

# Good Shepherd Community Church

## STATEMENT OF FAITH

### Article 1: The Scriptures

**We believe** that the Scriptures, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, are the inspired ("God-breathed") Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men, and the Divine and final authority on all matters upon which it speaks, requiring unreserved submission in all areas of life.<sup>1</sup> We believe that all Scripture centers around the LORD Jesus Christ, the Living Word,<sup>2</sup> and its message is energized by the Holy Spirit so that it is active in people's lives.<sup>3</sup>

**With this as our foundation:**

### Article 2: God

**We believe** in the one true and living God,<sup>4</sup> an intelligent, spiritual, eternal, incomparable and personal Being, Sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and unchangeable in wisdom, holiness, truth, justice, mercy, goodness, and love<sup>5</sup> and eternally existing in three persons as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup>

### Article 3: Jesus Christ

**We believe** in the absolute Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ<sup>7</sup>; His virgin birth; His real and perfect manhood;<sup>8</sup> His work of atonement for the sin of mankind by His vicarious suffering and death<sup>9</sup>; His bodily resurrection and His ascension into heaven; His present High-priestly intercession for His people; His lordship over His church as its Supreme Head; and His future personal return.

### Article: 4 Holy Spirit

**We believe** in the absolute Deity of the Holy Spirit<sup>10</sup>; that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the LORD Jesus Christ,<sup>11</sup> to convict men of sin, to regenerate sinners,<sup>12</sup> to baptize them into the Church,<sup>13</sup> to seal them until the day of

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Timothy 3:15-17

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews 1:1-2

<sup>3</sup> 2 Peter 1:19-21

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 3:13-15; Deuteronomy 6:4-5

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 34:5-8

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 8:6

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 16:13-20; John 1:1-18; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1-4

<sup>8</sup> Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 2:14 – 3:1

<sup>9</sup> 1 Timothy 2:5-6

<sup>10</sup> Genesis 1:2; 1 Corinthians 6:11

<sup>11</sup> John 15:26; John 16:8-11,14

<sup>12</sup> John 3:5

redemption,<sup>14</sup> to indwell,<sup>15</sup> guide,<sup>16</sup> instruct,<sup>17</sup> empower, and fill the believer for godly living and witness,<sup>18</sup> and to give spiritual gifts to each believer for the edification of the Body.<sup>19</sup>

#### Article: 5 **Spiritual Warfare: Allies and Enemies**

**We believe** that God created an innumerable company of sinless spirit-beings called angels to serve Him and do His will.<sup>20</sup> These spirit-beings possess intelligence, will, emotion, and power, but are subject to the limitations belonging to creatures. Most of this vast host kept their first state of holiness and are the elect angels.<sup>21</sup> They are obedient spirits who presently worship God and serve his purpose. They especially minister to the heirs of salvation<sup>22</sup> and are our heavenly allies in the spiritual battle with Satan and his demons.

Satan, although created good, fell through the sin of pride and revolted against the Creator, taking a large number of angels with him. Satan, who was called Lucifer, is the originator of sin in God's universe and is the enemy of God and his people. He led our first parents, Adam and Eve, into sin, thus subjecting them and their posterity to his own power. The spirit-beings who fell with Satan became demons and are active as his agents and associates in the unholy purpose of accusing God's people, tempting them to sin, and counterfeiting and opposing God's works and truth. Satan is the unholy god of this age and ruler of the realm of darkness. God retains sovereign control over these fallen creatures, although they do exercise great power and influence among men. Satan and his agents are to be resisted steadfastly in the faith by believers.<sup>23</sup> He was judged at the cross and his and his agents' ultimate destiny is the lake of fire. Their destiny has been sealed by Christ's victory over sin and death.

#### Article 6: **Man and Sin**

**We believe** that God created humankind in his own image and according to his own likeness<sup>24</sup>: both male and female.<sup>25</sup> Adam was originally endowed with true knowledge, righteousness and holiness for the purpose of loving and glorifying his

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<sup>13</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:13

<sup>14</sup> Ephesians 1:13

<sup>15</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:19

<sup>16</sup> Romans 8:14

<sup>17</sup> John 14:26, 16:12-15

<sup>18</sup> Acts 1:8

<sup>19</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:7,11

<sup>20</sup> Psalm 148:1-5; Colossians 1:16

<sup>21</sup> 1 Timothy 5:21

<sup>22</sup> Hebrews 1:14

<sup>23</sup> James 4:7; 1 John 5:3-5

<sup>24</sup> Genesis 1:26-27

<sup>25</sup> Galatians 3:28

Creator.<sup>26</sup> He stood as the appointed representative and head of the human race.<sup>27</sup> He fell from his original state into sin through willful disobedience and brought upon himself and all of his offspring death (spiritual, physical, eternal) and condemnation.<sup>28</sup> Consequently all humans are born with a sinful nature, spiritually dead, and are subject to the suffering and misery of this fallen world.

Adam's offspring are born subject to both imputed and inherent sin and are therefore by nature the children of wrath under the condemnation of God, corrupted in body and soul, and liable to eternal death.<sup>29</sup> Being dead in our trespasses and sins, we are wholly unable to save ourselves and incapable of choosing and doing that which is acceptable to God except through the divine intervention of the unmerited grace of God our Savior.<sup>30</sup>

### Article 7: **Salvation/Redemption**

**We believe** that God, acting in love, graciously provides salvation for a people chosen in Christ Jesus before all time.<sup>31</sup> Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and mankind.<sup>32</sup> Christ the Lord commands us to preach the gospel to all people urging them to repent and believe<sup>33</sup>. All who believe will be saved<sup>34</sup>. The justification of the repenting and believing sinner is God's gracious act of declaring him righteous on the ground of the reconciling death of Christ Himself in the sinners' place<sup>35</sup>, bearing the penalty of the transgression of God's holy law, the Just dying for the unjust<sup>36</sup>, Christ the Lord bearing our sins in his own body on the tree. Jesus shed his blood as a voluntary sin offering by which God put away his people's sin and regards them as righteous before Him. By this means he made the atoning sacrifice that turns away God's wrath against sinners and establishes reconciliation.<sup>37</sup> The redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ is effectually applied by the Holy Spirit who works repentance and faith in us through regeneration in connection with the Word of the gospel and thereby unites us to Christ<sup>38</sup>. God's provided salvation includes the satisfaction of divine justice, the full forgiveness of sins and peace with God<sup>39</sup>, the crediting of the righteousness of Christ Jesus, adoption as

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<sup>26</sup> Genesis 1:28-31, 3:8ff; Acts 17:27

<sup>27</sup> Romans 5

<sup>28</sup> Genesis 3:1-7

<sup>29</sup> John 3:36; Ephesians 2

<sup>30</sup> John 4:10; John 6:44; Ephesians 1; Titus 3:4-5

<sup>31</sup> Matthew 1:21; Luke 19:10; 1 Timothy 1:15

<sup>32</sup> Romans 1:16-17; 1 Timothy 2:5

<sup>33</sup> Matt. 28:18-20;

<sup>34</sup> Rom. 10:11-17

<sup>35</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:21

<sup>36</sup> Rom. 3:26

<sup>37</sup> Romans 3:21-26

<sup>38</sup> Titus 3:4-7

<sup>39</sup> Roman 5:1-2

sons of God, the gift of eternal life<sup>40</sup>, and the guarantee that all those united to Christ shall never come under condemnation or perish but are kept by the power of God unto ultimate glorification<sup>41</sup>. The Almighty God, who cannot fail and whose purposes are certain and unchangeable, will in the end present each one spotless before his presence in Christ Jesus, based on his merits, conformed to his likeness, to the praise of his glorious grace<sup>42</sup>.

#### Article: 8 **Sanctification**

**We believe** that sanctification is a setting apart unto God and consists of three aspects: the foundational anchoring in Christ<sup>43</sup>, the progressive growth in the likeness of Christ<sup>44</sup> and the final glorification at the coming of Christ<sup>45</sup>. The Lord accomplishes this in the life of the believers through the gracious continuing activity of the Holy Spirit<sup>46</sup>, the utilization of the Word of God<sup>47</sup>, and the fellowshiping of the body of Christ<sup>48</sup>, with the results of holiness<sup>49</sup>, Christlikeness<sup>50</sup>, fruitfulness<sup>51</sup>, and usefulness<sup>52</sup>. It is a progressive work<sup>53</sup> never completed in this life, consummated at the resurrection when we are made fully conformable to His image<sup>54</sup>.

#### Article 9: **Ordinances \ Sacraments**

**We believe** that our Lord Jesus Christ has ordained two sacramental signs or gospel ordinances to be observed by His community of faith until He comes again. They are immersion in water of penitent believers in the name of the triune God upon confession of their faith in the person and saving work of Jesus Christ and the sacred eating of bread and drinking of the cup (fruit of the vine) in remembrance of His atoning sacrifice for sin. These holy rites are a visible sign of the grace of God in Jesus Christ on behalf of His people and of his pledged word of forgiveness, as well as the ratifying acts of faith by which the believer is publicly identified with Christ in his saving work.

#### Article: 10 -**Doctrine of the Church**

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<sup>40</sup> John 3:16; 10:27-28

<sup>41</sup> 1 Peter 1:3-5

<sup>42</sup> Ephesians 1:7,12,14

<sup>43</sup> Acts 20:32; Romans 15:16; 1 Corinthians 6:11

<sup>44</sup> Rom. 6:1-14; 2 Pet. 3:18; Col. 1:10; 2:19; 3:7-14; Tit. 2:11-14

<sup>45</sup> Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17; 1 Pet. 4:13

<sup>46</sup> Rom. 8:1-17

<sup>47</sup> 2 Tim. 3:16

<sup>48</sup> 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:16

<sup>49</sup> 1 Pet. 1:13-16, cf. Lev. 20:7

<sup>50</sup> 1 Pet. 1:21-22

<sup>51</sup> Col. 1:6,10

<sup>52</sup> 2 Tim. 2:21; 4:11

<sup>53</sup> Eph. 4:15; 2 Pet. 1:5-13

<sup>54</sup> 1 Jo. 3:2

**We believe** that the church is the people of Messiah, the body of Christ<sup>55</sup>, a special people<sup>56</sup> called out of the world system<sup>57</sup>, united as a family under God the Father, confessing a common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit<sup>58</sup>. It is a ministering spiritual body<sup>59</sup> of which Christ is the Head<sup>60</sup> and all who place their trust in him are members through the baptizing (placement) work of the Holy Spirit<sup>61</sup>. God by his Word and Spirit creates the one holy universal apostolic Christian Church, calling sinful people out of the whole human race into fellowship with his Son Christ Jesus. This new redeemed humanity purchased by the blood of the Messiah from every culture, nationality, race and language is spiritually one with all the people of God in all ages<sup>62</sup> and is the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose in Christ Jesus.<sup>63</sup>

The Church finds her visible, yet imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its purity, and the gospel ordinances are administered in integrity<sup>64</sup>. Each congregation is to be a representative sample of the church as a whole existing as a fellowship of redeemed, forgiven sinners who love and serve their Savior-Lord<sup>65</sup>. Here scriptural discipline in truth with love is exercised<sup>66</sup>, loving fellowship is maintained, and spiritual ministry of the believer-priests (members) under the Holy Spirit through his gifts is carried out for the maturing of the believers<sup>67</sup>. Each church is a self-governing body<sup>68</sup> under the lordship of Christ<sup>69</sup> by his Word and Spirit, in which all members share responsibility<sup>70</sup>. Its officers (servant leaders) are elders and deacons who serve under Christ in the assembly. All Christians are commanded to be baptized upon profession of faith<sup>71</sup> and to unite themselves with a local congregation for mutual encouragement and growth in discipleship through corporate worship, nurture, service, and proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ<sup>72</sup>. This gospel must be preached to the surrounding community<sup>73</sup> and around the world in obedience to the commission of Christ and for the glory of God.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> 1 Cor. 12:12-27

<sup>56</sup> 1 Pet. 2:9

<sup>57</sup> Gal. 1:4

<sup>58</sup> Eph. 4:4-6

<sup>59</sup> Eph. 4:12-16

<sup>60</sup> Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23

<sup>61</sup> 1 Cor. 12:12-13

<sup>62</sup> Eph. 2:12-22; Rev. 5:9-10

<sup>63</sup> Eph. 1:7-10

<sup>64</sup> Acts 2:42-47

<sup>65</sup> 1 Thess. 1:1-3

<sup>66</sup> 1 Cor. 5:9-13

<sup>67</sup> Gal. 6:1-2; Rom. 15:1-3

<sup>68</sup> Acts 14:23; 6:1-6

<sup>69</sup> Eph. 5:23-24

<sup>70</sup> Phil. 1:1-11

<sup>71</sup> Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; 10:44-48; 16:30-34

<sup>72</sup> Col. 1:3-14

<sup>73</sup> Acts 13:48-49

<sup>74</sup> Matt. 24:31; Matt. 28:18-20; Mk.16:16-17, 20; Rom. 10:8-15; 15:8-12

## Article 11 - Missions & Evangelism (Disciplemaking)

**We believe** that proclaiming the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to all the peoples of the world is an essential ministry of the Church<sup>75</sup>. Throughout the Bible God is seen as desiring to draw all ethnic groups and peoples to himself<sup>76</sup>. In the Old Testament God revealed Himself to Abraham and his descendants so that all people groups would be blessed by worshipping the one true God.<sup>77</sup> At the proper time in God's plan Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners<sup>78</sup> and he commissioned his church with the task of proclaiming to everyone the good news of his salvation<sup>79</sup>. It is through human messengers that God causes the message of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection to be proclaimed throughout the earth<sup>80</sup>. Therefore preachers must be sent so that people can hear, turn from their sins, believe the gospel, and become worshippers of the only true God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Missions exist because the worship of the true God among so many people does not. Since there is salvation in no one else except Jesus Christ<sup>81</sup>, the church must spare no effort in declaring the gospel to all the world's people groups by every means possible<sup>82</sup>. Those who repent and believe should be baptized in water and discipled in the fellowship of a local body of believers<sup>83</sup>. The goal of all evangelistic efforts is to bring people not only to faith in Christ but also participation in the life of the local church, the establishment of which is the ultimate goal of all missionary work.<sup>84</sup>

Missionaries should be commissioned, sent out, supported, be accountable to, be in personal relationship and partnership with a local congregation or congregations. The Church's faithful proclamation of the gospel requires unwavering and sustained commitment so that Christ's name will be exalted in all the earth.<sup>85</sup>

Therefore, as a local church we will continue to proclaim the gospel to as many people in our generation as we can, both locally and throughout various places in the world through our own messengers and through others to whom we lend support. The Scriptures promise that when the Holy Spirit has called out all God's elect people through the preaching of the Gospel, then Christ will appear a second time. Therefore, we preach so that we may hasten the day of our Lord's return.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Eph. 3:10; Psa. 67; 96:3; 98:2

<sup>76</sup> Isa. 45:22

<sup>77</sup> Gen. 12:2-3

<sup>78</sup> Gal. 4:4-5

<sup>79</sup> Matt. 28:18-20; Mk.16:15; Lu. 24:44-49; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:7-8

<sup>80</sup> Acts 14:21-28; Rom. 10:13-15; 1:14,16-17; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; 2 Cor. 2:14-16; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; Acts 17:30-31; 1 Thess. 1:9

<sup>81</sup> Acts 4:12

<sup>82</sup> Col. 1:24-25; 2 Tim. 2:10

<sup>83</sup> Acts 2:38; Acts 8:16; 19:5; Romans 6:3; Gal. 3:27

<sup>84</sup> Eph. 4:12-16

<sup>85</sup> Acts 1:8; Rom. 15:20; Matt. 24:14

<sup>86</sup> 2 Pet. 3:12

## Article 12- **The Second Coming of Jesus Christ & the Eternal State**

**We believe** in the personal<sup>87</sup>, bodily<sup>88</sup> return of our Lord Jesus Christ<sup>89</sup> who will come back to earth just as he left, only this time with power and great glory<sup>90</sup> to establish the kingdom of God in the fullest sense<sup>91</sup> and to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him<sup>92</sup>. This is our blessed hope<sup>93</sup> and we eagerly await his coming while being watchful<sup>94</sup> and also working to establish his kingdom on earth in the hearts of men<sup>95</sup>. He will come as the Judge of the living and the dead<sup>96</sup>. Both the just and the unjust will be resurrected, the just, the redeemed, to participate in their resurrected and glorified bodies in the eternal blessedness of heaven in the presence of God, and the unjust to suffer the eternal punishment reserved for the devil and his angels<sup>97</sup>. In accordance with God's redemptive purpose and in fulfillment of his covenant promise he 'will dwell in the midst of his people' in a new heaven and new earth<sup>98</sup>.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,  
 "See, the home of God is among mankind;  
 He will dwell with them;  
 they will be his people,  
 and God himself will be with them,  
 and be their God."<sup>99</sup>

Amen.

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<sup>87</sup> John 14:1-3

<sup>88</sup> Acts 1:11

<sup>89</sup> 1 Thess. 4:14-18;

<sup>90</sup> Matt 24:30; 26:64

<sup>91</sup> Matt. 6:10; Rev. 11:15

<sup>92</sup> Rom. 13:11; Rom. 8: 19-22

<sup>93</sup> Tit. 2:13

<sup>94</sup> Mark 13:32-37; 1 Jo. 2:28; 2 Pet. 3:14

<sup>95</sup> 2 Thess. 3:11-13; Matt. 24:14; 2 Pet. 3:12

<sup>96</sup> John 5:28-29; Acts 17:30-31

<sup>97</sup> Daniel 12:2; Acts 24:15; Rev. 20

<sup>98</sup> Eph. 1:9; Rev. 21:1; 1 Cor. 15:50-55

<sup>99</sup> Rev. 21:3