

A Statement of Faith

Third Presbyterian Church

On God

God is a spirit, whose being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth are infinite, eternal, and unchangeable.

God is Sovereign.

God exists eternally as one God in three equal Persons -- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, co-equal, co-eternal, the same in substance, power, and glory, and unchangeable in every way.

On Creation

God created out of nothing instantaneously, creating by omnipotence simply by speaking.

God created man and woman in His image, without sin and without a sin nature, to live in communion with Him.

God through His infinite power and wisdom orders and sustains all of creation.

On Humankind

Having rejected God and His will, we live separated from God in a state of sinfulness with a heart that tends toward idolatry.

We are totally sinful and unable to do anything in and of ourselves to save us from the consequence of our sinful nature – that consequence being the condemnation of God.

Salvation from sin and entry into God's heaven are dependent upon each person's decision to accept Jesus Christ as both Lord and Savior. Each person must individually choose Jesus Christ in order to enter the kingdom of God, but the ability to make such a choice is the result of a supernatural work of God the Holy Spirit.

A new relationship with God is established through repentance from our sins (changing direction - thoughts, beliefs, deeds), and through faith (willful trust and obedience) in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

God invites people to repent, believe in Jesus Christ and accept God's offer of love, forgiveness and salvation.

We are justified by faith alone in Christ alone. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein God pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in His sight, only by virtue of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone. This is a legal righteousness that is entered to our account. Therefore we are adopted into the family of God solely on the basis of the Person and Work of Christ, totally apart from any human works on our part.

As we come to God the Father through faith in His Son, Jesus, we are made a new creation in Christ – a new creation in whom the Holy Spirit of God makes His dwelling.

On The Scriptures

The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments are our primary source of knowledge of God and our primary guide to Christian living.

All of the Bible is the authoritative, inspired Word of God speaking accurately to all it teaches and affirms and is to be understood in the light of the language and culture of its authors. It is absolutely necessary and totally sufficient for the Christian life, being the only infallible source of absolute truth for righteous living in our world.

On The Person and Work of Jesus the Christ

The only Redeemer of God's people is the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, who became man.

As our Redeemer, Christ is a Prophet, Priest, and King in both His abasement and His exaltation.

Jesus is the Christ, total God and total man in one person with no mixture of the natures. When he came to earth he did not relinquish his deity but added to his divine nature, yet was only one Person. While on earth he functioned as both God and man. He continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever.

Christ, the Son of God, became man by assuming a real body and a reasoning soul. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, who gave birth to Him; yet He was sinless.

The Lord Jesus Christ lived a perfect life of obedience to God and God's Law. Although remaining free from personal sin, he died by crucifixion on the cross as the substitute for sinners, and in so doing bore the wrath of God. He was raised bodily from the grave and He dwelt among men for forty days. He then ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father.

On The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit draws us to God the Father because our sinful natures could not suitably respond by means of our own power and desire. God the Holy Spirit regenerates the heart of a sinner, thus enabling their eyes to see, their ears to hear and their minds to receive the gospel.

As we come to God in faith we are indwelt and sealed by the Spirit of God, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession. Thus we become heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. We become adopted as God's children. Adoption is an act of God's grace whereby we are received into the family of God and have a right to all the privileges of the children of God.

As believers we seek to conform to the character of Jesus Christ growing in personal holiness through faith, through obedience to the Word of God, and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit a process of sanctification occurs as we subdue the sinful nature by God's power and as we allow God's righteousness to grow in our daily lives.

The Holy Spirit of God indwells us and empowers us to do the work of the church, imparting various gifts to God's people while also interceding for us, and through us, in accordance with the will of God the Father.

On New Life in Christ

God draws people to Himself not only for their Salvation but for lives of Worship and Service to Him.

Although we are justified by faith alone, faith that saves is not alone, but is always accompanied by good works. Obedience to God's Word is the necessary evidence, though not the meritorious cause, of genuine faith, for faith without works is dead.

We are to exercise a faithful Stewardship that shuns ostentation and seeks the proper use of the gifts of God's creation even as we grow in personal and corporate holiness.

On the Church of Jesus Christ

The church is the Body of Christ, the pillar and foundation of the truth, of which Jesus is the head. As the Body of Christ, the church is to be the visible presence of the invisible God. Through the church, the manifold wisdom of God is to be made known to all creation, according to God's eternal purpose which God accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The people of God are called to work for the transformation of society by seeking justice and living in humble obedience to God's Word.

The sharing of our faith with non-believers is a priority for both individual Christians and the whole church.

Believers are to live together within a covenant life marked by a disciplined concern for order in the church according to the Word of God.

Ongoing Fellowship is essential for the Christian community in order that it might experience spiritual nourishment, accountability and growth.

On Our Hope in Christ

God is with us always.

All who believe in Jesus Christ will persevere in the faith because of God's grace and because it was God who called them to Himself. A true believer in Jesus Christ will not lose their salvation although they may for a time fall into a pattern of sinful living.

Upon death, a true believer will experience communion in glory with Christ in that their souls will be made perfect in holiness and they will be received into heaven to experience the radiance and glory of God as they await the full redemption of their bodies at the day of judgment. Then they will receive a new, eternal body, becoming one in body and spirit to worship and serve the Lord forever.

Jesus will literally return to earth one day and judge all mankind, separating the wicked to eternal life apart from God, and the righteous to eternal life with God.

Christ will come again to bring his people home and establish his eternal Kingdom in heaven with all the saints.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:17-21)