect gift¹⁰. He prepared and willed the redemptive plan from before the foundation of the world¹¹ and is the forgiver of our sins¹², providing adoption for His chosen as His children¹³. The Father also expresses His mercy by personally answering prayer¹⁴ and sanctifying souls¹⁵ as He prepares each for resurrection from the dead unto judgment and reward. We seek to worship, revere, thank, and glorify Him¹⁶ in spirit, truth¹⁷ and deed¹⁸.

(¹Isaiah 63:15-16; ²Matthew 5:48; ³John 10:30; ⁴Acts 5:3-4; ⁵Matthew 11:27; John 16:13-15; ⁶John 1:18; ⁷John 14:26; ⁸1Corinthians 8:6; ⁹Isaiah 64:8; John 6:32-33; ¹⁰James 1:17; Matthew 6:32; ¹¹Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:3-6; ¹²Matthew 6:14; ¹³Romans 8:15; ¹⁴Matthew 7:7-11; ¹⁵John 15:1; Romans 6:4; ¹⁶Revelation 5:13-14; Ephesians 1:17-20; James 3:9-10; Ephesians 5:20; ¹⁷John 4:23; ¹⁸John 15:8)

IV. On Jesus Christ

We believe in and confess the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person¹ of the tri-unity, as the only mediator² between a holy and just God and a radically fallen and unjust humanity³. He, who is eternally⁴ and fully God,⁵ became truly man,⁶ for us and for our salvation⁷ being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.⁸ He revealed the Father⁹ to us as the very Word of God.¹⁰ He fulfilled all righteousness, being sinless in nature and thus having lived a sinless life¹¹, and satisfied eternal justice¹² for us by offering Himself as perfect sacrifice¹³ upon the cross to take away the sin of the world.¹⁴ He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven,¹⁵ where he ever intercedes for us¹⁶. He abides forever as the indwelling Christ in our hearts¹⁷ where we are joined to Him by faith. He rules without end over us, and over all for us,¹⁸ and is the supreme and sole head of the Church.¹⁹ He will return²⁰ to judge the living and the dead.²¹ He is worthy of love, obedience²², and worship²³ as our Prophet,²⁴ Apostle, High Priest,²⁵ and King.²⁶

(¹John 5:19,30, John 10:30; ²1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 9:13-16; ³Romans 3:10-23; ⁴John 1:1; ⁵John 8:58; Colossians 2:8-9; ⁶1John 1:1-3; ⁷Luke 2:11; ⁸Matthew 1:18-25; ⁹John 1:18; ¹⁰John 1:14; ¹¹Hebrews 4:15; ¹²Romans 3:21-26; ¹³Hebrews 10:10ff; ¹⁴John 1:29; ¹⁵1Corinthians 15:4; Acts 1:9-12; ¹⁶Romans 8:34; ¹⁷Ephesians 3:17; ¹⁸Eph 1:20-23; ¹⁹Ephesians 5:23; ²⁰Acts 1:11; ²¹Acts 10:38-42; ²²John 14:15; ²³Revelation 5:12; ²⁴Matthew 13:57; ²⁵Hebrews 3:1; ²⁶John 18:37)

V. On the Holy Spirit

We believe and confess in God¹, the Holy Spirit, who from eternity² with the Father and Son and who in economic order³ is the third person of the Tri-unity, being one⁴ in essence with the Father and the Son. We believe that Holy Spirit is the empowerer of life⁵. We believe that He moves in the hearts of all believers to strengthen them for the indwelling and working of Jesus Christ unto

the fulness of God.⁶ We believe that the Holy Spirit has spoken through holy men of God⁷, God's truth to all humanity for their salvation; that, through the Father and Son, He was sent forth in power to convict the world of sin⁸, to enlighten men's minds in the knowledge of Jesus Christ⁹, to persuade, to regenerate¹⁰, to preserve¹¹, to enable them to obey Christ¹², to set His servants apart for service¹³, and to gift each for their given ministry.¹⁴ He intercedes on behalf of believers¹⁵ and abides with the Church, forever.¹⁶

(¹Acts 5:3-4; ²Hebrews 9:14; ³John 15:26; ⁴John 4:24; ⁵Job 33:4; ⁶John 6:63; ⁷Ezekiel 37:14; ⁸Ephesians 3:16-21; ⁹2 Peter 1:21; ¹⁰John 16:7-14; ¹¹John 14:26; ¹²Titus 3:5; ¹³Ephesians 1:13; ¹⁴1 Peter 1:2; ¹⁵Acts 13:2; ¹⁶1 Corinthians 12:4ff; ¹⁷Romans 8:26; ¹⁸John 14:16)

VI. The Doctrine of Angels

We believe and confess that Jesus Christ created all angelic hosts,¹ before the creation of the material world.² He created them as good and holy in character,³ limited in power and knowledge⁴, dependent upon God's will⁵, and everlasting in being.⁶ We believe God created angels to render worship to Him alone⁷ and as guards,⁸ messengers,⁹ and servants¹⁰ to His elect, thus, they themselves are not to be worshiped.¹¹ We believe that a fixed number of angels have fallen from the excellency of His grace¹², Satan* being the foremost among many. These angels have rebelled against the purpose for which they were created¹² and are both enemies of God and to their utmost power, enemies of every good thing created including the elect.¹³ We believe their ultimate destiny is defeat and everlasting damnation.^{12,14}

(¹Colossians 1:16; ²Job 38:4-7; ³Genesis 1:31; ⁴Mark 13:32; ⁵1 Peter 1:12; ⁶Job 1:12; ⁷Luke 20:36; ⁸Hebrews 1:6; ⁹Psalms 91:11; ¹⁰Luke 1:11-20, 26-38; ¹¹2:9-15; ¹²Hebrews 1:13-14; ¹³Revelation 22:8-9; ¹⁴2 Peter 2:4; ¹⁵Jude 6; ¹⁶Ephesians 6:12; ¹⁷Revelation 20:10)

*See Article VII The Doctrine of Satan

VII. The Doctrine of Satan

We believe in the existence of a personal finitely created spirit being called Satan¹ (also called, "the devil"²). We believe that Satan chose to exalt himself above God as God and thus became an enemy of God.³ Satan has limited access to the presence of God.⁴ We believe that Satan served as leader of an angelic rebellion against God and was punished by being cast out from heaven.⁵ We believe he is the current ruler of the earth⁶ where through cunning deception he usurped man's dominion.⁷ We believe Satan seeks to thwart all God's purposes and as ruler of earth he seeks to deceive, corrupt, pervert, and destroy all that is created.⁸ He and the demons who serve him particularly hate the elect and though we may be oppressed by him we have power over him through Jesus Christ, further we believe that it is impossible for them to be possessed by Satan, meaning that, he is unable to separate the elect from the love of God, to claim ownership them, or to control them.⁹ We believe Satan stands condemned by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ¹⁰ and that his rule is passing away.¹¹ He shall be judged and be cast into the lake of fire for all eternity.¹²

(¹Job 1:6,12; ²Revelation 20:2; ³Matthew 4:8-10; ⁴Job 1:6-7; ⁵Revelation 12:3-9; ⁶John 16:11; ⁷Genesis 3:1-6; ⁸Ephesians 2:2; ⁹John 8:44; ¹⁰1 Peter 5:8; ¹¹Ephesians 6:10ff, James 4:7; ¹²Romans 8:38,-39; ¹³John 10:29; ¹⁴Mark 3:11-27; ¹⁵Hebrews 2:14; ¹⁶John 16:11; ¹⁷Revelation 20:10; ¹⁸Matthew 25:41)

VIII. Doctrine of Mankind*

We believe and confess that God created man as a personal and moral being composed of both material and immaterial facets.¹ We believe that man was created with the inherent ability to choose good and the freedom to choose evil.² Furthermore, we believe and confess that God created man in His own image,³ fit for fellowship with Him and forever responsible to Him as Maker and Lord.⁴ We believe that Adam, being tempted, chose evil and so fell away from God⁵ resulting in the penalty of death.⁶ We believe and confess that by reason of Adam's sin all men with the exception of Jesus Christ,⁷ are totally depraved in nature⁸ at the time of their conception, being under the power of sin.⁹ This depravity is manifested in man's rebellious heart¹⁰ toward God resulting in disobedience¹¹ and a final judgment resulting in eternal separation from God,¹² the second death,¹³ except those redeemed by Jesus Christ.¹⁴

¹Genesis 2:7; ²Genesis 2:16-24; ³Genesis 1:26-27; ⁴Genesis 1:28; 2:15-17; 3:9;

⁵Genesis 3:1-6; ⁶Genesis 2:17; 5:5; ⁷2Corinthians 5:21; ⁸Ephesians 2:3; ⁹Romans 5:12-14;

¹⁰Jeremiah 17:9; ¹¹Romans 3:10-23; ¹²2Thessalonians 1:9; ¹³Revelation 21:8;

¹⁴Ephesians 2:8-9)

**Mankind-We recognize that our culture is shifting to inclusive language in the sphere of gender. Many theologies are beginning to use the term 'humanity, mankind, or persons when referring to the human species without regard to gender. Also, we recognize that most orthodox translations of Scripture still use the term 'man' to designate the human species. We are seeking to begin to move toward less apparent exclusive language in this discussion by providing the title "mankind" to designate the human species in contexts where gender emphasis is not the textual focus. We use the term "man" in the body of the text to refer to 'mankind' or the 'human species' in order to (1) remove potential confusion between text and Scripture, (2) emphasize the responsibility of each individual of the human species, and (3) to expedite the writing of less cumbersome statement. Our use of the term should not be construed as statements promoting androcentricism or exclusivity of the female gender. It is our best attempt in a complex period of language transition.*

IX. The Doctrine of Salvation

We believe and confess that God, from the beginning of man's creation, permitted man the choice to know eternal life in God's presence or to know evil and eternal separation from God's presence.¹ God, in His foreknowledge of man's choice of evil, decreed the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Redeemer and Mediator between man and God before the world's creation.² We believe that man's depravity³ prohibits his access to God⁴, but out of God's great love for the world He sent His only begotten Son who reconciled man to Himself.⁵ Jesus, who was without sin and sin nature, took all man's sin upon Himself⁶, fulfilled all righteousness and satisfied all justice⁷, and offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice⁸ to God, a substitutionary atonement for the sins of the world⁹. Further, we believe that God called some out of their fallen state, unto salvation, chosen in Christ.¹⁰ We believe God freely offers salvation sufficient for all men.⁹ We believe that this salvation is received only by God's grace unto repentance¹¹ through faith¹² in the Lord Jesus Christ, wherein sins are confessed and forsaken. We believe that all who are saved by grace are changed, that is, regenerated in nature by the Holy Spirit with full purpose of and endeavor after a new obedience to God.¹³ They are called to a life of purity and service by

the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit who is the source of rebirth and the empowerment of their new nature in Christ.¹⁴ The Holy Spirit seals them eternally as heirs in Christ¹⁵, and purges them while transforming them as they endure until they are perfected in the likeness of Christ in the glory of the life to come.¹⁶

(¹Genesis 2:9, 15-17, Romans 5:12-14; ²1 Peter 1:18-21; 1 Timothy 2:3-6; Hebrews 9:11-15; ³Romans 3:9-18 [see Article XIII - Doctrine of Mankind]; ⁴Isaiah 59:2; ⁵John 3:16; ⁶2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22-24; ⁷Romans 5:15-21; Romans 3:25-26; ⁸Hebrews 9:11-14; ⁹1 John 2:2; ¹⁰Acts 13:48; Ephesians 1:4-11; Romans 9:11-16; ¹¹Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:9-10; ¹²Ephesians 2:1-8; Titus 3:5-7; ¹³Colossians 3:1-10; ¹⁴Titus 3:5-7; Ephesians 3:14-19; ¹⁵Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; ¹⁶2 Corinthians 3:18)

X. Doctrine of the Church

We confess and believe that the Lord Jesus Christ founded¹ one holy² universal³ Church comprised of a vast company of saints (believers) of every nation and tongue.⁴ These saints, united by the Holy Spirit to Christ their only Head,⁵ are one body in Him and have communion with their Lord and with one another.⁶ We receive it as the will of Christ that His Church on earth should exist as a sacred fellowship consisting of those who profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and live in obedience to Him. The Church is organized for the confession of His name, the public worship of God, the upbuilding of the saints, and the proclamation of the Gospel.⁷ We believe that every local expression* of the Church throughout the world which professes this faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him as divine Lord and Savior is part of this universal fellowship.⁸ We practice believers' baptism by immersion,⁹ the Lord's Supper,¹⁰ confession of sins,¹¹ marriage,¹² the ordination into the ministry,¹³ and anointing of the sick¹⁴ as symbols expressing the reality of God's mystical presence. We confess and believe the Lord Jesus Christ, has appointed the Church's worship, teaching, discipline, and government to be administered according to His will by elders and deacons¹⁵ chosen for their fitness according to the criteria of Scripture¹⁵ and through affirmation by the local autonomous congregation.¹⁷

(¹Matthew 16:18; ²Ephesians 5:27; ³1 Corinthians 12:13; ⁴Revelation 5:9-10; ⁵Ephesians 1:20-23; ⁶1 Corinthians 12:12; ⁷Ephesians 3:20-4:13; ⁸1 Corinthians 1:2, Revelation 2:1-3:22; ⁹Matthew 3:11-16; Romans 6:3-5; ¹⁰Luke 22:15-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; ¹¹1 John 1:6-10; ¹²Matthew 19:5-6, Ephesians 5:31-32; ¹³Titus 1:5, 1 Timothy 5:22; ¹⁴James 5:13-15; ¹⁵Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-11; Romans 16:1; ¹⁶1 Timothy 3:8-12; Titus 1:5-9; ¹⁷Acts 6:1-6; Acts 14:23)

* By "local expression" we mean the "pressing out" of the nature of the universal Church in the practical life of the local Church.

XI. The Doctrine of Last Things

We believe in the imminent, sudden¹, visible² return of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven with power and great glory³ on a day known only to God, the Father⁴. We believe that those who have rejected Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior will be resurrected, separated from the righteous⁵, judged⁶, and cast into an existence of eternal punishment⁷ being separated from all that is of God⁸. We believe that those who have accepted God's gift of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ shall receive their inheritance of glory in the kingdom of their Father⁹. They shall be made fully blessed in the presence and service of God, Whom they shall see and enjoy throughout the age of ages¹⁰. Although we do not know what the faithful shall be fashioned into when present with the Lord we do know that we shall be fashioned into His likeness, resurrected and conformed to His body of glory.¹¹ We believe that the souls of the righteous who die before the day of the Lord enter a state of conscious rest and happiness in the presence of the Lord¹². We believe it is imperative for the Church to work and wait in clear-headed watchfulness¹³, that we may be found ready at His coming.¹⁴ Even so come Lord Jesus¹⁵!

(¹1Thessalonians 5:2-3; Matthew 24:43-44; ²Acts 1:9-11; ³Luke 21:27; ⁴Matthew 24:36; Matthew 25:13; ⁵Matthew 25:31-41; Daniel 12:2; ⁶Revelation 20:11-15; ⁷Matthew 25:30; Daniel 12:2; Mark 9:43-48; ⁸Matthew 25:41; 2Thessalonians 1:8-10; ⁹1Peter 1:1-4; Ephesians 1:11-14; ¹⁰Revelation 22:1-5; ¹¹1John 3:1-3; Philippians 3:20-21; 1Corinthians 15:50-57; ¹²2Corinthians 5:6-9; Philippians 1:23; Luke 16:19-31; ¹³1Peter 1:13; Matthew 25:13; ¹⁴Matthew 25:1-13; ¹⁵Revelation 22:20)