

Shoestring Valley Community Church

ARTICLE III - STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. The Bible

- A. We believe the Bible alone is God's Word, uniquely authored (inspired) by God through human writers. (*Acts 1:16; 3:18; 1 Pet. 1:11; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Ex. 17:14; 24:4; 34:27; Num. 33:2; Jer. 1:9-10; Isa. 55:11; Ezek. 3:10-11*).
- B. We believe God's authorship extends equally and fully to the whole Bible and every word in it. (*Matt. 5:17-18; Luke 24:44-46; John 14:26; 16:13-15; 1 Cor. 2:13; Heb. 1:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 3:15-16*)
- C. We believe the Bible is without error in the original writings (*John 10:35; 17:3, 17; Luke 16:17; Titus 1:2; Ps. 12:6; 119:89; Matt. 5:17; 22:31-32; 24:35; Isa. 40:8*).
- D. We believe God safeguards the meaning of the Bible through the centuries so that the Bible we read today is God's Word (*Josh. 1:8; 2 Kings 22:8-13; Neh. 8:1; Matt. 26:14; Luke 21:33*).
- E. We believe the Bible is the final (supreme) authority for faith and life, and all human traditions, experiences, emotions, and ideas are judged by God's Word and must conform to its teachings to be judged true (*Matt. 4:4; Mark 7:6-13; 1 John 4:1-3; Col. 1:18-20; 2:4-5*).
- F. We believe everything necessary for salvation, faith and life is clearly revealed in the Bible (*Deut. 30:11-14; Ps. 19:7-8; John 10:35; 20:30-31; 2 Tim. 3:15-17*).
- G. We believe humble submission to the Lord is a precondition for understanding the Bible, and knowing the Bible is indispensable to living a truly Christian life (*1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Pet. 3:16; Col. 1:9-10; 3:16; Rom. 15:4; Heb. 4:12*).
- H. We believe every believer has both the privilege and the duty to interpret the Bible correctly (*Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 2:15; Rom. 10:6-18*).
- I. We believe there is one correct interpretation of a verse based on the literal meaning of its words, the context where it is found, and the teaching of other passages (*Ezra 7:10; Neh. 8:7-8; Matt. 22:29-32; Luke 24:25-27, 32, 44-45; Gal. 3:16*).
- J. We believe this one correct interpretation, i.e. the truth, has many valid life applications that the Spirit helps obedient believers to understand and practice (*1 John 2:27; 1 Cor. 2:12-16*).
- K. We believe the Bible is a finished document, voiding all present day claims to authoritative, prophetic pronouncements and extra-biblical revelations (*Jude 3; 1 Cor. 13:10; Ps. 119:89; Rev. 22:18-19; Prov. 30:6; Deut. 4:2*).

2. The Triune God

We believe in the one God, eternally existing in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who are co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and who thus share the same attributes and perfections. The Triune God is complete in and of Himself, is abounding in all goodness, and performs all His deeds out of the overflow of His inexhaustible fullness and shared joy. He is eternal, holy, merciful, loving, just, changeless, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and concerned with all men. (*Ex. 3:14; Deut. 4:35, 39; 6:4*;

Ps.110:1-3; Dan 4:34-35; Matt. 3:15-17; 28:19; John 1:1, 14; 8:24, 58; 10:30; 17:4-5; Acts 5:3-4, 9; 16:6-7; 20:23, 28; 1 Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Col. 1:15-19; Heb. 1:3, 6-13; James 2:19; Rev. 5:1-13)

A. God the Father-- The First Person

We believe God the Father is the source of all things, the ultimate Sovereign who governs the universe according to His perfect plans, and the One whose love sent His only begotten Son to provide the gift of salvation to the world. His nature can also be seen in creation, in calling and caring for Israel, and in the perfect fulfillment of all His promises and plans. (*Gen. 1:1;12:1-3; Ex. 3:14; 34:6-7; Ps. 19:1; 33:11; 90:2; 115:3; 139; Isa. 41:4, 21-26; 43:13; 44:6-7; 45:21-22; 46:8-11; 48:3-7; Matt. 6:9-13; John 3:16; 5:26; Acts 15:16-18; Rom 11:36; Gal. 4:4-7; Eph. 1:3-5*)

B. God the Son-- The Second Person

- i. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God and agent of creation, became man without ceasing to be God. (*Isa. 9:6; Mic. 5:2; John 1:1-6, 14; 8:23-24; 17:5; Matt. 1:23; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 John 1:1-4*)
- ii. We believe He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God to us and redeem sinful humanity. (*Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 12:45; 14:9; Col. 1:15; 2:9; Heb. 1:3*)
- iii. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for all mankind, stood in our place as a righteous substitute, took the full force of God's anger towards our sin, and offered a payment that completely satisfied all of God's just judgments against us. (*Rom. 3:21-26; 5:1; 8:1; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 2:9; 7:25-27; 9:26; 10:10, 12, 14; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 4:10*)
- iv. We believe His atoning sacrifice has enough value to redeem every person and enough power to justify everyone who trusts in Christ alone for eternal life. (*John 1:29; 3:16; Rom. 3:24-25; 1 Tim. 4:10; 1 John 2:1-2; 4:14*)
- v. We believe in the literal, physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (*Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-29; Acts 1:9-10; 2:32; 3:15; 10:40-42; 1 Cor.15:4-8, 12-20; Rev. 1:18*)
- vi. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where He ministers as our high priest, praying friend, and defense attorney. (*Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; 1 Tim 2:5-6; Heb.1: 3; 4:14-16; 8:6; 12:2; 1 John 2:1*)

C. God the Holy Spirit-- The Third Person

- i. We believe the Holy Spirit is a Person with mind, will, and emotions. (*Acts 5:3-4, 9, 32; 16:6-7; 20:23, 28; Eph. 4:30*)
- ii. We believe the Spirit was active in creation and with men in the Old Testament period-- indwelling them temporarily to perform mighty acts or reveal truth. (*Gen. 1:2; Num. 11:25-29; Judges 14:19; 15:14; 16:20, 28-31; 1 Sam. 10:6; 16:4; 2 Kings 3:15-18; Ps. 51:11*)
- iii. We believe the Spirit presently convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (*John 16:8-11; Rom. 8:16; Heb. 2:4; 1 John 5:11-13*)
- iv. We believe the Holy Spirit immediately imparts life to the person trusting in Christ-- immersing them into the body of Christ, forever indwelling them, and marking them out as reserved for the day of redemption. (*Acts 15:8-9; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:9-11, 15-16; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5*)

- v. We believe the Holy Spirit is the divine teacher who uses the Word of God to guide believers into conformity with Christ's person and will. (*John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:12-16; Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:17-18*)
- vi. We believe it is the privilege and duty of every believer to yield to the moment-by-moment control of the Holy Spirit. (*Gal. 5:16; 6:8; Eph. 4:30; 5:18-20; Rom. 8:6-7*)
- vii. We believe the Holy Spirit freely bestows at least one spiritual gift on every believer, enabling them to build up other Christians in their faith. (*1 Cor. 12:7-11; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Pet. 4:10-11*)
- viii. We believe the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit (divine revelations, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, and miracle-workers) are of a temporary, foundational nature— being superseded by the completed and perfect revelation of God in the Bible. Such gifts are given to the church as a supernatural witness in times and places where no such witness through the Word exists, proving that the new gospel message is truth from God and must be accepted in order to be saved. (*Acts 2:4-6, 33; 3:12-13, 16; 4:9-12; 5:14-15; 7:8; 8:13, 25; 13:12; 14:3; 19:11-12; Rom. 15:18-19; 1 Cor. 13:9-10; 14:20-22; 2 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11; Heb. 2:3-4*)

3. Man and Sin

- A. We believe God, by a direct act, created man in His own image and likeness that we might know Him and enjoy Him forever. (*Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7; Gen. 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Eph. 4:24; Jam. 3:9*)
- B. We believe Adam, the first man, sinned against God. (*Gen. 3:1-13*)
- C. We believe Adam's sin was transmitted to the whole human race so that all people inherit a sin nature and are born alienated from God. (*Gen. 3:14-19; Rom. 5:12-19; Eph. 2:1-3; Ps. 51:5; 58:3*)
- D. We believe the essence of sin is an enthronement of self at God's expense. (*Gen. 3:5; Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5; Isa. 1:12-22; 14:13-14; Luke 4:1-13; Matt. 16:23; John 5:44*)
 - i. It is lawlessness, living as one pleases in disregard of what God is like or what He says in His Word. (*1 John 3:4; Deut. 12:8; Judges 17:6; 21:25; 1 Sam. 15:23; Ps. 32:1; Matt. 7:23; 2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Tim. 1:9*)
 - ii. It is unrighteousness, doing what is wrong by God's standards and/or failing to do what is right. (*James 3:2; 4:17; 1 John 5:17*)
 - iii. It is ingratitude, withholding thanks from God for His many good gifts and choosing instead to accuse Him of withholding good things from us. (*Rom. 1:21-22; 2:4; James 1:17-18; Jude 14-16; Job 40:2*)
 - iv. It is unbelief, choosing to rely on oneself or other gods instead of depending on God alone, and viewing Him as not wholly good and therefore unworthy of one's trust. (*2 Kings 17:14-15; Jer. 2:13; Rom. 1:23-25; 14:23; James 1:6-8; Heb. 3:12-19; 11:6*)
- E. We believe all people are guilty of personal sin, are without excuse, merit God's wrath, and therefore are subject to physical, spiritual, and eternal death (Hell). (*Prov. 20:9; 1 Kings 8:46; Job 14:4; Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 1:20; 2:1-11; 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 John 1:8-10; Ps. 11:6; Isa. 66:24; Mark 9:42-49; 2 Thess. 1:6-9; Rev. 20:11-15*)

- F. We believe the corruption of sin affects the entire person-- mind, will, and emotions -- to the point where man is utterly unable to remedy his lost condition by reforming himself. (*Job 14:4; Jer. 13:23; 17:9; Mark 7:21-22; John 8:34; Rom. 3:1-24; 7:7-11; 1 John 2:11-13*)
- G. In a fallen world, however, God has made provision for victims of unjust divorces to have a new life. When an unbelieving spouse divorces their Christian partner or when divorce happens because one spouse is sexually unfaithful to the other, God grants the right of remarriage to the victim of sinful conduct. (*1 Cor. 7:15-16; Matt. 5:21-32; 19:9*)
- H. In all other cases, divorce is forbidden and the right to remarry with God's approval is forfeited. (*1 Cor. 7:10-14; Matt. 19:9; Luke 16:18*)

4. Salvation

- A. We believe salvation is God's rescuing us from the power and effects of sin. It is a free and generous gift given to undeserving people by an unimaginably generous God. (*Eph. 2:1-9; Titus 3:2-7; John 1:12-13; 3:16-18; Rom. 5:8-10,15-17; 6:23*)
- B. We believe salvation is received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose shed blood purchased our deliverance from sin's penalty, power, and presence. (*John 20:30-31; Rom. 1:18; 3:22; 4:5; 10:9-10; Acts 16:31; Col. 1:13-14; 2:13-14; 1 Thess 5:9*)
- C. We believe God chooses each believer for salvation before the foundation of the world, enabling him to believe through the Holy Spirit. (*Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:4-6; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2:10; John 6:29; Acts 13:48; 16:14*)
- D. We believe God imparts the divine nature and divine life at the moment of faith to each believer by a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. (*2 Cor. 4:10-11; 5:17; 13:5; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13; 1 John 3:9; 5:11-13; 2 Pet.1:4*)
- E. We believe God fully and finally forgives each believer, forever removing all our sins and placing them upon Christ at His cross. (*Ps. 103:12; Isa. 38:17; 43:25; Mic. 7:19; John 19:30; Acts 3:19; 13:38; Eph. 1:7; 4:32; Col. 1:14; 2:13-14; Rev. 1:5*)
- F. We believe God has reconciled believers to Himself. Christ experienced the estrangement, hostility, and punishment we deserved, removing all offense and establishing peace between God and us. (*Rom. 5:1, 11; 8:1, 31-39; 2 Cor. 5:18-19; Eph. 2:13-18; Col. 1:20; Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2, 4:10*)
- G. We believe God declares each believer righteous in His sight. All of Christ's righteousness is credited to his account the very moment he believes. (*Rom. 3:21-26; 5:1; 8:1, 33-39; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9*)
- H. We believe God cleanses believers from all the filth and shame of sin, setting them apart for Himself upon salvation and making them saints (holy-ones). (*Acts 15:9; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:9-11; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:3; Titus 3:5-6; 1 John 1:7, 9*)
- I. We believe God has adopted believers as His children, making us eternal objects of His love and granting us all the privileges of sonship. (*John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:15-16, 23; Gal. 3:26-4:7; Eph. 1:5-6; 1 John 3:1-3*)
- J. We believe God keeps those who are truly born again permanently saved, making them secure in Christ forever. (*John 6:39; 10:28-30; Rom. 8:31-39; 1 Cor. 1:8; Phil. 1:6; Heb. 7:25; 1 Pet. 1:5; Jude 1*)

- K. We believe God commands all Christians to manifest both love and purity, to do good works, and to abstain from all evil through His power. (*2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Eph. 2:10; 1 Thess. 5:22; Titus 2:11-14; 3:1, 8, 14; James 2:14-26; 1 Pet. 1:5,18-19, 23; 1 John 2:15-16; 3:16-18*)

5. The Church

- A. We believe the Church--the body and the bride of Christ-- is a unique spiritual entity made up of all born-again persons of this present age (from the day of Pentecost until the Rapture). (*Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:37-47; 1 Cor.12:12-13; Col. 1:26-27; Rev. 3:10; 12:1-6; 19:7-9*)
- B. We believe the church to be separate and distinct entity from Israel, and that God will literally fulfill all His unique promises to Israel in the future. (*Dan. 9:24-27; Rom. 11:1-32; Eph. 2:15, 19-22; 3:4-11; 4:11*)
- C. We believe the local church is a duly organized group of baptized believers, of like-minded biblical faith, who unite in a specific place to share the gospel, edify one another in Christ, and glorify God. (*Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:41-47; Rom. 14:1-15:7; 1 Cor. 14:26-40; 1 Tim. 3:15-16*)
- D. We believe in the self-government under Christ of the local church, submissive to yet free from domination by worldly authorities. (*Acts 4:19; 5:29; Luke 20:25; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 1:22; 1 Pet. 2:13-16*)
- E. We believe in the elder rule form of church government. (*Acts 6:2-4; 14:23; 20:17, 28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; Heb. 13:17; James 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1-2; Rev. 4:10; 5:5, 8, 11, 14*)
- F. We believe the local church is commanded to observe two ordinances: believer's baptism by immersion, and communion. (*1 Cor. 11:23-28; Matt. 28:18-20*)
- G. We believe the local church is commanded to proclaim the gospel to all nations, and to nurture believers unto maturity in Christ. (*Matt. 28:18-20; Acts. 9:31; 1 Cor. 11:23-28; 2 Cor. 5:20; Eph. 4:11-16; Col. 3:19*)
- H. We believe the local church, and all who attend our fellowship, should demonstrate love for others, not only towards fellow believers, but also towards both those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal with opponents graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or the use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions. (*Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10, 17-21; 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 John 3:17-18*)
- I. We believe Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the local church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (*1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32*)

6. Angels

- A. We believe angels are spirit beings of limited power who were created to serve and worship God. The holy angels continue to serve God according to His original purpose. *(Luke 1:11, 18, 26-37; 24:4-7; Acts 1:10-11; Heb. 1:4-14; Rev. 5:11)*
- B. We believe Satan was created holy but rebelled against the Creator, involving numerous angels in his fall. He then introduced sin to the human race by the temptation of our first parents, Adam and Eve. *(Gen. 3:1-5; Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:12-19; Rev. 12:4)*
- C. We believe Satan and the demons tempt humans to sin, bring accusations against believers before God, deceive people through lies, incite conflict between believers, war against believers through persecution, and corrupt the true church with evil people and practices. *(Job 1:6-7; 2:3-5; Zech. 3:1; Matt. 4:1-11; 13:26-43; John 8:44; Acts 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 11:3-4, 12-13; 1 Thess. 3:5; 1 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 12:10; 20:2-3, 8)*
- D. We believe Satan and the demons were defeated by the death and resurrection of Christ and will be tormented eternally in the lake of fire. *(Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 Pet. 3:22; Rev. 20:10)*
- E. We believe demonic control over Christians is external-- in that Spirit-indwelt believers cannot be indwelt by a demon, avoidable-- since it is brought on by a free choice to walk in sin, and always breakable-- though repentance and new submission God. *(Matt. 12: 29; Rom. 16:19-20; 1 Cor. 5:5; 10:13; 2 Cor. 2:10-11; 4:4; Eph. 6:10-18; 2 Tim. 2:26; James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8-10; 1 John 4:1-4)*

7. Future Events

- A. We believe in the near and sudden coming in the clouds of Jesus Christ for His Church, prior to the Tribulation period. *(Acts 1:11; Rom. 13:11-12; 1 Thess. 5:1-4; Rev. 1:1, 3, 22:6-7; 10, 12, 20)*
- B. We believe at that time all church age saints will be raptured or raised, then glorified and rewarded. *(John 14:1-4; Rom. 14:10; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 4:5; 15:51-55; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 1:10; 4:13-18; 5:9; 2 Thess. 2:1-5; 2 Tim. 4:6-8; Heb. 10:35-36; 1 Pet. 5:4; 1 John 3:1-3)*
- C. We believe Christ will return at the end of the Tribulation to judge both Israel and the Gentile nations, set up His Millennial kingdom, overthrow Satan, and re-gather Israel to their promised land according to the Old Testament promises. *(Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-9; 35:1-10; 60:1-22; 62:1-12; Jer. 30:1-3; Ezek. 20:42; 36:24; Dan. 2:44-45; 7:13-14; Joel: 3:1-3, 12-21; Luke 17:20-37; 21:7-36; Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 19:11-16; 20:1-6)*
- D. We believe in the physical resurrection of all the dead:
 - i. The unsaved dead will experience eternal separation from God and eternal punishment in the lake of fire; *(Ps. 11:5; Isa. 66:24; Matt. 25:41; Mark 9:42-50; Luke 16:24; 2 Thess. 1: 6-10; 2 Pet. 3:7; Rev. 14:10-11; 20:11-15)*
 - ii. The saved dead will enjoy a glorious eternity in the presence of God in a new heaven and a new earth. *(Ps. 16:10-11; 1 Cor. 2:9; 1 John 3:1-3; Rev. 21-22)*

8. Marriage, Gender and Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25.) We believe that

God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10.)

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of SVCC as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the SVCC members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by SVCC in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22.)

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11.)

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of SVCC.

Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, SVCC will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, the pastors and staff of SVCC shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. Finally, the facilities and property of SVCC shall only host weddings between one man and one woman.

9. Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Ps 139.)

10. Authority of This Statement of Faith

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teachings of the Bible, and therefore is held as the standard of teaching and practice of members of SVCC. For purposes of faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Board of Elders is SVCC's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.