

## **Eastside Church of Christ's Statement of Faith**

We, the members of the Eastside church of Christ (Eastside), believe that to carry on the religious mission of the church, to preserve the functions and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons who associate with the church as members should abide by and agree to the following statements and conduct themselves in accordance with them.

### **A. Statement of Faith**

#### **God the Father**

We believe in God the Father, who is the Supreme Ruler of Heaven and earth, Creator of all things. He is gloriously perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. He infallibly knows everything that shall come to pass, and He is lovingly involved in the affairs of humanity. He co-exists equally with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, forming a holy Trinity, or Godhead. He is knowable through His creation, Word, and Son.

Genesis 1:1, Exodus 15:11, Psalm 90:2, Proverbs 5:21, John 1:1-18, 4:24, Romans 1:20, Timothy 1:17, 1 John 4:8, Revelation 4:8-10.

#### **Jesus Christ**

We believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. He is the Eternal Word and the image of the invisible God. It is for Him and by Him that everything exists. At the right moment in world history, He became flesh by virgin birth and experienced the full breadth of human existence. He lived a sinless, perfect life and gave Himself as a substitutionary sacrifice for human sin. After three days in the tomb, He resurrected from the dead. He has since ascended into Heaven to sit at the Father's right hand until every enemy is placed under His feet, the last enemy being death itself. At an undisclosed future date, He will visibly return in order to reward the righteous and judge the wicked.

Matthew 16:16, Mark 10:45, John 1:1-18, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Colossians 1:15-20, Philippians 2:5-11, Matthew 25:31-46, Hebrews 9:27-28

#### **Holy Spirit**

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who is co-existent and co-equal with the Father and Son. By His power, He raised Jesus from the dead and brought to the remembrance of the apostles all the things that Jesus taught them. By His guidance and influence, the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, was authored. He is the Comforter of the Church and the individual gift to every believer who repents and is baptized. He personally dwells within each Christian, empowering them for holiness and interceding for them in prayer.

Matthew 28:18-20, John 14:26, 16:8-11, 16:13, Acts 9:31, Romans 8:13, 26, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19, Galatians 5:22-23, 1 Thessalonians 4:8, 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21

## **Man**

We believe that humankind, both male and female, is created in the image of God and that therefore all human life is inherently valuable. We believe that man was made to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. The first human pair, Adam and Eve, rebelled against God in the Garden of Eden by seeking to elevate themselves as gods. As a consequence, they exchanged the perfect friendship that man enjoyed with God for enmity, thus creating the framework within which all humanity thereafter would fall into sin. As a result of personal sin, all mankind stands under the holy wrath of God, deserving of an eternal hell. It is only through the light of the Gospel that the darkness that clouds men's hearts can be scattered. It is only through the power of Jesus' sacrifice that man can be restored to a proper relationship with God and begin functioning according to God's original design.

Genesis 1:26-27, 3:1-7, Isaiah 43:7, Romans 3:23, 2 Corinthians 4:3-6, Ephesians 2:1-10

## **The Bible**

We believe that the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God, having been produced by divine inspiration whereby the Holy Spirit guided and influenced human authors to pen its words. It is without error in the original manuscripts and it is infallible in what it affirms. We believe that it is the sole rule of faith and practice for all Christians and the final authority in all matters pertaining to what is true and right.

John 10:35, 2 Timothy 3:14-16, 2 Peter 1:21, Hebrews 4:12, Psalm 19:7, 119:160, Proverbs 30:5

## **Salvation**

We believe that as a result of the Fall in Eden, creation has been corrupted and man has been inclined to sin. Consequently, all men lie under the just wrath of God unless salvation can be acquired. This salvation is provided by God Himself as a free gift through the atoning, substitutionary death of Jesus Christ upon the cross. The merits of the death of Jesus are applied to the individual sinner by grace through faith, being formally bestowed in the act of water baptism preceded by repentance and a confession of Jesus as the Son of God. In baptism, the sinner is buried and raised to newness of life as a new creation in Christ, having received the circumcision without hands, the washing of regeneration, and the renewal of the Holy Spirit, whereupon the gift of the Holy Spirit Himself is imparted to the believer.

Acts 2:38, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:3-4, 10:9-10, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 2:1-3, 8-9, Colossians 2:11

## **The Church and Kingdom**

We believe that the church of Jesus Christ was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Its authority for existence and operation rests upon the identity of Jesus as the Son of God, God's Messiah. The church is the spiritual body of Christ, over which Christ sits as head. This body is one, although it consists of many members. It is worldwide in scope but local in its distinctive manifestations. The church is the Temple of God

on earth today. Oversight of every local church has been committed to specially qualified men known variously as elders, overseers, or pastors. In these local contexts, men known as deacons also serve in special ways. In connection with the Kingdom of God that occupied the main theme of Jesus' proclamation while on earth, we believe that the church is the visible expression of that Kingdom.

Matthew 16:16-18, Ephesians 1:22-23, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 12:12, Acts 20:28, Ephesians 4:11, 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-3.

Mark 1:15, 9:1, Acts 1:8, 2:1-4, 1 Corinthians 15:24, Colossians 1:13, Revelation 1:6

### **Discipleship**

We believe that every Christian is called to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. This involves the process of learning all that Jesus taught His first disciples and implementing this teaching into one's daily life. It involves the daily struggle of bearing one's cross and following in the pattern of Jesus' life. It requires the continual pursuit of holiness, manifested in the growth of the fruit of the Spirit and a decrease in the works of the flesh. It will be manifested by obedience, faithfulness, perseverance, love, humility, and an eagerness to make more disciples by a persistent testimony to the Gospel.

Matthew 16:24, 28:18-20, John 8:31, 13:35, 14:15, 15:8, Galatians 5:16-26, 1 Peter 1:14-16, 2 Peter 1:5-11

### **Last Things**

We believe that Jesus will return at an undisclosed time in the future to judge the living and the dead, resurrecting the righteous to eternal life and the wicked to eternal condemnation. At that time, all wrongs will be put right, all enemies of God will be defeated, and the kingdom will be delivered up to the Father. The present earth and all its affairs will be consumed with fire and the righteous will be rewarded with a new heaven and new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Matthew 25:31-46, John 5:28-29, Acts 17:31, 1 Corinthians 15:24-26, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 2 Peter 3:7-13, Revelation 21:1-8

## **B. Statement on 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 (I 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; I Cor. 6:9-10.)

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Eastside as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to its members and the community, it is imperative that all persons as members or employed by Eastside 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; I 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; I 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 the Holy Scripture.

### **C. Statement on Church Discipline**

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (I Cor. 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin and promoting purity (I Tim. 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Gal. 6:1).

The Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted the local church with the authority and responsibility to discipline members for flagrant sin or serious doctrinal error, with the goal of restoration of the offender. This discipline is entrusted to the elders, and is to follow the biblical pattern as set forth in Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 5; II Corinthians 2:7-8; Galatians 6:1; II Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 3:10-11; and II John 7-11. Any member of this church who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct that, in the judgment of the elders, is opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, or is threatening to the testimony of this church, or is divisive to the body, shall be subject to church discipline.

Discipline will follow the biblical pattern, and is an effort to bring the individual to repentance and protect the church from unrepentant sin. Discipline may involve exclusion from participation in ministry and communion, as well as dismissal from the fellowship of this church. An individual may be disciplined by the elders short of dismissal from the fellowship, as they deem appropriate for the specific circumstance (for example, an individual may remain in certain circumstances a member of this church but be denied the privilege of serving in a particular way or in a particular ministry). The elders, as required by Scripture, may report to

the congregation the names of those who have lost membership by reason of church discipline, and the reason for that discipline, as described in Matthew 18:15-20.

#### **D. Statement on Mediation**

Members of Eastside agree to submit any legal dispute with the church for mediation before a mutually agreed-upon mediator from within the church, or if none can be agreed upon, one selected by the majority of the members of Eastside. Lawsuits between believers, or threats of lawsuits between believers, are a matter of grave concern for the church, are contrary to biblical and church teaching, and mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a biblical fashion. (1 Cor. 6:1-7.)

The confidentiality of the mediation process will be protected and these matters will not be discussed with people who do not have a necessary interest in them. If settlement can be agreed upon, the conciliators may, at their discretion, issue an opinion. Neither the opinion, nor any communications exchanged in the mediation process, will be admissible for any purpose in any subsequent legal proceeding.

#### **E. Statement on 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 (Psa. 139)

#### **F. Statement of Final Authority on Matters of Faith and Conduct**

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Eastside's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, the elders serve as the overseers of this congregation, and are the final decision-makers on disputed matters regarding the Bible's meaning and application.

**The statements above represent what we believe the Bible teaches on these crucial topics. They have been taught in Bible classes and from the pulpit and hang in conspicuous spaces around the building. The members of Eastside agree to be governed by all the provisions herein.**