

Preface to the Bridgeway Statement of Faith

We believe that it is crucial to the spiritual health and public witness of our fellowship that we articulate and celebrate the glorious truths that God has graciously revealed to us in the Scriptures. These doctrinal truths bring stability to the church in the midst of widespread confusion and equip the people of God to confront both the false religions and secularism of our society.

We believe that it is best and most biblical not to discover how little can be believed simply to get by, or to find the lowest common denominator of doctrine around which all can gather, but to elevate the fullness of biblical truth and to teach and hold fast to the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

While avoiding arrogant and divisive dogmatism on secondary issues, we do believe that the Bible speaks clearly on the essential concepts of the Christian faith and that it is our responsibility to proclaim “the good doctrine” (1 Tim. 4:6) and to “guard the good deposit” (2 Tim. 1:14) entrusted to us. That is why we have undertaken to define as clearly as possible what we believe to be the foundational principles of the Scriptures.

We do not believe that every article in this statement of faith is of equal importance. Some are considerably more essential than others. Thus we do not believe that every doctrine stated below must be believed in order for someone to be saved.

It should also be understood that this statement of faith is not a requirement for people who attend Bridgeway Church, as if to suggest that disagreement with any particular assertion disqualifies a person from being actively engaged in the ministries of this local body of believers. We welcome and embrace all who believe in and follow the Lord Jesus Christ, whether or not they can affirm every article of faith in this statement. We welcome and embrace all who are still searching for spiritual truth and have not yet acknowledged Jesus as Lord and Savior.

The purpose of this declaration of doctrinal beliefs is to make known where Bridgeway Church stands on issues of supreme importance to Christian faith and life. These are the biblical and theological truths and boundaries that will be honored by those who teach and preach at Bridgeway Church, whether on Sunday morning at our corporate celebrations, in our house churches, children’s ministry, formal classroom settings, or any other expression of life and training. Whereas we recognize that differences of opinion and interpretation may exist among the people of this local church, and that robust, yet humble, discussion and debate on these matters is spiritually healthy, nothing contrary to this statement of faith will be either publicly or privately promoted.

We do not claim perfection for this statement of faith. God’s Word alone is inerrant and infallible, not our interpretations of it. Thus we will always be open to correction from Scripture and will refine this statement as the Spirit teaches and guides us.

Our hope and prayer is that we will know how “to contend [without being contentious] for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3), and that by faithfully and humbly holding fast to the word of truth we will both honor the Lord Jesus Christ and be a rich and encouraging blessing to his bride, the church.

Bridgeway Church Statement of Faith

1. We believe that the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, are the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of his will for the salvation of mankind, and the final authority for all Christian faith and life (Matthew 5:18; John 10:35; 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).
2. We believe that the one true God exists eternally in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that these, being one God, are equal in deity, power, and glory. We believe that God not only created the world but also now upholds, sustains, governs, and providentially directs all that exists and that he will bring all things to their proper consummation in Christ Jesus to the glory of his name. We believe that God has exhaustive foreknowledge of all future events, including the free choices of all moral agents, both angelic and human, that he hears and answers prayer, and that he saves from sin and death all who come to him through Jesus Christ (Isaiah 40:48; Psalm 104; Psalm 139; Matthew 10:29-31; 28:19; Acts 17:24-28; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 1:9-12; 4:4-6; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6).
3. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, that he was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, and offered himself as a substitutionary sacrifice for sinners. By the blood of his cross he satisfied the wrath of God, obtained for us eternal redemption, the forgiveness of sins, spiritual adoption as sons and daughters, life everlasting, and defeated the powers of darkness. He was raised bodily on the third day and ascended to the right hand of the Father, there to make intercession for the saints (Isaiah 53:1-12; Matthew 1:18-25; John 1:1-18; Romans 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:1-28; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:10-14; Ephesians 1:7; Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 1:15-23; 2:15; Hebrews 7:25; 9:13-15; 10:19; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 1 John 2:1-2; 3:8).
4. We believe that the Holy Spirit is fully God, equal with the Father and Son. The primary ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit also convicts unbelievers of their need for Christ and imparts spiritual life through regeneration (the new birth). The Spirit indwells, sanctifies, leads, illumines, and graciously empowers for godly living and service all who come to faith in Christ. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ baptizes believers in the Holy Spirit, in whom also we are sealed for the day of redemption. Subsequent to conversion the Spirit desires to fill, empower, and anoint believers for ministry and witness (Matthew 3:11; John 1:12-13; 3:1-15; 15:26-27; 16:7-15; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14; 5:18).
5. We believe that the gospel is the good news of what God has accomplished for sinners through the life, death, and resurrection of his Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. The gospel is centered in Christ and is not proclaimed if his death and resurrection are not the focus of our message. The church is responsible for the declaration of this good news and the defense of it against all who would seek to distort or re-define its core truths. The gospel is the foundation for the life of the Church and our only hope for eternal life. The Gospel is not only the means by which people are saved, but also the means by which people are sanctified. The truth of the Gospel enables us to genuinely and joyfully do that which is pleasing to God and to grow in progressive conformity to the image of Christ (Mark 1:1; Luke 24:46-47; John 3:16-18; Romans 1:16-17; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; 2:2; 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 4:1-6; 9:13; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Timothy 1:8-14; Jude 3-4).

6. We believe that the ministry of the Spirit in signs and wonders continues to be as broad, tangible, and powerful among believers today as it was in the early church. We also believe that all the biblical gifts of the Spirit continue to be distributed by the Spirit today; that these gifts are divine provisions central to spiritual growth and effective ministry; and that these gifts are to be eagerly desired, faithfully developed, and lovingly exercised according to biblical guidelines (John 14:12; Acts 2:14-21; 4:29-30; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; 12:28-31; 14:1-33; Galatians 3:1-5).

7. We believe that Adam was created in the image of God, righteous and without sin. In consequence of his disobedience, Adam's posterity are born subject to sin and moral corruption, and are therefore by nature and choice the children of wrath, justly condemned in the sight of God, wholly unable to save themselves or to contribute in any way to their acceptance with God (Genesis 1-3; Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:9-18; 5:12-21; Ephesians 2:1-3).

8. We believe that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world and will, through the work of the Holy Spirit, draw the elect to faith in his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. We are therefore justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. No ordinance, ritual, work, or any other activity on the part of man is required in order to be saved. This saving grace of God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, also sanctifies us by enabling us to do what is pleasing in God's sight in order that we might be progressively conformed to the image of Christ (John 1:12-13; 6:37-44; 10:25-30; Acts 13:48; 16:30-31; Romans 3-4; 8:1-17,31-39; 9:1-23; 10:8-10; Ephesians 1:4-5; 2:8-10; Philippians 2:12-13; Titus 3:3-7; 1 John 1:7,9).

9. We believe that Satan, originally a great and good angel, rebelled against God, taking a multitude of angels with him. He was cast out of God's presence and is at work with his demonic hosts to establish his counter-kingdom of darkness and evil on the earth. Satan was judged and defeated at the cross of Christ and will, at the end of the age, be cast forever into the lake of fire which has been prepared for him and his angels (Matthew 12:25-29; 25:41; John 12:31; 16:11; Ephesians 6:10-20; Colossians 2:15; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 12:7-9; 20:10).

10. We believe that the Church is the Bride of Christ and is comprised of all believers in every age. The Church is also God's primary instrument through which he is fulfilling his redemptive purposes in the earth. We believe that God has called the Church to preach the gospel to all nations, and especially to remember the poor and to minister to their needs through sacrificial giving and practical service. We also affirm the priesthood of all believers and the importance of every Christian being joined with and actively involved in a local community of the saints (Isaiah 58:6-12; 61:1; Matthew 16:17-19; 28:18-20; Luke 4:18; 21:1-4; Acts 2:17-18,42; Galatians 2:10; Ephesians 3:14-21; 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 6:8; Hebrews 10:23-25; 1 Peter 2:4-5,9-10).

11. We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances of the church to be observed until the time of Christ's return. They are not a means of salvation but are sacramental channels of God's sanctifying grace and blessing to the faithful in Christ Jesus. Only those who have personally and consciously placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are qualified to receive the sacraments (Matthew 26:26-29; 28:19; Romans 6:3-11; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34; 1 Peter 3:21).

12. We believe that both men and women are together created in the divine image and are therefore equal before God as persons, possessing the same moral dignity and value, and have equal access to God through faith in Christ. We also believe that men and women are together the recipients of spiritual gifts designed to equip and empower them for ministry in the local church

and beyond. We also believe that God has ordained the principle of male headship in both the home and in the local church and that certain governing and teaching roles are restricted to men (primarily the office of Elder) (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; 3:1-7; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

13. We believe that when Christians die they pass immediately into the blessed presence of Christ, there to enjoy conscious fellowship with the Savior until the day of the resurrection and glorious transformation of the body. The saved will then forever dwell in blissful fellowship with their great Triune God. We also believe that when unbelievers die they are consigned to hell, there to await the day of judgment when they shall be punished with eternal separation from the presence of God (Matthew 25:46; Luke 16:19-31; John 5:25-29; 1 Corinthians 15:35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10; Philippians 1:19-26; 3:20-21; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:1-22:15).

14. We believe that the Kingdom of God came in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, that it continues to expand by the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the Church, and that it will be consummated in the glorious, visible, and triumphant appearing of Christ when he returns to the earth as King. We believe that after Christ returns, he will bring about the ultimate defeat of Satan, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and the eternal blessing of the righteous. At that time, the Kingdom of God will be completely fulfilled in the new heavens and the new earth, in which righteousness dwells and in which he will be worshipped forever (1 Corinthians 15:20-28,50-58; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12; Revelation 19:1-21).