

Refuge Church Doctrinal Statement

PURPOSE - This doctrinal statement is a summary of the truths of God revealed in the Scriptures that we believe are crucial for the understanding and defense of the gospel, for instruction in godly living, for the order of a New Testament church, and for evangelism. This doctrinal statement is a foundational guide for all instruction, teaching, leadership, and preaching at Refuge Church. The Elders believe, teach, and affirm the entirety of this doctrinal statement, and they govern the church accordingly.

REVELATION - We believe that God exists and has revealed himself to mankind. Though he is wholly transcendent and unfathomable, he is knowable by nature of his gracious self-disclosure and by giving mankind the capacity to comprehend him. This revelation is necessarily limited, but it is perfect truth and given by God's good pleasure. His revelation has come through multiple avenues, including creation, humanity, divine action, divine speech, apostles, and prophets, but it comes most clearly through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ and is now accessible finally and authoritatively through the Bible. We believe that our conscience and actions must be directed by and submitted to God's revealed truth, which is accessible and comprehensible through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. **(Genesis 1:26-27; Deuteronomy 29:29; Psalm 19:1-6; Isaiah 40:18; 55:8-9; 66:1-2; Daniel 2:21; John 1:14-18; Acts 14:17; 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-23; 2:12-16; Hebrews 1:1-2; I Peter 1:20-21; II Peter 3:2,15-16)**

THE WORD OF GOD - We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, infallible and without error in the original manuscripts, written by men under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The Bible, comprised of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is Holy Scripture, accessible and sufficient for understanding and believing the message of salvation it discloses, and is absolutely trustworthy with regard to everything it communicates. **(Mark 13:31; John 8:31-32; 20:31; II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21)**

THE TRINITY - We believe that there is only one true, good, and living God, who is of a singular essence, power, and eternal purpose, yet eternally exists in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We believe this Trinitarian God is without division of nature, essence, or being, though each person in the Trinity is distinct in both identity and role. The Father is neither begotten nor preceded; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; and the Holy Spirit is eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. The persons of the Trinity are equal in every divine perfection. They execute distinct but harmonious functions in the work of creation, history, providence, and redemption. This One God possesses all life, glory, goodness, and blessedness in and of himself. **(Genesis 1:1,26; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; John 1:1-3; 5:26; 15:26; Romans 9:5; I Corinthians 8:6; II Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:5-6; Colossians 2:9)**

GOD THE FATHER - We believe in God the Father, the everlasting, infinite, perfect, personal, divine being who is the sovereign and rightful ruler of all that exists. The Father is perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. The Father, in his ordinary providence, makes use of all natural and spiritual means yet is free to work without, above, and against them at his pleasure. He does this to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and grace. He is sufficient in himself, not standing in need of any creature that he has made. He conducts himself with steadfast mercy towards humanity. He draws men to himself through his Son, forgiving of sin and delivering from death those who come to him through Christ for salvation. It was the will of the Father to save humanity through the cross of his Son. The Father hears and answers prayer according to his wisdom, love, and providence. He carries out all things in their proper time and order that they would consummate in Jesus Christ to reveal the supremacy of his name and purposes, and especially the greatness of his love. (***Psalm 139; Isaiah 55:10-11; Daniel 3:27; Hosea 1:7; 2:21-22; Matthew 4:4; 23:9; Luke 10:21-22; John 3:16; 6:27; Acts 17:24-31; Romans 1:7; 4:19-21; Colossians 1:16-17; I Timothy 1:1-2; 2:5-6; I Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:4-6***)

GOD THE SON - We believe in Jesus Christ, the Father's unique, uncreated eternal Son, the image of the invisible God. He took upon himself our nature, being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. The Son is fully God, therefore he is able to purchase our souls for God. He is fully man, therefore he is able to represent mankind as the sin bearer. The Son exists forever as fully God and fully man without confusion, without change, without division, and without separation of his two natures. While on earth, Jesus lived a sinless life as a man by the influence and power of the Holy Spirit. He performed many signs and wonders, taught the words of eternal life, called people to repentance and faith, taught that the kingdom of God was at hand, and inaugurated the New Covenant. He offered himself as an atoning sacrifice for sinners, bearing our sins in his body and suffering under the wrath of God for us. He was physically crucified, suffered, bled, died and was buried. By the blood of his cross, he secured for us eternal redemption and made a way for life everlasting. He was literally and physically raised from the dead on the third day and physically appeared to his disciples in his resurrected body. He ascended into heaven, where he now sits at the right hand of the Father and is continually interceding for the saints. He lives today and awaits the time when the Father will send him personally back to earth for a final resurrection of his people. He will judge his creation and usher in the final movement in redemptive history. He is due from angels, men, and every other creature whatever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require. At his appearing, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. (***Isaiah 53:10; Matthew 1:18-25; 20:28; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1-18; 8:46-47; 20:28-31; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; 6:9-10; 8:34; 9:5; I Corinthians 15:1-28; II Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Ephesians 1:7; Philippians 2:5-7; Hebrews 7:25; 9:28; I Timothy 3:16; I Peter 2:21-23; Revelation 5:9-14***)

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT - We believe in the Holy Spirit, eternally one with the Father and Son, uncreated and sharing fully in the divine essence, who convicts and convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. His primary roles are the perfection, sustenance, and empowerment of the designed works of God, directed by the Father and enacted by the Son.

Through illumination, he enables men to understand God's revealed truth. The Holy Spirit is the divine agent by whom believers are born into the Kingdom of God, and he is the giver of true faith in Jesus. It is the gracious work of the Holy Spirit that opens our blind eyes to the glory of the gospel, draws us to Jesus in repentance and faith, and adopts us into God's family. Apart from the Holy Spirit, no one sees, comprehends, or experiences the deep love of God as revealed in the gospel. As our abiding helper, the Spirit effectually calls, sanctifies, empowers, baptizes, indwells, gifts, guides, teaches, and equips all believers for service and witness. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit counsels, governs, and protects the child of God from spiritual defeat and oppression. The Holy Spirit empowers all believers to live a faithful and fruitful life on mission for the glory of God. He enables believers to live in union with God the Son and God the Father. (***John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26-27; 16:8-14; Romans 8:9,12-13; I Corinthians 2:10-11; 3:16; 6:19; 12:13; II Corinthians 3:6; Galatians 5:22-26; Ephesians 6:11-18; Titus 3:5***)

CREATION - We believe that God created all things, both visible and invisible, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness. He created every molecule and every galaxy, every angel and every creature, everything physical and everything spiritual (Himself excluded). All of creation has its beginning and end in God's will, and it does not exist independently from him, nor does creation reflect a prior deficiency in God, but its formation and maintenance represent a continuing exertion of his creative power and ability. We believe that the culmination of His creative work was the creation of Adam from the dust of the earth, and Eve from Adam. Both Adam and Eve were created equally in the image of God, without sin, with God's natural law of conscience written on their hearts, and were created with the ability to completely refrain from sin. However, as free moral creatures, they also lived with the ability to sin. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man and woman in his own image, and therefore every person of every race and sex possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love. We believe that God created men and women as gendered beings, each created in the image of God, fully equal in value, dignity, and worth, with complementary roles in the created order. (***Genesis 1; 2:7; Ecclesiastes 7:29; 12:7; Job 26:13; 33:4; Psalm 24:1-2; 33:5-6; 104:24; Isaiah 55:10-11; Jeremiah 10:12; Matthew 10:28; John 1:1-3; Acts 17:24; Romans 1:20; 2:14-15; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 1:16; 3:10; Hebrews 1:2; 11:3; Revelation 4:11***)

THE FALL - We believe that Adam and Eve received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which allowed them, while they kept it, to remain joyfully whole in their communion with God and have dominion over the earth and all living things. However, being influenced and seduced by the subtlety and temptation of Satan, they sinned by eating of the forbidden fruit. They thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God and so became dead in sin and wholly corrupted in all their parts and faculties of soul, spirit, and body. We believe that Adam was the representative head of all mankind; therefore, the guilt, death, and corrupted nature caused by this sin was imputed and conveyed to all his posterity descending from generation to generation. For this reason, we believe all human beings are born with a sinful nature. Since this original corruption, we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and opposed to God himself, our wills being completely enslaved to sin. We are thus wholly inclined to all evil and suppression of the truth, and from this disposition proceeds all actual sin. This corruption of nature, during this life, remains in those that are saved; and although it is, through Christ, pardoned and mortified, it is never completely overcome until our glorification. We believe that although our nature has been corrupted by sin, every single human remains fully created in the image of God. While this image has been marred by sin, it has not been completely lost or destroyed by sin. Therefore, every person, regardless of race, ethnic background, sex, age, marital, or social status, is still worthy of dignity, honor, and respect. (***Genesis 1:27-28; 2:16-17; 3:1-24; 5:3; 6:5; 8:21; Job 14:4; Psalm 51:5; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Jeremiah 13:23; 17:9; Matthew 7:11; 15:18-20; Acts 17:26; Romans 1:18; 3:10-18,23; 5:12-19; 7:7-25; 8:7-8; I Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49; II Corinthians 11:3; Galatians 5:17; Ephesians 2:1-3; Colossians 1:21; Titus 1:15; James 1:14-15; I John 1:8,10***)

REDEMPTION - We believe that God, in his unbelievable mercy and love for the world, chose not to abandon creation in its fallen, broken state, but rather chose to redeem creation and make salvation for humans possible. Immediately after the Fall, God covered the nakedness of Adam and Eve and promised that the serpent would be defeated. The continued refrain of God throughout both the Old Testament and the New Testament is that he is working for the redemption of all things, and is making a way for salvation for all people who would trust him. This salvation is the gracious purpose of God according to which he justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness and grace, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. (***Genesis 3:14-15, 21; Deuteronomy 30:11-20; Isaiah 66:17-25; Acts 15:16-18; 17:30-31; Romans 5:20-21; 8:20-23; 10:5-13; Ephesians 1:7-10; Colossians 1:19-20; Revelation 21:1-8; 22:1-5***)

God's work in redemption is universal in scope and includes not just the salvation of individual persons, but encompasses a complete recreation of the created universe to cleanse it from the effects of sin. In this work of redemption, God, through the work of Jesus and by the power of the Spirit, determined to bring life where sin brought death, purchase sinful souls for God, delivering sinful humanity and broken creation from darkness and futility, and reconcile wayward sinners to God the Father through the institution of the New Covenant.

We believe that by complete and perfect obedience to God throughout the entirety of his life, by his penal substitutionary atoning death on a cross, and by his glorious resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ obtained forgiveness of sins and the gift of his righteousness for all who trusted in God prior to the cross, and all who trust in Christ thereafter. Through living a perfect life and dying in our place, the just for the unjust, Christ absorbed and became sin and succumbed to our due punishment thereby satisfying the wrath of God against us. We further believe that the work of Christ on the cross for sin warrants and impels a universal offering of the gospel to all persons, so that to every person it may be truly said, "God gave his only begotten Son so that whoever believes in him might not perish but have eternal life." (***Matthew 28:19; John 3:16; 4:14; 6:37; 10:27; Acts 1:8; Romans 3:23-26; 5:6-9, 18-19; 8:1, 34; 14:9; I Corinthians 15:3; II Corinthians 5:14, 21; Galatians 3:13; Ephesians 1:7; 2:3-6; Philippians 3:9; Colossians 1:14, 23; I Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; Revelation 22:17***)

We believe that human beings are accountable for their response to the forgiveness, pardon, and reconciliation offered to them in the Lord Jesus Christ. When an individual trusts in Jesus, the person is justified by God and adopted into his family. Justification occurs by and through Christ and because of his work on the cross and is apprehended through faith. No man is justified in the sight of God partly by Christ and partly by works; it is fully by Christ, and Christ alone. In light of this glorious salvation, God's will for believers is that they exhibit transformed lives evidenced by purity, holiness, and growth in Christ-like character. He desires that they each participate, according to their spiritual gifts, in the task of effectively sharing the gospel message of salvation with those, near and far, who have yet to believe in Jesus. We believe that those who are redeemed and come to saving faith will never lose their salvation but will remain in him. Believers may fall into sin through neglect, spiritual weakness, and temptation, whereby they grieve the Holy Spirit, degrade their graces and joys, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves. Even so, they will be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, sanctified by his Spirit, and will never fully fall away from the state of grace but will endure to the end. They will never fall fully and completely because God, by His grace, protects and preserves them. The intercession of Christ for those God has called is efficacious unto eternity. (***Psalms 32:3-5; 51:8-12; 89:31-33; Isaiah 8:20; 63:17; Jeremiah 31:3; Matthew 7:22-23; Mark 6:52; 16:14; John 10: 28-29; 17:11, 24; Romans 5:2-5; 12-16; 8:33-39; I Corinthians 11:32; Ephesians 1; 4:30; Philippians 1:6; 2:13; II Thessalonians 3:3; II Timothy 2:18-19; 3:15-17; Hebrews 6:17-18; 7:25; 9:12-15; 10:10- 14; 13:20-21; I Peter 1:5-9; II Peter 1:10; I John 2:3; 3:9, 14, 18-24; 4:7; Revelation 2:4***)

CHURCH - We believe the Church is the holy, gospel-shaped, community comprising the New Covenant people of God, consisting of all who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for their eternal salvation, and is the spiritual body of Christ. This includes all the redeemed of the ages, believers from among all peoples from every tribe, tongue, and nation. The primary purpose of the Church is to worship God and glorify him by building up believers and effectively reaching the world with the gospel of Christ. We believe that Christ is the King, the High Priest, the Holy Prophet, and the Senior Pastor of the church. God ordained the ministry of the Church to include taking the gospel of Jesus

Christ to a lost world and making disciples who make disciples, thereby accomplishing his redemptive purposes among all peoples, which is carried out primarily through local expressions of the Church. The local congregation is a gathering of believers who are associated by the New Covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Spirit, observe the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are governed by his laws, and exercise the gifts, rights, and privileges within them by the power of the Word and the Holy Spirit under unified, shared leadership. The primary officers in the church are elders and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus. Both men and women play a necessary and vital role in the life of the local church. When men and women walk out their respective roles and responsibilities as laid out in the Scriptures, both genders are complemented and shine more gloriously. We believe that God, grounded in the ordained principle of male headship, intended that the primary governing and teaching role of elder is restricted to biblically called and qualified men. (**Genesis 1:27; 2:22-25; Matthew 16:15-19; Acts 2:41-47; 3:22-23; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 14:23, 27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:17-32; I Corinthians 3:16; 7:17; 9:13-14; 11:2-34; 12:1-31; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 1:18; 3:1-19; I Timothy 2:11-15; 3:1-7; II Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 4:14; 8:1; I Peter 3:1-7; 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 5:6-10; 21:2-3**)

BAPTISM - We believe baptism by immersion is the prescribed method the Lord gives for new believers to express their new faith in Him and identification with Jesus. (**Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 16:30-33**)

GOSPEL AND MISSION - We believe the call and holy privilege of every child of God and of all churches of Jesus Christ is to go and make disciples of the nations. God creates transformed lives evidenced by purity, holiness, and growth in Christ-like character by means of new birth. The Holy Spirit imputes the love of Christ into the hearts of believers, thus transforming their love toward others, for his name's sake. This results in children of God who actively seek to take the gospel to sinners and who share in carrying out the Great Commission. The highest purpose for evangelism and missions is that the name of Jesus Christ and the glory of his kingdom be taken to the ends of the earth until he returns. (**Matthew 9:37-38; 28:18-20; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 1:8; 2:37-39; 8:1-8; 10:34-35; 13:47; Romans 1:5; 10:13-15; 15:20-21; II Timothy 4:5; I Peter 2:9; Revelation 5:9-10; 22:17**)

SPIRITUAL GIFTS - We believe the Holy Spirit imparts spiritual gifts to every Christian, man or woman, according to his own purpose and will. Being positioned in the church by God, each Christian serves as a necessary part of the body of Christ, and is equipped with gifts necessary and vital for both ministry and mission. These gifts are designed to testify to the presence of the Kingdom and the Holy Spirit, and they are distributed to equip the saints for worship, ministry, and the building up of the body of Jesus Christ. The use of spiritual gifts is for the purpose of edification within the body, that it would be built up in Christ. We believe that God uses these spiritual gifts to display his glory and anointing in individual saints for the work of his ministry and mission, established in the timeless message of the Bible. (**Acts 2:1-4, 17-18; Romans 12:6-8; I Corinthians 12:4-11, 14-20; 13:8-12; 14:1, 12; Ephesians 4:11-12; I Peter 4:10-11**)

MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY - We believe that God instituted marriage as a holy union, intended from the beginning of creation to serve as a picture of the relationship between Jesus and his church. This union is a part of God's original creative design, as set forth in Scripture, and is for complete fidelity (physically, emotionally, and spiritually) within heterosexual and monogamous marriage. Husbands are called to love, lead, and serve their wives, working for their purity and growth in Christian maturity, as Christ loves his church, and wives are called to honor, respect, and submit to their husbands. This complementary relationship provides the framework for the union, and serves to point people to Jesus and his Gospel. Singles are called to serve God with their sexuality, and, regardless of one's marital status, we believe Christians should pursue purity and abstain from sexually immoral practices such as adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, and pornography. (***Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18- 25; Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 1:18-32; I Corinthians 6:9-20; 7:1-9; 10:8; Ephesians 5:3-14; 5:22-33; I Thessalonians 4:1-8; I Timothy 1:8-10; Hebrews 13:4***)

JUDGEMENT - We believe that in the end all deeds done by humans, angels, and demons will be judged by the rightful, righteous, and good Judge, God himself. His judgment is both right and just, and will be the final word regarding every moral being created. After the resurrection of the dead, God will render final judgment, which will include both eternal condemnation for the unrighteous, those who were not united to Jesus through faith, and eternal blessing for those who are righteous, not because of what they did, but because of imputed righteousness they gained when they were united to Jesus through faith.

We believe that Heaven is a real place of eternal blessedness prepared by God for those who have been saved by grace through the shed blood of Christ. In Heaven, those who have repented of sin and trusted in Jesus, being completely freed from the presence of sin and temptation, will experience an ever-increasing level of eternal joy, pleasure, and delight in all that God is.

We believe that Hell is a real place of eternal suffering for those who continue in unrepentant rejection of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, we believe that Hell is the ultimate destination for the fallen angels, while Heaven is the residence for faithful angels. There is no intermediate state in which the unsaved can atone for his or her own sins. (***Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 16:19-31; John 14:1-6; Acts 10:42-43; II Corinthians 5:1-10; Hebrews 9:27-28; Revelation 7:13-17; 14:9-11; 20:7-15; 21:22-27***)

LAST THINGS - We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the full realization and establishment of his kingdom. Jesus will return to the earth one final time to finally and fully lift the curse of sin off of the earth and bring everything under complete and total submission to himself. Heaven will come down to earth, and there will be a new heaven and new earth, where there will be no more pain, sorrow, sin, or death. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal joy of those who trust in Jesus, and the eternal punishment of those who do not trust in Jesus. (***Matthew 16:27; Acts 1:11; 3:20-21; I Corinthians 15:12-26, 51-57; Philippians 3:20; I Thessalonians 4:15-17; II Thessalonians 1:5-10; II Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; Revelation 20:11-15; 22:20***)

